

# Lowdham and Epperstone Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	253347
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jasmin Myles-Wilson
<b>Setting Address</b>	Lowdham Village Hall, Main Street, Lowdham, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG14 7BD
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Lowdham and Epperstone Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care, Out of School 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 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?

Lowdham Pre-School Playgroup is committee run and opened 1974. It operates from the Village Hall in Lowdham. The group have access to the main hall and adjacent room. There is an enclosed grassed outdoor area available.

The setting is open to children in Lowdham and the surrounding areas. They operate during the term time from 09:15 to 12:00, Monday to Friday. In addition a lunch club is provided on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 to 13:00. During the summer term the setting is open on a Monday afternoon from 12:50 to 15:20 for children going to Lowdham School in September. Children attend a variety of sessions depending on parental wishes. The setting is registered to care for 26 children at one time and there are currently 43 children on roll; of these 25 are funded.

There are eight members of staff, six of whom have early years qualifications. Teaching methods used are the Foundation Stage curriculum and 'Birth to three matters' framework. The setting receives support from a private voluntary and independent teacher and the Pre-School Learning

Alliance development co-ordinator. The setting also have close links with the local primary school.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is generally protected well because staff have good and consistent practices and routines in place. Children develop good personal hygiene skills through the encouragement they receive from staff. They begin to realise the importance of keeping themselves free from the spread of infection. For example, children know that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food so they wash away all the germs or they may become ill. Good arrangements are in place so that children who are injured or sick receive efficient care from staff.

Healthy snacks are provided and children enjoy eating nutritious food, such as a good selection of fruit, bread sticks or toast. Children's dietary requirements are taken into consideration and met well as parents and staff work together to provide healthy food. Children can help themselves to a drink of fresh drinking water throughout the session as a covered jug of water and cups are left in an accessible place. They also receive a healthy drink, either milk or water, at snack times.

Children have good control over their body movements. They enjoy exercising their whole body by running around and balancing as they take part in outdoor activities. They also show good awareness of space as they manoeuvre well around people, and go over and through objects. Children use and handle tools confidently and correctly, such as scissors which help to develop good hand and eye co-ordination as well as their fine motor skills.

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

The provision is good.

The pre-school environment is very welcoming as staff make every effort to welcome children individually, therefore children are relaxed and settled. Staff ensure the premises is clean, warm and provides sufficient space for children to move safely and spontaneously around their surroundings. Staff assess potential risks to children on a regular basis and do daily risk assessments, both visual and written, of resources, equipment and the outdoor area before children arrive. Staff also have good working knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow in the case of suspected abuse, therefore children are safeguarded and their welfare protected. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe through discussions and reinforced messages, for example, staff discuss with children learn how to cross the road and the message is then repeated in the form of a song or when playing with the pretend zebra crossing.

Children play with a good variety of quality toys and equipment which are easily accessible to them. They confidently select what they wish to play with or do and persist in activities that interest them for a sustained period of time amounting to at least 20 minutes. For example, children choose to dig in the garden and fill little pots with soil, pour it out then repeat it all over again. The procedures in place for checking and ensuring resources are well maintained are effective.

## Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are involved in a varied range of activities that they enjoy, for example, young children clap their hands and shout 'yeah' after singing 'Baa, baa black sheep.' Activities are developmentally appropriate and interesting, therefore children concentrate well. Children are keen to try new experiences and activities. They take part in a good range of sensory and creative experiences, such as playing with oats, tissue paper, leaves and other materials. Young children play well within the large group and staff help them to engage in activities when needed. Interaction between staff and children is good. Staff spend their time talking, smiling and listening to children, therefore children are happy and settled.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' framework. They plan activities and observe what children can do which informs them of how to move children on to their next step. Staff are enthusiastic, motivated and work well together to create a welcoming, stimulating and supporting environment, therefore children become competent learners and integrate well within the group. Staff effectively observe and assess what children can and cannot do so they are clear of children's capabilities and plan a range of activities to meet their needs. Planning is good and covers all areas of learning and provides realistic challenges for children, however, opportunities are missed for older children to be more challenged in physical play. For example, children are given the opportunity to practise their skills of balancing but there is not much opportunity to practise climbing. Staff listen well to children which promotes children's sense of belonging and they use open-ended questions well to encourage children to develop their thinking and voice their ideas. For example, staff ask children 'what noise do you think the leaves make when we kick them or how do we know Mr bear is tired?'. Children respond enthusiastically to the simple questions. Children are competent speakers and initiate conversations with their peers or adults. For example, children tell the group about their family members, such as 'my sister woke me up this morning' or 'my daddy snores'.

Children are motivated and interested in what they do. They interact well together and show high levels of concentration whether doing group or individual activities. Children use their imagination well, for example, they role play what fire fighters do or they dress up like an animal and try to represent it. They also enjoy being creative and using various types of material. Children are good at listening and respond well to instruction, for example, on hearing the sound of the tambourine children quickly raise their hands then follow instruction given by the supervisor. Children confidently join in singing songs they are familiar with such as 'Tommy thumb'. Children behave well and they show care towards others or other living things, for example, when children are asked to join in with creative activities they make sure their friends are also invited to join in or after digging worms up from the garden they look at it then carefully put it back in the soil.

Children show interest in numbers, and older children can count up to eight objects in order without support. Staff reinforce and give children opportunities to become familiar with numbers and simple calculations during activities such as singing or counting objects. Children recognise simple shapes, such as a triangle or a circle but have difficulty in recognising more complicated shapes such as shapes within shapes. They correctly use size and positional language to give a description of what they have seen, for example, they know their coats are bigger when

comparing it to a work jacket they use for role play or they point in the right place as they refer to crocodiles being under the tray.

Children carefully construct materials very well such as making cars out of stickle bricks or make a spider out of the popoids. They are curious and investigate natural things such as soil and enjoy exploring with their senses. For example, they use their hands to feel oats when they are dry and then wet or they squeeze play dough through their fingers. Children show an interest in operating equipment, such as a computer. They are developing the skill of using one handed tools such as scissors or small garden tools. They also use writing tools confidently and begin to make markings with meaning, for example, they attempt to write their names or draw numbers.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and treated with equal concern. At present there are no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending the group. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity which enables them to treat children as individuals and according to their needs. For example, children who are a little reserved receive support from staff which helps them be bold to join in activities with other children. The space available is thoughtfully organised so that it is suitable, therefore children's varying needs are met well. Children are regularly involved in indoor and outdoor activities which helps develop their knowledge and understanding about their world and community. For example, they celebrate different festivals from around the world in a creative way, such as making sweets typically eaten by asian families or they meet people from the local community, such as firemen.

Staff use good strategies to manage children's behaviour. For example, staff explain to children why they should not run in the building except in the area for physical play. Children respond well, therefore children learn what behaviour is acceptable. They also behave positively towards one another and play well together or on their own. Staff develop good relationships with children and effectively praise them for their positive behaviour. For example, when children share toys and equipment staff tell them they have displayed kindness and thanks them. This helps children to feel valued and makes them feel good about themselves. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnerships with parents and carers is good. Staff obtain detailed written information from parents about their children which informs them of children's starting points which they are then able to build on. Parents are kept fully informed of any significant information. They receive this information in various formats, such as regular newsletters, the notice board information or directly speaking to staff members. Parents choose to be included in children's learning and the activities they do as they sign up on a rota to assist staff during sessions. Children's development and educational progress is shared with parents on a regular basis in written and verbal form. Staff know children and work well with parents enabling them to provide effective care for children's individual needs.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Staff are valued and encouraged to share their ideas and inspiration for the setting. They meet regularly to discuss planning and any other issues or concerns. Staff work well together as a team to provide children with a

happy and caring environment. They have sound knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage to help children progress through the stepping stones. The good support and advice they receive from other professional workers, such as a voluntary and independent teacher and a pre-school development co-ordinator helps them to provide an environment which encourages children to progress in their development. There is a good procedure in place to ensure that activities are evaluated well and children's development is assessed which informs the planning of activities, which enables children to progress on to their next step. However, children's development files are not updated as often as they should be. Supervisors complete a self-evaluation form regarding the five outcomes for inspection and have also created a 'moving forward' document in support of this, identifying any room for improvement. One area identified through this form of evaluation is the need to provide more physical challenges for the older children. Staff continually look for ways to improve their service.

Robust procedures are in place for recruitment and vetting which ensures that children are cared for by staff who are suitably experienced and have an early years qualification. The setting is very well-organised and carefully thought out which enables children to be grouped with peers of a similar age, for example, younger children are separated from the older children so they have their own 'carpet time' to have stories or sing songs. Therefore, children's play opportunities are optimised and they have confidence to explore their environment and experience natural resources.

Staff have good knowledge of childcare and they commit themselves to further training which enhances their practice and skills, such as promoting equality of opportunity or supporting transitions and learning through effective key worker systems. Staff dedicate their time well to individual children, they are deployed suitably and work well together so that they meet children's needs effectively. Relevant documentation, records and consents are kept which contributes to the safety of children and the good service provided. Staff have good awareness of the group's policies and have knowledge of how to implement them. Supervisors have good understanding of their responsibility to inform Ofsted of significant events or changes.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last education inspection it was recommended that planning and assessments should be developed and clearly linked together. The plans should also include sufficient details of short term plans to enable practitioners to make the best use of activities and experiences and promote the of learning all children. It was also recommended that children have more opportunities to develop writing skills and sometimes record their observations. At the last care inspection it was recommended that all children's next steps in learning and development is planned and that the child protection statement is based on the procedures in the government booklet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused.'

The setting have developed their planning and assessment of activities which clearly link together and sufficient details in written short term plans enable practitioners to enhance children's play. Therefore, children now have a good range of activities that promote their all-round development. They also have regular opportunities to help them develop their writing skills and record their observations. For example, clipboards and paper are provided near activities, both inside and outside, and children choose whether to record what they are doing. Children's next steps of learning and development are now planned to ensure they are making

good progress. The child protection statement now has procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This ensures staff know the procedures, and children's welfare is protected.

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

Since 1st 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 complaint 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):

- further improve systems for children's developmental files.

#### **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 opportunities for physical play that provide realistic challenges for older children.

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)