



Ladybird Pre-school Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306418
Inspection date	19 October 2006
Inspector	Sheila May Price
Setting Address	99 Woodchurch Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH42 9LJ
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Registered person	Ladybird Playgroup Committee c/o Mrs R O'Loughlin
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Ladybird Pre-school has been operating for 20 years and is run by a voluntary management committee. The provision has its own self-contained unit within Woodchurch Road Primary School in Birkenhead. The playroom has integral toilet and kitchen facilities. There is a secure outdoor play area. The pre-school operates weekdays and term times only, with morning sessions from 09.05 to 11.35 and afternoon sessions from 12.35 to 15.05. It is registered to care for a maximum of 20 children at any one time aged from two to five years. Children normally start attending when they are three years old.

There are currently 36 children on roll of whom all receive funding for nursery education. The provision employs eight members of staff to work with the children. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The provision participates in an endorsed quality assurance scheme called 'Effective Early Learning'.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children follow good hygiene practices and learn how to keep healthy. They wash their hands before eating, practice blowing their noses, and remember to put used paper towels and tissues in the bins to keep the room clean. They appreciate that washing removes dirt that spreads germs. The premises and equipment are kept clean and safe. All staff have a current first aid certificate to deal with emergencies and parents are well informed of the sickness policy to prevent the spread of infection.

The staff have good knowledge of food hygiene procedures and ensure that food is prepared safely. They are well informed of children's individual health and dietary needs and follow thorough procedures for children's safety at snack times. Children eat nutritious snacks which include fruit or crunchy vegetables for a healthy diet. They learn about good dental care from topics and can have dental milk with parents consent. They learn to recognise when they are thirsty, such as after vigorous exercise, and have their own labelled water bottles available to drink from whenever they wish.

Children enjoy a good balance of fresh air and exercise. They make good progress in their physical development as they take part in a range of activities and use good resources to develop strength, balance and coordination. For example, they play a variety of aiming and catching games, use wheeled toys, and climb up and over large equipment. When children move to music they move safely within restricted space learning to be aware of the movements of others.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a very well organised and welcoming environment. The room is attractively set out into areas of learning which are cleverly linked for extending activities and is well equipped. Children particularly enjoy snuggling up in the rainbow canopied reading area. Displays are colourful and reflect the topics children have covered. They access equipment with ease and have a very good range of choices to select from. The outdoor play area is well designed and has a new shelter for sunny or rainy days.

Good security is maintained at the door during times of arrival and departure. Staff deploy themselves effectively to keep children well supervised at all times. The integral toilets are suitably located for children to gain independence in their personal care without disrupting levels of staff supervision. Risk assessments are thorough and revised in differing circumstances so that children are always safe. Good systems are in place for maintaining the premises and equipment in a suitable state of repair.

Children are safeguarded well. They develop the confidence to express their feelings and to ask for help because staff are good listeners and respect what the children have to say. Children learn to make choices within safe boundaries. When children become over boisterous they are told how their behaviour might affect the safety of others. All staff have attended recent child

protection training and are fully conversant with the comprehensive child protection policy and procedures for the safeguarding of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle in very well to their first term at playgroup because the staff use good methods to make them welcome and to meet their individual needs. Children soon learn what is expected of them with a simple registration routine that is over with quickly but also teaches them skills of independence, such as learning to hang up their own coats. Children are happy to say goodbye to their parents when reassured that they will see them later. They build good relationships under the care of the friendly staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards early learning goals. Activities are well planned and linked to topics to help children make connections. Plans very effectively cover all areas of learning. Staff are deployed effectively to support continuous learning as children select their own resources to play with. While children are playing staff make detailed observations of the learning that is taking place which is recorded for future reference. They use children's interests to motivate them well, such as their love of nursery rhymes. Staff skilfully set different children challenges according to their capabilities through appropriate questioning and suggestions. For example, in the role play area they use simple naming games to help some children learn basic vocabulary while giving other children complex instructions to follow that challenges their listening skills.

Children make a good start in learning skills for reading and writing. They are helped to find their own name card to hang up with their coats and when taking turns to sit at the table for snack time. Children begin to identify the initial letters of their name and to say the letter sound in helping them to read. They use the resources on the writing table to draw pictures and are encouraged to write their names in a card. Staff join children in the reading corner to share books, looking at the pictures and telling the stories. Some children have remembered the Rama and Sita story so well that they confidently retell the story, explaining about the good and bad key characters.

Children are developing an interest in mathematics and problem solving. They enjoy learning about pairs by sorting socks and making animals go two by two into Noah's Ark. They gain an awareness of pattern and shape as they use the peg boards and create tessellations with shapes on the floor, or build with the bricks. They learn to count during every day activities, such as putting out the cups and plates. Staff set children challenging questions, such as asking 'How many more' or 'less' and 'How many altogether' to encourage them to think and calculate.

Children love to explore the world around them and say 'Look what I've discovered'. They play with a magnetic construction set, fascinated by the way the ends sometimes attract and sometimes repel. Staff suggest things to find out such as, how long they can make the links before the pieces drop off. Children learn to use technical equipment such as the computer mouse and key board. They monitor changes in the weather with their own weather chart and

learn to appreciate the passing of the seasons. Children explore colour and texture through a range of activities, and move expressively to Indian music. Sometimes staff direct children's art and craft work too much to allow scope for individuality. All children play imaginatively in the role play area and explore materials creatively.

Staff monitor how children are progressing through continual observation and periodical assessments which are recorded against the stepping stones towards early learning goals. This helps staff identify gaps in children's learning or areas for more consolidation, to inform them what to plan next. They are in the process of reviewing planning systems to plan less far ahead and develop ideas, more from learning opportunities that arise from children's choices and interests during continuous provision.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children make a good contribution to what goes on at the playgroup. They make decisions as to what they play with and when they eat. They keep the place tidy by hanging up their coats and helping to put things away at clearing up time. Children take pride in their achievements, proudly showing others the holders they have made for the candles at Divali. Through this they gain confidence and self-esteem.

Children successfully develop social skills, such as sharing and taking turns and learn to appreciate the effect of their behaviour on others. This is because staff act as good role models by being positive, calm and friendly and set clear boundaries by discussing with children the playgroup's code of behaviour. This is also displayed prominently for parents, staff and visitors to encourage consistency. When appropriate the staff use a reward system to positively re-enforce good behaviour.

Staff assess children's individual needs very well and use this to ensure all are equally included in activities, working closely in partnership with parents. They call in expert advice before making adaptations to the premises to include children with visual impairment. The system for identifying and monitoring the progress of children with suspected learning difficulties works effectively so that prompt action is taken to seek help and advice. Children are learning to have positive attitudes towards others as they use persona dolls to discuss similarities and differences and learn to appreciate diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Very good relationships are fostered which helps parents feel confident to share information about their child with the staff. Parents are given good information about the playgroups operational plan and they in turn sign that they have understood the playgroup's policies and procedures. Information about the early learning goals is simply conveyed through an introductory leaflet and the stepping stones individually explained to parents after their child has successfully settled in. Records of progress are officially shared at two further points during the year but parents are comfortable to discuss their child's progress at any time they wish. Parents receive a news letter about the topics being covered and any special events. They make a contribution to children's learning through coming with them on trips or bringing in resources. Parents make very positive comments about the friendliness and

flexibility of the staff and how their children have made good progress and enjoyed themselves at the playgroup.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The managers are very experienced and suitably qualified for providing care and education. They devise well written policies and procedures and ensure these are followed well by staff for children's safety and welfare. Systems for progressing checks on new staff and committee members for children's protection are adequate but slow to complete. All regulatory documents are well maintained to safeguard children. Good ratios of staff to children are maintained, which enables individual needs to be met.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. All staff work very well together as a team to promote children's learning and development. There is good organisation of space, resources, time and grouping, which contributes to children's enjoyment and achievement. There are good evaluation and monitoring systems in place to ensure that the educational programme is being suitably covered and to highlight areas for further improvement. This has resulted in recommendations from the last inspection being generally met well and further improvements have been made in the outdoor play area. The managers are working well with early years advisors to further develop their planning and assessment systems. The training programme covers health and safety issues well.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendations arising from the last inspection of care and two key issues from the inspection of nursery education. These related to behaviour management strategies, induction processes, and providing opportunities for children to solve mathematical problems during practical activities.

The induction process has been further developed and is in two parts covering an initial induction which focuses on issues, such as health, safety, child protection and behaviour management with further reading of policies to support understanding of other key policies including equal opportunities. The manager has also devised a training and induction booklet in behaviour management strategies and used it initially for discussion purposes and for new staff. This means that children's behaviour is now being more effectively managed.

Plans for continuous learning indicate how children can develop mathematical thinking in any of the learning areas, provided staff focus on these opportunities. Staff now notice more opportunities to set children mathematical problems to solve during play activities and every day routines. As a result children have more practice in developing their problem solving skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there 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 provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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 systems for monitoring completion of checks on suitability for staff and committee members.

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 ways for children to express their individual ideas and responses to experiences through art and craft materials.

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