



## Locking Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115276
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Timothy Butcher
<b>Setting Address</b>	Locking Village Hall, Grenville Avenue, Locking, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 8AR
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<b>Registered person</b>	Locking Pre-School Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Locking Pre-School playgroup is a committee run pre-school group that operates from the village hall in Locking near to Weston-super-Mare and serves the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 41 children from three to five years on roll which includes 39 funded three and four-year-old children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens four days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09.15 to 12.15 and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Friday afternoons from 13.15 to 15.45.

Five part-time members of staff work with the children. Two members of staff hold early years qualifications to level 3 and two members of staff are working towards a level 3 qualification. The pre-school supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The setting receives support from the local authority. Parents serve on the voluntary committee.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is actively promoted. Children are sensitively cared for should they have an accident and require first aid. There are clear policies and procedures for dealing with accidents and procedures are consistently followed. Parents are kept fully informed and asked to sign in acknowledgement that information has been shared with them. A number of staff hold a first aid certificate.

All children learn about good personal hygiene through routine procedures, such as hand washing. They are encouraged to go to the toilet and know to wash their hands afterwards, as routine. Staff are well organised to provide appropriate guidance to those children just developing these skills. Hand washing following messy play takes place within the hall at a table with a bowl of water and paper towels. This is adequate in most circumstances, however, on occasion the water in the bowl becomes too well used for the procedure to be effective. Staff follow sensible hygiene procedures in regard to food preparation and at snack times.

Children have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating. They are encouraged to try a different fruit as part of the greeting process at registration time. Children receive praise for trying out a new experience.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities that contribute to their good health and help them develop control and coordination of their bodies. The group have limited opportunities to take play outside but ensure that children are able to take part in activities that encourage their physical development on a daily basis. Different equipment is put out each day for children to practise physical skills. Children learn to climb, go under and over and to control their speed of descent on the climbing frame slide with increasing confidence and skill. At other times during each session they practise their coordination skills with action rhymes together in a whole group.

Children develop their fine motor skills through the use of a range of tools and equipment. Children roll, cut and shape play dough. They develop hand and eye control and use small muscles with increasing skill, for example, when at the sand tray they use scoops to fill containers and explore volume and textures. They thread wooden needles through blocks and string through buttons. They have many opportunities to use scissors, paint brushes and glue sticks and handle these with increasing control.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a safe environment in which to play. The provider has carried out a thorough risk assessment of the premises and has effective control measures in place to reduce the risk of accidental injury to children. Daily visual checks are undertaken of the premises and of the

equipment put out in readiness for children. The premises are secure and entry is closely monitored. Children regularly practise the fire drill and begin to understand what to do should they hear the whistle. Children learn about keeping themselves and others safe when using the sit-on equipment and staff prompt them to be aware of others when using the slide and trampoline.

Space is used very constructively to provide a wide range of activities to meet the needs of all children. Children freely access a good range of resources and equipment appropriate to their age and stage of their development. Good resources are set out effectively to support their play and learning for each area of development. Large rugs and carpets, plastic sheeting and safety matting is spread to provide functional but comfortable floor space for children to play. Toy resources and table-top equipment are changed throughout the session according to the topic and the type of activity. Children benefit from the welcoming and child-friendly environment that staff have established.

Staff have a secure knowledge of the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and have an understanding of child protection procedures. They know to whom they should report concerns. The committee have an awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children. A policy and procedure is in place to ensure children's welfare is promoted, however, there is no procedure to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff. This is a breach of regulation. In discussion with the manager she was clear of the action that she would take if an allegation was made. She would report the concerns and notify the regulator.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children settle well as they are greeted warmly by staff who sensitively support them to separate from parents and carers. Good induction processes prepare children for pre-school and provide staff with useful information from parents to help children settle. An effective key worker system is in place. Parents, carers and children know who their key worker is. Staff provide high levels of reassurance and plenty of close contact to children until they become sufficiently self-assured to play independently and in groups. Consistent daily routines provide structure for children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The staff use their skills effectively, to ask questions of children and to extend children's language and communication skills. They sensitively support less-able children to remain fully involved and to become more confident in both small and whole group activities. At registration time all children learn to sign 'good morning' and enthusiastically greet staff and each other. All children are encouraged to speak and to listen in the group. Those less confident are skilfully helped to contribute and have their contribution acknowledged. Children grow in confidence and make good progress with their language skills.

Children have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and fully involved in a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities that capture their interest and their imaginations.

Children are provided with good opportunities to express choice through free-play activities and within activities themselves. Most activities provide them with suitable challenge as the staff effectively support children's play and learning. Key workers have a good understanding of a child's stage of development as the size of the setting and effective methods of communication, allow key workers to get to know the needs of their children very well. Teaching is rooted in a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Written observations of children's achievements are consistently recorded and, along with folders of creative work and work activity books, contribute to the process of assessment. However, children's progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals is not recorded. As a result, assessment is not used systematically to track children's progress and does not sufficiently influence planning for children's next steps. The lack of a clear record of progress makes monitoring and evaluation less clear. The staff team meet regularly to discuss and plan for activities and to discuss individual children. A plan for each term is displayed for parents.

Learning is integrated and takes place on a number of levels during single activities as learning is well supported by the interaction of staff, for example, children help measure out the ingredients during an activity to make heart shaped biscuits. They measure and mix different ingredients and are encouraged to smell and taste the icing sugar. They develop language to describe the runny mixture as water is added. They knead the biscuit base and are asked to explore the changes taking place. They press hard to make the shapes with the cutter and they learn to take turns to stir and to use the tools. They count biscuits and name colours while they choose how to decorate the biscuits, and are proud and excited with the end result.

Children learn to count confidently and make good progress because staff effectively use a wealth of opportunities throughout activities to prompt them to count, name and to think for themselves. Their learning is also consolidated and extended in some focussed mathematical activities, such as where children match and sort objects. Concepts of 'bigger and smaller', 'more and less' and 'heavier and lighter' are introduced and explored in many activities.

Children are developing their literacy skills. They learn to recognise their own written name and discuss some letter sounds in different contexts throughout their day. They independently select books from the reading area. Children understand that print carries meaning. Children recognise their own name labels at registration time and begin to recognise those of others. There are some opportunities for children to write for a purpose and to practise writing skills, for example, in a role play situation at the doctor's surgery, paper is placed beside a pencil for children to pretend to make marks. Children also practise pen control and form recognisable letters through work books. They are encouraged and supported to write their own names on pieces of creative work.

Children are making generally good progress in their creative development. They have good opportunities to express themselves creatively because they explore a wide range of materials, such as paint, sand, play dough and collage activities that are available in some form on a daily basis. Children benefit from the opportunities to use their imaginations as they freely access the role play corner, for example, when it is set up as a doctor's surgery and they make good use of dressing up materials. There are regular opportunities for children to sing together and to use musical instruments.

Children have opportunities to build and design, for example, construction toys, large bricks, junk modelling and play dough. They use simple tools like scissors and rollers. There are fewer opportunities for larger scale construction or modelling and they do not have so many good opportunities to explore why things happen and how things work. Children are beginning to learn about technology through the use of the computer and through the use of the 'bee bot' programmable toy.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated with respect and enjoy warm relationships with staff. Staff provide good role models. They offer children choice and provide plenty of praise and encouragement. As a result children grow in confidence and are helped to feel positive about themselves. Staff have high expectations of children and have a positive approach to the management of behaviour. They provide clear and consistent boundaries. Children generally behave well towards each other. They learn to take turns and this is practised in a number of ways throughout the session.

Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn about diversity through the positive images they encounter when using resources and during activities where they are prompted to consider the wider world, for example, through the celebration of festival days from different religions. Makaton is routinely used to aid all communication and all children are encouraged to sign. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities have their individual needs appropriately met. They are well supported as staff work constructively to carry through specific plans and to work with carers and the other professionals involved.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents and carers are closely consulted about the individual and everyday care needs of children and routine discussions take place at collection and arrival. Children benefit as this contributes to the continuity of care for children as information is shared on a daily basis. Parents report positively on the friendliness and approachability of the staff and on the good care provided to children.

Parents are invited to be active in their children's learning from home. They are kept informed about the topic area for their child during the forthcoming term through the displayed activity plan and through the newsletter. They comment positively about this and value the opportunity of their involvement. Information is provided about the letter of the week, items for the interest table and 'talk time', numbers, colours and nursery rhymes. Additionally parents can see their children's folders at any time upon request. They routinely receive information about their child's progress verbally both informally, through discussion at collection and more formally, through a parents' evening each term. Information is presented under each area of learning within the Foundation Stage curriculum but not in regard to children's progress along the stepping stones.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the good continuity of care created by the good staffing ratios and by a stable staff team who are committed to providing good care for children and who work effectively together as a team. Time and resources are used effectively to offer children a wide variety of experiences. Indoor space is used well to maximise play opportunities for children and staff work hard to make it a child-friendly and well-organised environment.

Most of the necessary documentation is in place. Although the documentation continues to support the general welfare and care of children, some of the information provided to parents and carers is out of date. There is a significant weakness relating to the child protection procedure. Most other policies and procedures have not been updated recently. All staff are suitably vetted. The parents' committee has clear roles and responsibilities and new committee members have been appointed. However, the provider has failed to keep Ofsted sufficiently informed and is in breach of regulation by failing to do so.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager provides a very good role model and children are cared for by a capable and skilled staff team. There is a commitment to further enhance the knowledge base of staff through further training. The key worker system and grouping of children provides children with appropriately sized groups in which to progress. There is a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children make good general progress overall, in each area of learning. However, the monitoring and evaluation processes do not sufficiently identify and address the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the provision's planning and assessment procedures. Currently the progress that children make is not sufficiently recorded against the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum and does not sufficiently influence the planning for children's next steps in their learning.

Overall, children are eager to attend, are happy and secure. They thoroughly enjoy their time at the pre-school. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection of care three recommendations were made to support improvement. These related to improvements in documentation, accident records and confidentiality in regard to documentation.

Since the last inspection of care in 2004, the provision has updated the majority of their documentation, policies and procedures. There are now clear procedures should a child have an accident and a suitable accident record is held that now maintains confidentiality. However, the documentation has not been reviewed again and so some information has again become out of date.

At the last nursery education inspection two recommendations were made to support improvement. The first related to the development of planning and systems of assessment to include specific learning intentions for individual children, based on regular observation and

assessments linked to the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The second related to the integration of reading and writing skills into everyday activities.

Since the last nursery inspection in 2004, the provision has continued to develop the planning and assessment processes. Observations of children's progress are made and these have resulted in the better planning and assessment of children's progress. Each area of learning is covered. However, the process is incomplete and children's progress is not measured against the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage. Some learning intentions are identified through staff discussions but these are not recorded. Further recommendations have been set against remaining issues.

Reading and writing skills have become more integrated into every day activities for children, for example, through writing opportunities being introduced within role-play activities.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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 satisfactory. 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):

- develop the child protection procedure further to include a procedure to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff.
- improve the procedure to ensure that Ofsted is notified of significant changes and other relevant matters.

#### **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):



- continue to develop planning and assessment systems to include specific learning intentions for individual children based on regular observations and assessments linked to the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- develop a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of nursery education.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)