



Ladybirds Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY240007
Inspection date	26 September 2006
Inspector	Suman Willis
Setting Address	Birch Centre, Hill End Lane, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0RA
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Registered person	Ladybirds Nursery Ltd
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 Nursery opened in 2003 and operates from seven rooms in a newly refurbished building. It is situated in Birch Centre on the Highfield Park Estate in St Albans. The building is leased from the Highfield Park Trust and the nursery have sole use, with nearby parking. The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 throughout the year except bank holidays. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 09.15 to 12.15, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 61 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 103 children on roll aged from birth to five years. Of these, 43 children receive funding for nursery education. Children can attend on a full time or part time basis. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 24 staff, 18 of the staff, including the managers, hold appropriate qualifications. The two nursery managers are qualified teachers. One member of staff is working towards a level 2 qualification. The nursery has completed the Hertfordshire Quality Standards and is currently undergoing re-accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have regular opportunities to take part in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities which contribute significantly to their physical development. For example children confidently express themselves to music and movement as they stretch and sway to music. They particularly enjoy their regular walks to the park and are given opportunities within a safe environment to practise more challenging tasks. Children competently negotiate obstacles when pedalling bikes. During topic work, they develop their knowledge and understanding about the importance of exercise and the changes that occur to their bodies after exercise. Babies enjoy developing their crawling, walking and reaching skills as staff provide appropriate support for their well-being. Children are able to rest and sleep according to their individual needs, therefore they are active and eager to participate in all activities.

Children stay healthy because of the effective policies and procedures implemented by staff. For example, a high level of staff are trained to administer emergency aid and staff have easy access to a first aid kit at all times. A clear sickness policy is shared and understood by parents thus ensuring that they are involved in ensuring children's health needs are met. Children are developing their knowledge of good hygiene practices because staff promote themselves as good role models. All areas are wiped clean with disinfectant by staff after use. Older children are rewarded with praise as they independently wash hands after toileting and younger children are fully supported by staff who are at hand to offer guidance. Consequently the risk of cross-infection is minimised.

Children are well nourished and benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy the social occasion of eating their packed lunches with their peers. Staff are at hand to offer support. Children stay healthy because staff have a good understanding of food hygiene and store food appropriately. Children's individual needs are very well met as food is clearly labelled with children's names thus ensuring that staff serve correct meals to the children. Children have independent access to fresh drinking water. Children are provided with fresh fruit and a choice of milk or water at snack time. They enjoy sharing their knowledge of where apples come from with staff and are delighted as they are praised. Children learn about healthy eating through topics such as 'about myself'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a child friendly environment; good displays of children's work and posters make them feel welcome and valued. All areas are utilised effectively to enable maximum use of the premises; for example, children in the Kingfisher and Starling rooms share facilities

to enable them to have a wider range of experiences. Children's safety is well maintained as staff carry out daily risk assessments in each room and a thorough risk assessment is made every six months. Informative risk assessments are completed for all outings. Staff effectively evaluate activities to ensure all children can participate safely. Good procedures are in place to ensure the premises are secure and that no unauthorised persons enter.

Children have access to a good range of resources which promote their development. Children in the pre-school are able to independently access a varied range of play materials which are stored in low level units. Units drawers are well labelled with pictures and words. Younger children are given a selection of toys, depending on what staff have planned. All resources promote development in all areas, are safe, and of good quality. Therefore, children are sufficiently challenged and are interested and motivated to learn through play. Resources are well maintained, and are checked for safety and hygiene. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they are reminded why it is important to walk and not run. They are shown how to use scissors safely and are given clear explanations on using ride-on toys to avoid accidents.

Children are safeguarded and their welfare generally well promoted because relevant procedures and documents are in place. Staff have a good understanding of child protection and know what actions to take should they have any concerns. However, as records of pre-existing injuries are not made, children could be put at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled. They develop confidence and self-esteem because they receive consistent levels of support. Children and staff develop a close relationship and children receive lots of praise and encouragement which helps them to develop trust and a strong sense of self. Younger children's learning is promoted by staff who are knowledgeable about the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff use the framework to plan and organise a broad range of activities that provide a balance of free play and more structured play opportunities. They use their observational skills to record and monitor the progress children are making. Younger children are given ample opportunities to develop their communication skills and enjoy singing familiar songs, such as 'Bob the builder'. Staff listen attentively to children as they attempt to say words. For example, one child is excited because he has seen a large lawn mower cutting the grass in the park, and points to the window saying 'tractor'. Staff respond positively as he is taken to the window and shown the cut grass. Toddlers enjoy sharing books as they sit cosily on soft cushions and are cuddled while being read to. Staff in the baby room use their observational skills and provide appropriate support. Consequently, children are excited to learn and make good progress. Children are beginning to distinguish between right and wrong as staff provide a calm and caring environment and encourage children to understand the needs of others. For example, a group of children line up in the corridor while getting ready to go out and are gently reminded by staff that babies are sleeping so everyone has to be quiet.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They plan a well

balanced and varied curriculum which is effectively evaluated. Staff get to know the children in their key groups and share information with other staff to ensure all children receive appropriate support in their learning. Observations of children's achievements are made regularly, and pictures of their work are also kept to monitor their development. Children's knowledge is constantly challenged by staff who are consistent and ask lots of extended questions using words such as 'why, how and what'. However, some learning opportunities are missed during daily routines to promote and extend children's learning further.

Children are increasing their gross and fine motor skills because they are provided with a wide range of activities. Children enjoy using a variety of tools which promote their small manipulative skills. They use scissors effectively to cut around shapes, and one child concentrates for sustained periods as she carefully traces around numbers, while a group of children enjoy painting and drawing. They move with confidence and control around the nursery.

Children behave responsibly, and they are delighted as they are given stickers for sitting and listening or for settling quickly. They feel valued and wear their stickers with pride. Children are familiar with boundaries and understand that when the tambourine is shaken they have to stop what they are doing and listen. Children are enthusiastic and supported by staff as they clear away toys. They have developed a very good relationship with staff and proudly invite them round to their houses. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they select toys, and are interested and eager to learn as they take part in their chosen activities.

Children are developing their communication, language and literacy skills. They enjoy being read to and make good links between the story 'Magic fish' and other familiar stories. Most children recognise their names and some competently write their own names while others are supported to write some of the letters in their names. Some children are able to use more complex language to describe their work. For example, one child describes what has happened to his picture as he has mixed dry powder paint with water explaining how the paint has dissolved because it has been mixed with water. All areas within the nursery are well labelled with words and pictures. Children enjoy independently practicing their writing skills as they access a wide range of writing materials from the low level unit. Children communicate well amongst themselves in the home corner as they give instructions to their friends, such as 'you hold that while I do this'.

Children show great enthusiasm as they learn to add and subtract. Children enjoy adding as staff use a hoop and tie scarves one by one. Children are asked the total as each scarf is tied on until they reach the number ten. They subtract one by one as scarves are taken off. Staff use their knowledge effectively to encourage children to problem solve. With support children count heads at group time, and use the maths area well to practice their measuring skills.

Children learn to explore different materials as they learn about floating and sinking, some correctly guessing that corks will float. They develop a good understanding of time as they talk about the days of week. For example, a group of children are shown a clock and told that in a minute it will be time to tidy up. Children demonstrate confidently their skills in technology as they play computer games under the supervision of adults. They use their imagination in role play and respond enthusiastically when exploring colour, texture and shape in painting activities. For example children enjoy creating pictures, using dry powder paint and mixed paint.

They develop a good understanding of painters and impressionists as they create own pictures. A group of children successfully build sand castles as they talk about their holidays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have regular opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world. They effectively use a variety of tools in the role play area to extend their knowledge of foods from around the world. For example, a group of children are engrossed as they make a stir fry in a wok. Children begin to appreciate the customs of other cultures through learning about festivals such as Diwali. They develop an excellent understanding of their community as they go for daily walks to the park, and visit local shops to link in with their topic work. Children are made to feel a sense of belonging because of the effective settling in procedures staff have implemented. Information is effectively shared with parents to ensure that children's individual needs are fully met. Children with learning or physical disabilities are fully integrated into the provision, their development is monitored and shared with parents. Appropriate strategies are in place to enable children with English as an additional language to settle and take an active part in the setting.

Children understand responsible behaviour because staff promote themselves as good role models. Children play well together and are taught to be polite to others. They are heard saying 'please' and 'thank you' when offered support, and food at snack time. Children are frequently given stickers for positive behaviour, which helps to reinforce good behaviour and promotes their self-esteem. They play and work harmoniously together with their peers and other adults. Children understand that they have to take turns and wait patiently as they queue to go for a walk. They are actively involved with other adults as they help to tidy away toys.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage and are encouraged to be involved in children's learning. Information about topics is included in the newsletter enabling parents to provide resources that children can bring and share with other children. Parents are invited to a consultation evening where they receive information about the progress their children are making. Parents are also involved in their children's learning by sharing books brought home from school. They have responded positively about the provision and have fed back how staff effectively share information about the progress their children are making. Parents also said that staff were very approachable, and caring.

The positive approach to promoting children's understanding of right and wrong, diversity in cultures and caring for others, helps to foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and welfare is very well promoted. The setting has effective procedures in place to ensure staff are suitably checked and hold appropriate qualifications. Children benefit from

the staff's ability to update their skills which they implement into their practice. Consequently children are cared for by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Most staff hold an early years qualification with some at degree level. The adult to child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. Group sizes and effective staff deployment contribute to children's good health, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Most documents to support the good practice are in place.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and staff team are clear about their roles and responsibilities and this underpins the smooth running of the group. Good induction procedures ensure that new staff settle with ease and reported that they are made to feel very much a part of the team. They all work very well together and share information effectively. Regular meetings ensure all staff are included and kept up to date. Training needs are constantly reviewed and promoted. The provision is pro-active in monitoring and evaluating their practice.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision agreed to give consideration to provide suitable seating in order to enhance the areas for the children to relax. Children have access to a range of soft cushions and beanbags and these are used effectively at different times in different rooms for children to relax when tired or when sharing books.

The pre-school agreed to give considerations for children to be given opportunities to initiate conversation, talk and express themselves freely. They do this throughout the day as staff ask lots of open ended questions during their free play; therefore, children are eager to learn.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection therefore have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- develop records to include details of any existing injuries when a child arrives.

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 enhance children's learning through every day routines.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk