



Ladybirds Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219245
Inspection date	02 October 2006
Inspector	Margaret Coyne
Setting Address	Bunyan Meeting Rooms, High Street Elstow, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK42 9XP
Telephone number	07740701359 Bev playleader
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Registered person	Elstow Ladybirds Pre School
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ladybirds Pre-School is a committee run group. It opened in September 1991 and operates in a village near Bedford in Bedfordshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open four days a week (not Thursdays) from 09:15 until 11:45 and from 12:30 until 15:00. Children have the opportunity to stay for a lunch club and to have either half day sessions or full day sessions. The group is open for approx 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 25 children from two years to under five years on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area which include surrounding villages and towns. The group have systems in place to support children with English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff. Of these one member of staff and the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The pre-school receives support from a qualified teacher and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable and clean environment. They are learning appropriate hygiene practices. For example, they wash their hands before snack, after being in the garden or having messy play time. Low-level steps enable children to reach the toilets and sinks which promotes their independence in this area. Children's health and safety is promoted because all of the staff are trained in first aid and the first aid box is appropriately stocked. Staff are confident they can administer first aid to the children to prevent them becoming distressed. Children's health is protected further by the high levels of cleanliness of the premises, toys and equipment, and the attention staff give to this in order to prevent cross-infection. However, the temperature of the fridge is not recorded to ensure food and drink can be stored safely for the children.

Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are documented and this includes all required written consents from parents to administer medication and to seek emergency treatment. Children have opportunity to try new tastes and experiences as they take part in some cooking activities and enjoy fruit and vegetable pieces at snack time. During imaginative play children discuss which foods are good for them. For example, they talk about their dinner being good but sweets are not. The group organises the snack time as a social event and children have time to help themselves to snacks, pour their own drinks and learn social skills and good manners. This promotes their independence and does not hinder their time at play. A lunch club is available for children to extend their hours and for those who stay all day. Parents provide healthy and nutritious lunch boxes for their child. They eat well and enjoy this social time as they engage in conversations about their lunches with their friends and the staff.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and coordination as they participate in activities such as using ride-on cars, a seesaw and the climbing and balancing frame. Children have developed good control and coordination as they explore new ways to move across the horizontal ladder using all fours, hands and knees or upside down. Extra skills are developed as they wind-up the voice recorder machine and race the cars on the wind up racing machine. The use of small equipment such as pencils, glue spreaders and small construction pieces aid the development of children's finer manipulative skills.

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 displayed and resources are arranged, prior to the children entering, for easy accessibility. Their safety is promoted as staff carry out daily risk assessments, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise

these. Children's play opportunities are maximised because they are able to move independently throughout the setting, making choices, using safe and well-maintained equipment which is suitable for their ages and abilities. High levels of supervision from staff ensures children can play and learn in a safe manner. This includes taking part in some cooking activities in the kitchen. Children's safety is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly sized tables and chairs. However, there is no provision available for children to have a sleep or rest when they stay all day. Children independently select toys and activities from an appropriate range of play materials. Staff regularly check these to ensure that they are clean and safe

Children gain a sound understanding of taking responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of sharing and taking turns. This is reinforced during group time as children join in discussions about safe play and enjoying themselves. For example, not throwing cushions and learning how to handle tools safely such as the hammers on the tack boards. Children help to tidy up their toys to avoid accidents and know not to run inside the hall in case they bump into another child or fall and hurt themselves. Road safety is practised when walking around the village so children gain an understanding of the 'Green Cross Code'. All fire safety procedures are adhered to and children gain an awareness of how to leave the hall in an emergency because they take part in regular practise sessions.

Children's welfare is soundly promoted as staff have an effective understanding of child protection procedures and have attended additional training to ensure that they are able to report and follow up any concerns. All supporting records, literature and documents are in place for the protection of children and the policy gives a clear indication of the procedures to follow in the event of any allegations made against staff or any concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the pre-school, enter confidently and readily participate in the activities provided. Their personal development and self-confidence are consistently promoted because staff treat all children as individuals, interacting and offering appropriate support. Staff sit at the children's level and join in enthusiastically with their play and conversations, enhancing children's self-esteem and self-reliance. For example, a member of staff sits with the children while they make patterns and shapes with the hammer tack boards, they talk about the shapes and pictures they create and incorporate counting and colour recognition. Other adults join children as they play in the role play home corner readily discussing the food the children cook, leading this on to discussions about healthy eating. Staff know when to step back and let children lead the activity but are on hand to support and extend their play. New children settle with ease because staff ensure they have an induction period where they get to know the setting and routines and because staff are sensitive and caring towards the children. For example, a member of staff comforts a child who is upset when mum leaves. She helps the adult to lock the door after mum and tells her 'mum will be back soon', while giving comfort. The child soon becomes confident to leave the member of staff and goes to explore the activities on offer. Children's interest is maintained and their natural curiosity

encouraged because they are generally able to freely access the resources, exploring these and determining their own play. Staff pay attention to getting to know the children and make suitable use of open-ended questions to encourage them to think further and extend their knowledge.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is now available and staff are looking at systems to incorporate this into their planning and observations of children. Younger children are confident with their communication skills as they start to join in with discussions and can make their needs known. They are starting to listen to instruction and enjoy having stories read to them by the staff or other children. Younger children are competent learners because they take part in hands on experiences in many areas of their play. For example, they create, using textured rollers to apply the paint and then make marks in the role play areas as they 'write' shopping lists. Children spend time in different roles as they act out familiar scenarios such as vacuuming, laying the table and cooking.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage. They combine this with their experience and knowledge of child development. Children's progress is generally balanced as staff have developed effective planning and assessment methods. The planning is comprehensive in most areas and covers all aspects of the early learning goals. Children's assessments and development records gain clear information of each child's starting points to give staff an indication of what children can achieve. This is followed through with observations and comments on their progress through the stepping stones. Pieces of the children's work are included to demonstrate some examples of their progress. The planning gives sufficient detail to enable staff to easily relate children's individual development to all areas of learning and shows differentiations, adult focussed activities and child initiated play.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in an appropriate range of activities. These include regular opportunities to engage in role play, construction, outdoor activities and a wide range of creative activities such as sticking, using different textures and techniques such as textured rollers to apply paint. Children's knowledge is further extended as they explore the local area looking at the shapes in the older houses, and discovering squirrels and birds. They have enjoyed a visit to a butterfly park and experience how things grow and change through topics with tadpoles and frogs. However, children have few opportunities to discover how things work or to use information technology or programmable toys to extend their learning in this area. Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts and talk about personal events. For example, children happily connect home and family, talk about outside interests such as ballet lessons and can describe how the empty fabric conditioner bottle smells like flowers.

Children have opportunities for mark making and to develop early writing skills. For example, a child pretends to write a shopping list in the role play area and children are encouraged to attempt to write their name on their art work. Most children can now find their own name card at registration and before snacks, and staff reinforce early word recognition and phonic sounds

as they sound out the first letters in their names and use the alphabet cards around the room. However, familiar objects are not labelled round the room to extend this knowledge and interest. Children thoroughly enjoy stories in large group times and in smaller groups and they handle the books well. However, a limited amount of books are laid out for the children's enjoyment of reading books for pleasure. Children are developing the skills required for future learning. For example, they show curiosity when playing, explore resources such as play dough, glitter and construction and talk about what they discover.

Children are developing their understanding of different mathematical concepts as they discover the meaning of numbers. For example, by counting people in toy cars, counting beads as they thread them and working out how many bricks to add to a tower to make them as tall as themselves. They use numbers in song to gain an understanding of simple adding and subtraction. They are beginning to use mathematical language when playing, describing bigger and smaller items and discussing shapes. However, their mathematical learning is not fully developed through hands on practical experiences and self-exploration using a variety of equipment each day. Children's physical development is well promoted. They are developing an awareness of different forms of movement through group activities such as using the parachute to create intended movements as they join in making it rise or fall. Their confidence in the outside area is enhanced by the child friendly, safe equipment in place such as the climbing frame, seesaw, bikes and interesting voice recorder, bell machine and car racing machine. Children's dexterity and hand to eye coordination is extended by the one-handed tools such as pencils, brushes, scissors and stapler and as they build train tracks, manipulate play dough and construct with blocks and bricks.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a good range of opportunities that promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Chinese New Year, Diwali and Christmas. Staff have positive attitudes and present themselves as sensitive role models while valuing each child and their individualism. This helps children relate to others and gain a positive understanding of the needs of others. Children access an abundance of resources which extend their understanding of different cultures as they dress up, cook, use musical instruments and look at books which depict different faiths. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Effective systems are implemented to support children with any special needs. Activities can be adapted to include all children, and staff are clearly committed to the support of each child.

Children have a good awareness of the boundaries within the pre-school and respond to direction from staff. They respond well to the consistent approach followed by all staff and this impacts clearly on children's security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children develop self-esteem as they are able to resolve differences and gain an understanding between right and wrong. The boundaries are reinforced with the children at group time as staff go over simple rules such as being kind to others, not throwing toys or cushions and sharing together. Staff help children learn that their play and learning can be fun as they use positive language and inject humour into situations which children can relate to.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is a commitment to involving parents in the setting and in their children's care, learning and play. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through daily dialogue, newsletters and consultation days with key workers. There is a comprehensive prospectus for parents which gives details of some of the policies and procedure, activities and the National Curriculum enabling parents to understand the setting and how their children learn through play. Staff are friendly and approachable creating a happy atmosphere for parents and children. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child. Additional information is available for parents with a handout showing the forthcoming activities planned to help them extend these at home and enter into a dialogue with their child about the activities they are involved in. This further supports the relationships between the parents, children and pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are offered a range of play opportunities because staff organise the play space effectively allowing them the freedom to move safely and independently from one activity to another. This enables children to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted through the staff's practical knowledge of the pre-school's policies and procedures which are well implemented throughout their daily practice. There are sound procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a secure induction and appraisal system for new and existing staff and that all checks are carried out to maintain children's safety and well-being.

Children's overall welfare and development are supported by the active involvement of the committee who work with staff to review practice and ensure that the group is able to meet the needs of all children. They are fully aware of their responsibilities to the children and are actively involved in many aspects of the organisation of the group including fund raising, reviewing and organisation of documents, and with recruitment and appraisals for staff. Policies and procedures and the operational plan have recently been reviewed and contain appropriate detail to enable staff to respond confidently to any situation. Records and documents are extremely well-organised to support the efficient running of the group with all records kept in a confidential manner, secure and up-to-date. The notice board in the entrance hall provides parents with information such as the registration certificate, insurance details and photographs of the staff team. All of these extra details contribute to the overall organisation, and supports children's feelings of well-being, trust and security.

The leadership and management is good. The manager and staff act as good role models and staff are motivated and enthusiastic. The management team recognises that each member of staff brings different experiences and strengths to enrich the educational program for the children. Staff are encouraged to attend additional training. This ensures they can continually update their knowledge in order to provide appropriate care, learning and play for all children. Sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities. Children are given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Staff meet regularly to plan future work, ensuring that the needs of individual children are met and the development

of all children is promoted. An inclusive environment has been created which clearly shows that each child matters. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to develop their procedures to ensure children's welfare and safety with regard to risk assessments, to implement daily routines, to develop the operational plan and to review the policies and procedures. Three key issues were also raised and the provider agreed to implement these. To ensure the curriculum is balanced across all areas of learning to sustain the educational program, to ensure planning supports and challenges older and more able children and to improve the program for knowledge and understanding of the world.

These actions, recommendations and key issues have been implemented. A risk assessment is now in place to protect the children and to minimize areas of harm. This will be further extended now a member of staff has undertaken training in this area. Daily routines help children to feel settled and to know what activities are available for the day. The operational plan and the policies and procedures have been reviewed to ensure they are consistent with any changes to the National Standards and current legislation. The curriculum planning shows a good balance across all areas of learning to enable children to make progress. Planning has been updated to clearly show how differentiation has been incorporated to challenge and stimulate the older or more able children. The planning for knowledge and understanding of the world has been greatly improved now the staff are more confident after accessing training for the Foundation Stage. This is still an area to extend for the children with regard to information technology and programmable toys.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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

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

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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):

- devise a system to check and record the fridge temperature on a daily basis
- ensure provision is made for those children attending all day who wish to relax or sleep.

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):

- extend the use of labels around the room to increase children's awareness of word recognition with familiar objects and ensure they have access to an appropriate range of books to extend their enjoyment of reading for pleasure
- ensure children's mathematical development is extended through hands on practical experiences and self exploration using a variety of equipment
- increase opportunities for children to gain an understanding of information technology and provide more opportunities for them to use programmable toys to increase their awareness of how things work.

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