

Milborne Ladybirds Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY217717
Inspection date	14 February 2007
Inspector	Dinah Round
Setting Address	Milborne St Andrew Village Hall, Milborne St Andrew, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 0JX
Telephone number	07766 572195
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Registered person	Milborne Ladybirds Playgroup Committee
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Milborne Ladybirds playgroup registered in 2002 and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. It operates from the village hall in Milborne St Andrew, in Dorset, and serves the small rural community. Children have use of the main hall with toilet and wash basin facilities accessible off this room. There is a separate kitchen situated off the hall. A small area outside the hall is cordoned off for outdoor play and the group also make use of the adjacent playing field.

The group is open every morning during school term time, with sessions from 09:15 until 11:45. A lunch club operates on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:45 until 12:45. The group is registered for a maximum of 20 children at any one time. Children from the age of two years to five years attend the playgroup. There are currently 16 children on role, of these 13 children receive government funding for nursery education. The group support children who have special education needs.

A team of three paid staff work with children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two voluntary workers who assist staff on a daily basis. The group receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the daily routines and are developing independence in using the facilities provided. For example, children have a clear understanding why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff reinforce this well through cooking activities so children learn that they wash their hands to get rid of germs. Children benefit from the effective measures followed by staff to minimise the risk of cross-infection, such as the provision of paper towels and disposable tissues, with tables cleaned before snack and individual plates provided.

Children learn about healthy eating through topic work and discussion, for example, they have made their own juice from oranges and a juicer. Staff talk about fruit and vegetables being good for you and children enjoy trying different tastes, such as noodles and prawn crackers during Chinese New Year. Children show great excitement as they experiment with chopsticks to taste the rice with peas and ham, and comment 'it's very difficult' and 'yummy rice'. Children are offered drinks of milk at snack time and some parents provide labelled containers of juice as an alternative. Drinking water is available throughout the session and children know to ask for a drink if they get thirsty.

Children are involved in a good range of activities to promote their physical development through both indoor and outdoor activities. They have opportunities to practise skills in climbing, balancing, playing ball games and riding bikes. Children develop their fine motor skills well as they use a range of small tools and equipment during their play such as, paint brushes, chalks and rolling pins. They show good control and care as they use the knives to cut up the ham and banana at snack time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from high levels of supervision by the staff to make sure they are safe. For example, staff closely supervise the external door during arrival and collection times. Children learn about keeping themselves safe during activities through the clear guidance provided by staff. This includes giving children gentle reminders to use the steps to access the stage safely and explaining the importance of listening carefully to instructions during the cooking activity. Some risk assessments are carried out to identify potential risks to children, however, this does not include outings children take part in. Regular fire safety practices make sure that both children and staff know what to do if they have to leave the building in an emergency.

Children move around the room freely and with confidence as they choose their activities. The room is arranged well into various areas of play which ensures children can access the resources safely. Children have access to a good range of age appropriate furniture and equipment which is clean and well maintained.

Staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues which helps them in their role of safeguarding children. A child protection policy is in place and made available to parents, however, it does not clearly detail procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the warm and welcoming environment created by staff. They have positive relationships with adults and each other, and take turns and co-operate well during the activities. Staff are friendly and caring, they are sensitive to children's individual needs and offer support and reassurance to help less confident children settle. This helps children feel secure. Activities are rotated and provide a wide range of interesting play opportunities that cover all areas of learning. For example, children eagerly take part in the cooking activity for their snack which generates lots of excitement and discussion with comments, such as 'I can't wait to eat this'. Staff get involved with the activities and spend time talking and listening to the children to promote their development. However, staff are less clear of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and though some assessments have been introduced, this is not linked with the planning to further support children's learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The team of qualified staff use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan a interesting range of learning opportunities. Planning identifies key activities but it does not link to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, or include sufficient details how activities can be organised for more or less able children. This means activities are not always geared to children's abilities to help them reach their full potential. For example, an activity to make 'lanterns' was too difficult for many children. Children's progress is regularly monitored and recorded through on-going assessments and observations. Effective consideration is given to the grouping of children at story time which allows children to concentrate for longer. Children respond well to the staff's positive approach to behaviour, such as to use their 'listening ears' at story time.

Most children come into the group with confidence. They show independence as they wash and dry their hands and enjoy having the responsibility to hand round the fruit at snack time. Although, the full opportunities for children to develop their independence is not always maximised. For example, drinks are poured out for the children by staff and art and craft activities are often very adult led. Children are developing awareness of themselves as members of the community through topics covered and visitors to the group, such as the library van, the postman and people with animals.

Children use language well to communicate. They happily chat to each other and staff about events in their lives, some are confident to speak in a group. For example, children listen with interest as a child talks about the 'secret diary' she writes in which has a padlock and key. Children join in enthusiastically with the nursery rhymes and enjoy the opportunity to choose their favourite one. Children handle books with care, and listen carefully to the group stories of 'Chopsticks' and 'Lanterns and Firecrackers'

Children have opportunities to count through planned activities including games, songs and cooking activities. For example, most children are able to count up to 10 at registration time. Children are introduced to simple problem solving through daily routines and practical activities. For example, children work out that they only have two stools and need one more as there are three children taking part in the cooking activity.

Children gain an understanding about nature through planned topics, such as planting and caring for sunflower seeds and looking for insects. They learn about changes during cooking

activities as they feel the 'hard' rice and observe the difference once it has been cooked in hot water. Children have opportunities to learn how to operate simple equipment, such as tape-recorder and the V-tech smart book. Children use their senses to explore materials such as rice, paint, play dough and shaving foam. They have regular opportunities to take part in craft activities, however, these are generally adult led with an end product required. This provides limited opportunities for children to freely use their imagination and initiate their own ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals. Photographs of children involved in activities are displayed which promotes a sense of belonging in the group. Consideration is given to children's individual needs and staff ensure that all children have opportunities to take part in the activities. The Senco (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) attends training to continue to update her knowledge. Staff identify when children need additional support and work alongside parents and other professionals to ensure that children's needs are met, such as adapting the environment and activities.

Children learn about different cultures and the wider world as they take part in activities relating to celebrations such as 'Chinese New Year'. For example, they happily dance under the Chinese dragon costume and use chopsticks as they enjoy tasting noodles and rice. This provides children with fun and interesting first hand experiences. Children take part in local community events such as, making decorations for the tree in the local church at Christmas. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are well behaved and co-operate together well. They eagerly join in tidying up and enjoy helping each other. Children are learning to share, take turns and think of others. For example, they wait patiently during registration to talk about the item they have brought in for 'show and tell'. Staff provide good role models and children benefit from their regular praise and encouragement. This helps to build their self-esteem and promote good behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive appropriate information about the setting through the playgroup prospectus and the termly newsletters informing them of events. They are invited to be involved in decisions about their child's care and learning by being on the committee. Parents have opportunities to exchange information about their child through daily informal discussions with staff. This contributes towards meeting children's individual needs. However, parents are not fully informed of how their child is progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Parents are provided with some basic information about the activities, however, there is little information of how they can support their child's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children enjoy a friendly and welcoming environment. Staff make effective use of space and resources to ensure children are able to move around freely and safely. Children are provided with a wide range of play experiences during the sessions, however, staff do not make use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to extend learning outcomes for younger children. The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children are cared for by a small, experienced team of staff who work together well. Staff have regular meetings to share information and discuss planning of activities. Policies and procedures are in place, however, some are not sufficiently detailed and staff do not always follow procedures through in practice. Documentation and records are well organised and kept secure and confidential. The committee organise fund-raising events which contributes towards the improvement of the provision and equipment used by the children. The playgroup enjoy close links with the school which helps children's transition as they move on to school.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to update their child protection policy, make a complaints procedure available to parents and increase children's access to resources reflecting diversity. The group's complaints procedure is now made available to parents through the policy folder. The child protection procedure is being updated, however, it does not include a procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member as staff. The group have purchased further resources, such as books, puzzles and dolls so that children have greater access to resources reflecting diversity.

Nursery education

At the last inspection the group agreed to increase opportunities to develop children's curiosity; to increase opportunities for children to use mathematics in everyday activities; and to develop children's awareness of other cultures. Children now have greater opportunities to experiment and explore through activities and resources, such as using magnifying glasses and egg timers. The Supervisor has provided in-house training and guidance sheets for staff highlighting ways to promote mathematics with children, and this is now incorporated within everyday activities. Children's awareness of other cultures has been developed further through visitors to the group and particular topics.

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 to 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):

- increase staff's understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this to develop planning to improve the learning outcomes for children
- update documentation to include clear written details of a lost children policy, child protection procedures and risk assessments for outings

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 planning linked to the stepping stones, to ensure it reflects learning objectives to help children to reach their full potential
- increase opportunities for children to use their imagination and initiate their own ideas in creative activities
- develop effective systems for sharing children's progress records with parents.

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