



Littlebourne Ladybirds Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127346
Inspection date	19 January 2007
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane
Setting Address	Church Road, Littlebourne, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 1XS
Telephone number	01227 722955 or 832143
E-mail	
Registered person	Littlebourne Community Childcare Centre
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?

Littlebourne Ladybirds Pre-School is managed by a committee. It opened in 1996. It operates from a mobile building in the grounds of Littlebourne Primary School, a few miles outside Canterbury. A maximum of 30 children may attend the centre at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00, term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 54 children aged from two to under five years on roll; of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The centre currently supports children with special educational needs.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The centre receives support from an Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning to keep themselves clean because staff remind them to wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before they have a snack. Gentle reminders from staff help children to learn about cleanliness, for example, they are asked not to eat food that has fallen on the floor. In the toilet area, pictures of hand-washing reinforce the message that this is important. The majority of the staff hold current paediatric first aid qualifications, and so have the knowledge to care for children appropriately in an emergency. Thorough and clear accident and medication records further protect children.

A strong emphasis is placed on providing children with nutritious snacks, such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Children serve themselves, and chat with staff, so they are learning that healthy food is important. Following this inspection, staff intend to give more thought to the salt content of spreads.

Children play in the fresh air frequently, as there is free flow to the stimulating outside play area, and they love digging, running and climbing in their warm clothes and boots. They can burn up energy running freely on the school's playing field. Indoors, small muscle development is promoted as children become adept at activities such as construction and threading.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit greatly from a really child-friendly and stimulating environment. Whenever weather permits, there is free flow to the outside area, where children love digging in the soil and pretending to be workmen. Indoors, an emphasis on self-selection enables children to initiate their own play and develop their own activities, for example, choosing a box of toy food to support their role play. The indoor and outdoor environments are set out with a great deal of thought, and plans of these areas show that children have access to toys and equipment covering all areas of learning. For example, children select items such as binoculars from the science box, enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the world.

The premises are safe and secure: for example, chemicals are on high shelves, and staff make sure they recognise visitors through the window before opening the door. Careful and safe procedures further protect children, for example, staff carry out a head-count as children come in from the garden. Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe; a chat at circle time helped children to understand the need to wear hats during certain activities, such as when in the sun or when riding a motorbike.

The member of staff who has responsibility for child protection is knowledgeable about issues and procedures. This means that she will be able to act in the best interests of children, if she

has concerns. For example, she has quick access to information about child protection, knows where to refer concerns, and would discuss worries appropriately with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and ready to learn, initiating their own learning, confidently making choices, concentrating and persevering and really enjoying purposeful play. The role play area is especially well used, and here staff are skilled at helping children develop their imaginations. Children are forming positive relationships with staff and their peers, playing together cooperatively, and showing understanding of each other's feelings. The promotion of children's independence is a strength within the pre-school. Older and more able children find their own coats and boots, and dress to go outside, and children select from well-organized and accessible resources to plan and develop their own play experiences.

Staff are using the Birth to three matters framework in the provision of activities for children aged under three years. The environment is planned so that all aspects of young children's emotional and intellectual development are promoted, and staff adapt activities to their developmental level. In addition, at various times during the day, these young children are separated from the older ones to take part in small group activities with close adult attention, for example, threading beads or listening to a simple story in the cosy reading area.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the learning intention of activities. Furthermore, they competently adapt activities to meet the differing needs of children. For example, when playing with rice and pasta in the tray, younger children are encouraged to explore, whilst older children are encouraged to develop their vocabulary, discussing textures and measures. The planning of activities effectively ensures that all areas of learning are given equal weight, so children are experiencing activities promoting their all-round development, and it is a helpful tool to make sure the room and the outside area are set up effectively with purposeful activities.

Observations of the children are carried out, and appropriately linked to the stepping stones, and they are very well-presented with photographs in the children's record books. However, staff are currently working towards using these to plan formally for individual children's next steps, as at the moment this is done informally, relying on staffs good knowledge of individual children, and their ability to adapt activities for children of different levels and abilities.

Staff have a good understanding of how children learn, and all staff are equally skilled at progressing children's learning, and they work consistently. For example, adult interaction is very good: they extend and develop children's learning well by asking good questions to make them think, to help them to use their imaginations, and to increase their vocabulary. There is an effective balance between adult directed activities, and child initiated activities, so children can control their own learning, concentrate and persevere, working at their own speed. The

children's environment is very well organised to support children's learning: plans show that staff have carefully thought through which areas of learning should be promoted in each area, both inside and outside. Therefore, children have good opportunities to explore and investigate, and learn at their own pace, make choices, explore and experiment. Staff made good use of unexpected opportunities for learning, and respond well to children's interests. For example, a child made a train from a row of chairs, and children then visited an imaginary zoo, discussing the animals and organising a picnic.

As a result of good teaching, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals: Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. They act very independently, for example, confidently pouring their own drinks and buttering their own crackers. They are making firm friendships with their peers, reading to each other, and negotiating during construction activities. They are eager to learn, and settled enough to make the most of the purposeful play opportunities available to them. Children make good progress in their imaginary play, in the areas of creative development. Staff provide a well-resourced role play area, and support it well, so children make maximum use of this area. For example, they enthusiastically take a train to the zoo to talk about the animals, and discuss what they need for a picnic. Staff skilfully include counting and mathematical language into most activities, so children are beginning to understand numbers. For example, a child charged another seventeen pounds for some food in the role play area. Songs, such as 'five little ones in a flying saucer' introduce the children to simple calculation.

Children's interest in the world around them is encouraged, for example, when they choose binoculars from the science box, and look to see what is bigger or smaller. They are learning to investigate and reason. Staff refer to pictures on a time line, helping children to learn the significance of time. Children readily find their favourite books, and 'read' and recall the story, running a finger under the words, starting to understand that print conveys meaning. Children enjoy songs: two boys sang 'Bob the builder' in loud voices, looking at each other and laughing. They are starting to recognise their own names, because there are regular opportunities to do this, for example, when they find their name at snack time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met, because the staff know the children well and respond to their interests. Children are learning about their local environment when staff make the most of opportunities to chat to them; for example, about where their houses are. Topics such as 'people who help us' help children learn about different types of people in society. Children who need help with the transition between pre-school and school have the continued support of familiar playgroup staff to help them feel secure when they enter the reception class.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) liaises closely with other agencies, for example, speech therapists. The good staff ratio enables daily one-to-one time with children with learning difficulties and disabilities, enhancing their progress. Regular discussion with parents enables staff and parents to work in partnership to meet the individual needs of children.

Children are beginning to understand right and wrong when staff talk to them about using kind language, and demonstrate this by example. For example, a child spontaneously apologised when he accidentally hit another child. Games, such as a card game where children compile shopping lists, encourage turn-taking and fairness. Good behaviour is promoted effectively, for example, a child felt valued and important when given the responsibility of carrying the story sack. The good staff : child ratio means that one-to-one support is available for children when necessary.

Partnership with parents is good.

Daily activities are clearly written on large pieces of paper and displayed for parents, for example, the story which has been read to children, and the main activities. This enable parents to continue children's learning at home. Colourful displays, illustrated with photographs, about the early learning goals, and the Birth to three matters framework informs parents about the curriculum. Newsletters also show parents links between the topics and the Foundation Stage. Parents chat to staff daily, but also have opportunities to discuss their children's progress with their keyworkers at open evenings. Parents are welcome to stay and settle their children, and new parents are shown around the setting and made welcome. Complaints against the setting have been recorded and investigated, but there are minor omissions in records.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff deployment is a strength. Staff plan their time very well, so that they are usually working directly with the children. The staff ratio is above the minimum expected, so children receive good support, and one to one attention is possible. They skilfully support activities, but know when to leave children to develop their own play. The minimum amount of time is spent maintaining the activities, as children are enabled to self-select the resources which they need for their play. All staff have a positive attitude towards gaining qualifications and attending short training courses: those who are unable to attend receive the information at staff meetings.

All documentation required for the efficient running of the pre-school is in place and correctly maintained. For example, the record of attendance provides an accurate record of who is on the premises at any one time.

The quality of leadership and management is good.

The manager has a very clear view of the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses, for example, she is currently considering making more effective use of observations to guide planning of activities and meet individual needs. The pre-school is keen to take part in local projects, such as 'The environment as the third teacher'. As a result, children have benefited from new and interesting ideas to improve the environment, and the quality of play experiences. Staff have input into weekly staff meetings, where some children's individual needs are discussed in order to inform the planning of activities. The success of the nursery education programme is also

discussed and evaluated at these meetings, so play experiences which children generally enjoyed are developed and included in future planning.

The pre-school meets the needs of the children for whom care and education are provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to ensure that the times of children's arrivals and departures are recorded. Children are now safer, as there is an accurate record of who is on the premises at any one time. They also agreed to include Ofsted's contact details in the written statement made available to parents of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint. The regulator's contact details are clearly displayed on the parents' notice board, keeping them informed. Finally, the provider agreed to extend children's independence at snack times. Children now benefit from choosing their own snacks, pouring their own drinks, buttering crackers, and taking their snacks to the table.

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 complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 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 that the record of complaints contains all the recommended details.

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 the use of observations to inform the planning based on children's interests, what they know, can do and need to learn next.

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