



Dear Parents/Carers

The Ofsted report from our inspection on the 24th October is now available to be downloaded off the Ofsted website using the following link:

<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50038122>

I am delighted to report that this letter will be a good deal easier for me to write, and for you to read, than the last one that started with those words. Our Ofsted grading overall, and across all four of the individual assessment areas is now once again **Good**.

To say we are relieved would be putting it lightly, because although we had reflected on the actions from the previous report and planned our improvements carefully, and although we had implemented the plan carefully and monitored it's effectiveness, and although we had sought and received external validation from our NYCC support officers; there was always the lingering concern that something would go wrong on the day. As it was Ofsted waited until we had no fingernails left and we were within the final days of the 6 months cut-off before they arrived on the doorstep.

The inspection itself was thorough with two inspectors, including one of the pair from the original inspection, spending nearly seven hours on the premises. They reviewed record keeping and processes, leadership and management, spoke to some parents, and spent a considerable amount of time in each of the three main age units of the nursery speaking with practitioners and observing the teaching and learning. We would encourage you to read the report thoroughly. We believe the report speaks volumes of the work the manager and practitioner team have covered in the last 6 months which in summary includes:

- Revised our registration procedure and moved to parent led registration rather than practitioner led.
- Medication procedure and policies refined - procedures in place for all children including higher risk children i.e those who have allergies, have history of febrile convulsions
- Planning of teaching and learning (*Ofsted took a photocopy of this as they were so impressed!*) - use of developmental stages as well as child's interests to plan their developmental needs.
- Supervision of practitioners - weekly observations in own areas and other areas giving feedback. Managers spending more time role modelling practice in rooms.
- Starting points in the nursery meetings - introduced more formal initial assessment of starting points meetings to enable planning from day one that a child enters Rainbow.
- Overhauled how, and how often, formal observations of children's development takes place - delivered Tapestry across the nursery, and a robust monitoring system with every observation checked by a manager before it goes 'live' and feedback offered to practitioners where needed.

- Greater two way communication between Rainbow and parents, and Rainbow and other settings that children may attend - initially paper based but quickly migrated to using Tapestry.
- Knowledge of safeguarding updated and embedded - questioning daily by managers and within teams/rooms
- Risk assessments revised across the nursery
- Hand washing procedures - hand sanitiser on outdoor play areas

Two areas for further improvement were identified by inspectors:

- Embed procedures for the supervision and monitoring of staff, to enhance the good quality practice.
- Provide children with the time they need to process their thoughts and formulate a response to questions.

The former of these was part of our original Ofsted development plan, and we had introduced a greater degree of structure and formality into the observations that managers made of the rooms in their area. We introduced managers observing rooms outside of their area to allow for the spread of best practice. This model of supervision and monitoring has proved to be useful, and was promoting cross-area best practise, but at the time of the second inspection it was still in its early stages and as such we agree that it needs embedding further within the nursery. Following the inspectors feedback from the re-inspection we have now moved to a process of individual practitioner observations rather than overall room observations, with the learnings from the observations discussed at managers meetings, used to inform staff training, and more directly linked to practitioners ongoing appraisals. We will also continue with and develop the process of managers observing practitioners outside of their own area as we feel this positive for professional development of both the practitioners and the managers, and promotes best practice across the nursery.

The increased focus on supervision and the quality of observations and planning has increased the workload of the area managers and so we have decided to add to our capacity here. Separately, and unrelated to Ofsted, recent staffing changes in Junior Club has given us the opportunity to review the service we offer there and the staffing we need to develop it. As such, from the 5th November Miss Steph Elcock joined the management team at Rainbow in the role of Junior Club Manager. Miss Elcock has a graduate honours degree in Playwork, extensive experience working in childcare settings, and working with young people with additional needs and challenging behaviour along with management experience of working in a regulated setting. However recognising the Junior Club/Holiday Club manager role is not a full time commitment in comparison to the manager role in the three main nursery units Miss Elcock will also have additional responsibility for Quality Assurance across the nursery, alongside the area managers. This will not remove that obligation from the area managers but will add to the capacity we have and provide additional challenge and development across the three areas.

The second point of feedback from Ofsted was about the amount of time a practitioner gives a child to formulate an answer to a question. We had received training from NYCC which covered this and they recommended allowing 10 seconds for a child to answer..... that seems like an age when you are sat one on one with a child.... when an Ofsted inspector is looming over your shoulder the age turns into an eternity! We take the feedback onboard but we are happy that under “normal” circumstances (such as there ever are when young children are involved!) our practitioners allow and promote the two-way flow of conversation effectively.

There have been a large number of changes implemented over these last six months and with the immediate distraction of an Ofsted visit now behind us we hope to give these changes time to properly bed in before we formally review our practice again at the start of May 2019, appropriately enough around the anniversary of the original inspection! At that point we will seek feedback from parents and practitioners and seek review and feedback from an external pair of eyes (either through NYCC support, or through ex-Ofsted consultancy). It will be four years before our next Ofsted inspection but our journey to Outstanding starts here.

I would like to conclude this final update of the Rainbow Ofsted 2018 story with two important thank you's. To our practitioners and managers, I would like to thank them for the resilience and professionalism they demonstrated both in the immediate aftershock of the original report, and in how they embraced the many changes that have happened since. And to you the parents, for the amazing support you showed us in May, and for the trust you continued to put in us through the last six months. We strongly believe that while this has been a challenging six months, the progress and improvements we have made have been excellent, will continue to underpin a happy, stimulating and supportive environment for your children.

Should you wish to discuss anything about this with us please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Karl and Harriet Shields
Directors