



Ladybird Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY313058
Inspection date	27 April 2006
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow / Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Russell Lower School, Queens Road, Ampthill, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK45 2TD
Telephone number	07748 567404
E-mail	
Registered person	Ladybird Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ladybirds Pre-school Playgroup is run by a voluntary management committee. It opened in 2005 at its present premises. It operates from two main rooms in a purpose-built building in the grounds of Russell Lower School, in Ampthill in Bedfordshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the Pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday from 09.05 to 11.45 and 12.30 to 15.10 during term time only. The group is planning to start a lunch club in the near future. All children share

access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 64 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 42 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. Their special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented and they are offered healthy snacks. These include foods low in sugar, salt and additives and preservatives. The group operates a 'snack bar' system where children choose when they have their snack, who to sit with and help themselves to snacks and drinks. This promotes their independence and provides them with opportunities to learn valuable social skills. However, children's full understanding of social expectations is not consistently promoted as they do not always use plates at snack time. They are learning good hygiene practices, for example, they wash their hands before snack and regularly have opportunities to discuss the relevance of this, through regular discussions with staff.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities such as parachute games and action rhymes. The children also have access to the school hall where they use apparatus such as balance bars and climbing equipment. They regularly use the outdoor area where they play on equipment such as the slide, rocker and ride on toys. The use of small equipment such as pencils, glue spreaders and small construction pieces aids the development of children's finer manipulative skills. Their independence is promoted and they are developing an understanding of their own needs, for example, pouring their own drinks and visiting the bathroom independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is creatively displayed and resources are appealingly arranged and easily accessible. Their safety is prioritised and staff carry out daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. This enhances children's play opportunities

because they are able to move independently throughout the setting. However, their safety is affected as they could have access to the kitchen and the store cupboard. Children have a good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of turn-taking and tidying toys away in order to prevent accidents.

Children's safety is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly sized tables and chairs. Children independently select toys and activities from a wide range of good quality play materials. Staff regularly check these to ensure that they are clean and safe, accessing additional guidance in this area through reference to the comprehensive resource inventory, which is divided into different areas of learning. Children's welfare is given a high priority as staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and have attended additional training to ensure that they are able to report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the pre-school and enthusiastically participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. They are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff. Their personal development and self-confidence are consistently promoted because staff treat all children as individuals, interacting and offering appropriate support. Staff always remember to sit at the children's level and join in enthusiastically with their play and conversations, showing their genuine interest and further enhancing children's confidence and self-esteem. An example of this is a staff member joining in with the sand play, encouraging children to explore the different textures of wet and dry sand and to use their imagination in making 'pies'.

Children's interest is maintained and their natural curiosity encouraged because they are able to freely access all rooms and the outdoor play area, exploring the resources and determining their own play. Children confidently make choices about their play and activities throughout the session. Staff pay attention to getting to know the children and make good use of open questions and discussions to encourage them to think further and extend their knowledge. Children are able to participate in all activities because staff continuously adapt these to suit individuals. An example of this is a staff member working with children to make 'cress sheep', encouraging more able children to write their own names on their work, use the glue spreaders, colour in the sheep, and sprinkle the cress, but giving more support to younger children, whilst encouraging them to do as much as possible for themselves.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and use appropriate teaching methods. Children spend their time purposefully because staff are skilled in monitoring them throughout the session, allowing them to develop their own ideas but quickly noticing

when they need encouragement and direction. Children's progress in all areas is well-balanced as staff use appropriate planning and assessment methods and are skilled and experienced in assessing individual children. However, written assessments do not clearly show children's starting points, which could lead to a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and assessing early progress.

Staff are skilled in using all activities and routines as learning opportunities, for example children designed postcards, signed their names, visited the post office to buy stamps, and posted the postcards. They eagerly awaited the postman at home. Staff used this activity to increase children's knowledge and understanding of concepts such as shape, colour, local community and the process of posting and receiving letters.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities. These include regular opportunities to engage in role play, the use of information technology equipment, reading and a wide assortment of crafts and construction. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics, providing opportunities for them to look more closely at subjects such as 'Spring', where they grow cress, sunflowers and vegetables noting what the seeds need and the changes as the plants grow. Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts and negotiate plans and activities. An example of this is a group of children drawing pictures of dinosaurs, discussing the sizes and which one was 'the scariest'.

Children enjoy books and demonstrate their understanding of this area through activities such as acting out 'The Bear Hunt' where they repeat well used phrases and sounds, and use their imagination in pretending to walk through long grass and squelching mud. Children participate in activities such as small construction and sticking and gluing which improve early writing skills and hand-eye co-ordination. They recognise letters and older children are able to write their own names. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them through opportunities to investigate and explore their environment. They make particularly good use of the computer, competently using the mouse, completing programmes and discussing 'scrolling through text'.

Children have a good understanding of concept of numbers, for example, counting how many bounces they do on the trampoline and stating which is the greater number. They understand and use positional and size language, for example, when involved in a parachute game and 'The Bear Hunt', children confidently recognise concepts such as under, over, through, on top, higher and lower. They are gaining an awareness of their own culture and that of others through activities and regular access to resources such as dressing-up clothes, books and puzzles, which provide both information and positive images.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures

and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Chinese New Year, Easter, Diwali and Christmas. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they choose their activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. They respond very well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented. They work sensitively with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines.

In connection with the provision of funded education, the quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is very good. There is a strong commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through daily dialogue, activity sheets and regular meetings with staff. There are informative notice boards containing information about a number of issues including the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, the 'Birth to three matters' framework, health and safety. The setting actively seeks feedback from parents and has provided accessible comments books which are reviewed regularly. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of all children who attend. Their play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space, allowing them the freedom to move safely and independently from one activity to another. This enables them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted through the staff's good practical knowledge of pre-school's policies and procedures. There are stringent procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a clear induction process for new staff, ensuring that all are able to work appropriately with the children. Children's overall welfare is further promoted by the active and enthusiastic committee, who make sure that they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. They work with staff to regularly review practice and this active approach has facilitated the group's move to their new premises and enabled them to settle in quickly.

In connection with the provision of funded education, the quality of leadership and management is good and children benefit from a well-managed setting. The manager and staff act as good role models and staff are motivated, regularly attending additional training. This ensures that they are able to provide appropriate care for all children. Sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities throughout the day. Children are always given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Their progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and parents are kept well informed of this. Staff meet regularly to plan

future work, ensuring that the needs of individual children are met and the development of all children is promoted.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve children's safety by ensuring they cannot access the kitchen and store room
- further develop the procedure at snack time to increase children's understanding of this area.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop the methods for assessing children so that these show their starting point so that progress can be charted and any issues highlighted at an early stage.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the

procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk