

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ladybirds Pre-school opened in 1996 and is managed by a parent-led committee. It is situated in a church hall in Salisbury and serves the local community. The premises consist of the main playroom, a kitchen area and two toilets. An area outside of the hall has been enclosed to form a secure play area.

The Pre-school is registered to care for 22 children aged between two and five years old. There are currently 27 children on roll, 22 of which receive funding for nursery

education. The pre-school is open every weekday during term time from 09:15 to 12:00. The pre-school supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The nursery employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children practice appropriate hygiene routines during the course of each session, reducing the spread of germs. For example, children independently wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. Staff ensure the area is hygienically clean, suitable for children and regularly clean the tables and sweep up spills as they arise.

Children receive appropriate care in the event of minor illnesses and incidents from staff that are trained in first aid. Parental consent for seeking further professional advice permits staff to seek assistance should a major accident occur. All regulatory documentation is in place and records the required detail. Children who fall ill whilst in-group receive support and reassurance until their parents arrive. Exclusion of sick children reduces the risk of cross-infection and illnesses spreading to both other children and the staff.

Children enjoy daily opportunities to experience physical activity both indoors and out, promoting their health and wellbeing. Opportunities use large play equipment, such as climbing frames, trampolines and tricycles, encourages children's physical development and co-ordination skills.

Children have free access to drinks throughout the morning, ensuring they remain hydrated. Records of children's allergies ensure they only receive snacks that are suitable for their dietary needs. Due to the lack of refrigerator space, staff request parents to provide lunches complete with cooler packs to keep them fresh until lunchtime.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enter the pre-school, which offers space for them to move safely between designated areas for play and activities. Displays of children's work and low-level posters encourage the room to be welcoming for children to enter. The premises are safe and secure. Appropriate measures in place, such as risk assessments within the playroom and the checking of toys and resources ensure children can play safely and free from the risk of harm. Children receive high levels of supervision, which promotes their safe play.

Appropriate strategies promote children's safety on outings. For example, staff

ensure they have a suitable number of adults to supervise the children and contact details of parents on hand should an emergency arise. Staff discuss the importance of staying safe with children, such as how to cross roads safely.

Staff have a sound awareness of the procedures to follow should concerns arise regarding a child's safety and welfare. They undertake training in child protection to ensure they have sufficient knowledge to enable them to act appropriately and promptly. Information available to parents informs them of the staff's role and responsibilities towards protecting children from harm. However, not all documents in place for recording issues, which not only aim to safeguard children from harm but to protect staff from allegations of abuse, such as those which record existing injuries that children arrive with, are shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy access to a good range of resources, many of which they can access for themselves from storage units within the classroom. They enjoy a variety of activities, which are age and developmentally appropriate.

Children benefit from high levels of support from staff who move effectively within the classroom, developing children's play and facilitating their participation in activities. Children willingly take part within group activities and enjoy the time to explore their own independent play choices. Consistent praise and encouragement from staff boosts children's confidence and self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children experience a broad range of activities during the week; however, not all areas of learning are sufficiently planned for within their planning framework, in particular the area of communication, language and literacy. Failure to sufficiently plan across all areas of learning provides children with an imbalanced range of planned learning opportunities and does not ensure all children make sufficient progress across the areas of learning.

Staff perform regular observations on children during activities and their play; yet do not consistently record this information within children's records of development. Combined with inconsistent evaluation of activities and little subsequent recording of information gained, children's records do not provide staff with an accurate reflection of where children are within their learning journey. This restricts their ability to use children's records as a tool for informing plans to encourage children's next steps in their development.

Children are happy, confident and relate well to each other and the staff. Most of the children enter with ease and display a strong sense of security within the calm atmosphere of the group. Staff place a high emphasis on valuing children's independent work and frequently mount children's work on display boards. Children are encouraged to show their creations to parents at home time, particularly those made with resources such as Duplo, encouraging children's sense of achievement.

Most children are confident in their use of language and enjoy sharing news before snack time, with support available to encourage those who are less confident. Good questioning techniques consistently applied by staff encourage children to think through their actions and to verbalise their thoughts. Children receive encouragement to name their artwork, with staff using the phonetic alphabet to aid children when appropriate. Children have plenty of opportunities to recognise their name and familiar words, such as the days of the week, in print.

Children are developing their understanding of mathematics. They regularly count during the session and have a good understanding of calculation. For example, children are able to calculate that when four staff and two visitors are present, a total of six cups are required for drinks. Children enjoy opportunities to match colours and patterns and particularly enjoy playing picture dominoes with others and members of staff.

Children are developing their small muscle control through regular use of writing implements and tools such as scissors, with a strong emphasis by staff to encourage children to use tools both safely and independently. They enjoy creative activities, which include free painting and colouring. Appropriate questioning by staff encourages children to recognise their shapes and colours. During role-play, children are using their imaginations well, enjoying tea parties in the home corner and constructing excellent models out of Duplo, during which they co-operate and work well together.

Throughout the year, children celebrate a range of cultural festivals, developing their understanding of the wider world. Available resources, which depict positive images of race, gender and disability encourages children's awareness of diversity naturally through their play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff value children as individuals and move effectively to support all children present. Good strategies in place ensure staff are able to meet individual children's needs and to provide an inclusive environment. For example, when caring for children with learning difficulties, staff liaise with parents and enlist professional assistance in order to encourage each child's progress and development.

Group activities, such as registration and story times combined with the provision of named coat pegs, nurtures children's sense of belonging within the group. Children take an active part within daily routines, such as helping to tidy up and enjoy taking turns to hand out snacks.

Children generally behave well with inappropriate behaviour promptly discouraged by staff. Clear explanations by staff and strategies, such as distraction and alternative play opportunities, encourage children to resume positive behaviour.

Partnership with parents is good. Open communication and approachable staff

ensure parents are able to seek further information regarding their child's development and records when they wish. Parents receive written information regarding the group's policies, procedures and the provision of nursery education within a prospectus and newsletters. Staff ensure they are available at the beginning and end of each day to share information, aiding their ability to provide care and education according to children's individual needs. Furthermore, staff offer parents an insight into their child's time at pre-school, particularly through sharing children's creations with them at home time. Staff encourage parents to contribute to topics and where possible to take an active part within the parent-led committee.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children receive care from suitably checked and qualified staff. Staff work as an established team and require little direction from the manager during the routines of the session. They attend training opportunities to increase their professional knowledge, for example, in first aid and special needs.

The organisation of activities and play opportunities at child level allow children easy access, choice and the freedom to explore defined areas such as the home and book corners.

All regulatory documentation is in place and records appropriate detail. However, the operational plan is not an up-to-date reflection of the group's working practices, which limits its effectiveness as a working document. For example, the staff structure and information regarding the planning system are out-of-date.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff understand their daily roles, with rotas in place to identify their responsibilities for managing the range of activities and play opportunities on offer. They attend meetings and contribute to the planning of activities, yet there is a lack of consistent evaluation and little use of information gained within children's records. The monitoring of staff's understanding of the record system and the progress children make is not fully effective.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group have made some improvements based on the recommendations raised at their last inspections for care and education.

Since the last care inspection, a policy has been implemented for the procedure to follow in the event a member of staff is accused of neglect or abuse against a child. As a result, this encourages prompt, effective action to take place in order to protect the safety and welfare of the child and to ensure management appropriately investigate the allegations made. In addition, an operational plan has been drawn up which shows how the setting is run on a day-to-day basis. This ensures both staff and parents are knowledgeable regarding the policies and procedures within the group and how the group manages their provision of care for children. However, the

plan requires regular maintenance to ensure the contents are up-to-date in order to be an effective working document and is an area of ongoing improvement.

Since the last inspection for nursery education, the group have recently been awarded with a grant to purchase a computer in order to extend children's opportunities of using equipment that develops their skills in information, communication and technology. Staff have also instigated the monitoring and observing of children during activities and their play, in addition to a system for recording children's progress. However, information gained by observations and monitoring children is not consistently recorded in the appropriate documents to ensure this information can be effectively used in future to inform the planning and children's next steps. As a result, staff are unable to use children's records effectively as a guide to the progress they are making or to identify where there may be causes for concern in children's development. This is also an area for ongoing improvement.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is requested 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):

- ensure records in place for recording existing injuries are shared with parents
- ensure the operational plan is regularly maintained with up-to-date information

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):

- Develop staff's understanding of the systems in place for recording children's progress and ensure records are regularly updated to accurately reflect where children are within their learning journey
- ensure the planning system covers all areas of learning, with particular regard to communication, language and literacy
- ensure consistent evaluations of activities take place and information gained recorded in children's records and used to inform future planning

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