

Our Lady Of Lourdes Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	136046
Inspection date	19 June 2007
Inspector	Kay Roberts
Setting Address	2 Court Road, Kingswood, Bristol, Avon, BS15 9QB
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Registered person	Our Lady of Lourdes Playgroup
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 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?

Our Lady of Lourdes Playgroup first registered in 1983. It is managed by a parent committee and has very close links with Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School. The pre-school is sited within a purpose built premises, with some areas used by other community groups at alternative times. Areas available for use by children include the play room, Mazenod room and patio, together with the school hall, playgrounds and playing field to the rear of the premises. The pre-school offers care Monday to Thursday from 08.45 to 15.00, and 08.45 until 11.45 on Friday, during term time. Registration is for a maximum of 26 children and currently there are 57 children on role, of whom there are 32 funded three year olds and 14 funded four year olds. The group caters for children with learning difficulties, but at present there are no children with physical disabilities or English as a second language. Six qualified members of staff and a lunch time assistant work directly with children. Advice on the education programme is provided by a teacher advisor from South Gloucestershire Council.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment and a proactive approach from staff helps children to understand how to promote their own good health. Children learn the importance of hygiene through the daily routine as they wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack. They are independent, as everything is placed within reach. Children understand that they must wash their hands because otherwise germs will make them ill. Children are keen to explain the importance of dental hygiene and know that sweets are bad for their teeth. This understanding has been developed following a visit from a dental hygienist and staff using a resource pack from the local authority. Children practise being thorough in their brushing using a large set of dentures. The risk of infection is minimised as staff follow hygienic procedures and children assist in helping to clean the tables with anti-bacterial spray before snack. The policy for excluding children who are sick is shared with parents. There are good procedures in place for managing both accidents and medication so that children are well protected.

When thirsty, either indoors or outside, children pour themselves a drink of water from a jug. The group have received a Healthy Eating Award for 2007/8 from South Gloucestershire Council. Healthy eating is encouraged as staff talk about carrots helping children to see in the dark and milk will make them 'big and strong', so children understand which foods are good for their health and those which are not. Parents have also receive information on healthy packed lunches and more recently many attended an open evening which focussed on healthy eating, which included a healthy meal demonstration. Children eat a varied range of healthy snacks and are provided with maximum opportunities to be independent. They open their own cellophane wrapped straw and place it in the carton of milk, cut up soft fruit which they use to make mini-fruit and vegetable kebabs, butter their own crackers and when they have finished eating, wash their own plates. Children are able to choose when they have snack as the group operate a snack bar, and there is a system in place to ensure that no child is forgotten. There is a clear system in place for ensuring that children's special dietary requirements are met. Children do not go hungry as they help themselves to more. Snack time is a social occasion when they discuss how fruit and vegetables grow and the process milk goes through from cow to carton. Children eat healthy packed lunches and eat their sandwiches first. The importance of healthy eating is reinforced as staff sit with children, and also eat a healthy lunch.

Children have many excellent opportunities to extend their learning outdoors. They are protected from the elements; in winter they wrap up warm and in summer they have sun screen applied, wear hats and are able to play in the shade of the canopy, arbour and pagoda. They jump from square to square along a hop scotch outline and four year olds are able to hop for some distance. Large muscle skills are used as children run around with kites they have made from plastic bags and ribbon. Children are encouraged to take exercise as staff provide pedometers and children are interested to see how many steps they take. Children identify the single numerals on the pedometer and staff introduce them to the higher numbers. They are keen to show others how far they have walked when staff tell them that they have taken 152 steps. Children develop pencil control as they paint with water and chalk on the playground and colour in the bricks, which are placed around the edge. Some children use a pencil on the fence to create a map which shows the route to Weston and direct staff to the beach hut. They explore the sound of musical instruments and use hand-eye co-ordination as they play a xylophone. Children attempt to keep to the rhythm with their instruments as they sing 'It's Raining, It's Pouring'. They compare the difference in sound when they bang items which are plastic and those which are

metal. Children prefer the sound of metal because it is louder. Some children are creative and make a sun flower out of the egg shakers. Children use their imagination well and play alongside others engaged in the same theme. They place a saucepan of leaves which they have gathered on the edge of some shrubs and wait for a T Rex to appear. When it does not appear one child tells everyone else to be quiet and a little later suggests the T Rex must be asleep. Under the arbour children perform a mermaid show for staff and other children. They then sing 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five Once I Caught a Fish Alive' and use their fingers to represent numbers. Children continue to take exercise indoors as they move to music; they stretch high and wide, jump up and down and crouch down small. When the weather is particularly bad larger equipment, such as a climbing frame and trampoline are brought indoors so children continue to develop large muscle skills. Children recognise when they are tired and at such times relax as they share a book with a member of staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children relax as they receive a warm welcome from staff. The suitably decorated and maintained, child focussed environment is inviting, with well presented displays of children's art work and everything placed at child height. Children are keen to play with the neatly organised, clean, safe resources which cover all areas of learning. They make informed decisions about toys they wish to play with as resources are stored in clearly labelled drawers, with pictures and words. Staff change the activities morning and afternoon so that children remain interested. Activities are organised in clearly defined areas, with space between each so that children move around freely and do not disturb their peers engaged in play. Children have a large space in which to play as they are able to move freely between two rooms or between in and outdoors. The outdoor environment provides many excellent opportunities for children; there is a field, playground, butterfly garden with shrubs and an area for planting, as well as a patio. Both in and outdoors children are provided with space for relaxation, play and physical exercise.

Children play in self-contained, secure premises. There is a safe procedure for the release of children to authorised adults. Although there are systems in place for ensuring children are protected from people who have not been vetted, recruitment procedures are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The risk of an accident is minimised as a risk assessment is completed bi-annually and on a daily basis staff check the environment, using a check sheet, to ensure there are no protection hazards. The high adult to child ratio and appropriate deployment of vigilant staff also helps to keep children safe. Although staff are aware of the lost child policy this is not written and therefore in the event of an emergency situation may be forgotten and children placed at potential risk. Children learn to keep themselves safe; indoors they know how to handle scissors safely and understand that they may injure themselves if they take off their shoes. In the event of a fire children know how to evacuate the premises safely as they practise the drill bi-monthly and full details are recorded. Outdoors children realise that they may scratch themselves on the shrubs. They know that before crossing a road they must 'stop, look and listen', hold an adult's hand and walk, because if they run, they may fall. A visit from a police officer alerted children to 'stranger danger' and also gave an opportunity for them to sit in a police vehicle and make badges. Children are further protected as staff are knowledgeable about local safeguarding procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children new to the provision settle quickly as they are already familiar with the environment, having previously visited with their parents. They are supported by the allocated key worker and relax as they play with their favourite toys. Emotional security is provided by a daily routine. Once settled they confidently enter the premises and are keen to play. They have full access to activities available to older children, which are adapted to their level of understanding. For example, children are divided into small groups for stories, and the length of the story determined by children's level of concentration. Staff undertake regular observations based on Birth to three matters and use this information, together with children's interests to plan for children's next stage of development, so that there is an effective planning cycle. Although key workers to children in this age group have completed training on Birth to three, as younger children will start in September, all staff need to complete this training, which is scheduled for the summer holiday.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good as all staff are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage. They know how to encourage learning by providing a wide range of activities which appeal to children so they are motivated to learn. Staff are flexible in following through on children's interests, access resources from elsewhere so that more learning opportunities are provided, offer many first hand learning experiences, seize each opportunity to extend learning, participate in play so that learning is more fun and provide an example. However, although staff make regular observations of children and record in the home/playgroup diary, this information is not consistently used to update children's records and therefore planning is based on memory, rather than written information. There is a system in place for ensuring that children receive a balanced curriculum and activity evaluations feed into future planning.

Children confidently answer their name at register and are keen to talk to the whole group about their holiday and show an award they received for swimming. Children have a sense of time; they know the day, month and year. In a large group children, feel the texture of an object in a bag and are sufficiently confident to put forward their own ideas, rather than copying what others have said. Children are keen to sing a solo to the whole group and some make up their own funny nursery rhymes, for example about a cat falling in a bin. Staff reassure younger children by offering help when they forget the words. Children show good concentration as they listen to the story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' and join in with many of the words. Children are able to sound letters of the alphabet and more able children successfully participate in a game of 'I spy'. Children recognise their name in print and some children write their own name. Children develop pencil control as they draw pictures. Four year olds show particularly good observation skills as they draw a toy lion and include detailed facial features and fur.

There are many opportunities for counting and more able children count beyond 10. Children accurately guess that there are more boys than girls present. Children recognise written numerals and use fine muscle skills to attach an appropriate number of pegs to written numerals on a tin. Afterwards children copy the written numbers to 10. Children name simple two-dimensional shapes and use mathematical language to describe size and position. Children match small plastic bears to the pattern on a card. Problem solving skills are used to complete 12 piece puzzles and proud of their success they announce that they have 'done it' and break the puzzle up and start again. They wrap small toys, such as motor bikes, which they later offer to staff as a present.

Children are provided with the time and opportunity to develop independence and physical dexterity as they prepare their own snack and put on and take off dressing up clothes, including all in one suiting and those with small buttons. Afterwards they admire themselves in the mirror. Children learn to use tools such as scissors, and although initially children struggle, the words 'brilliant cutting' from staff makes them keen to continue. More able children show good hand-eye co-ordination as they cut to the lines. As children cut out pictures from magazines, staff alert children to what is written and help them to understand that print has meaning. Once children have cut out the pictures they create a picture by sticking them onto a large piece of paper. Some children explore the play dough; they squash it flat using the palms of their hands, poke and roll it. Two children share one piece of play dough taking turns to roll it. Later they pretend to make a birthday cake which they present to a member of staff after singing 'Happy Birthday'. Other children explore the paint; they paint their hands black and then look at how it changes when they add different colours. Children build tall, wide houses from good quality construction materials and ask others to look at their achievements.

Children are curious and motivated to learn. They engage in discussion and as they look at photographs, point out which is them and name their friends. Children are social and for much of the time imaginative play involves a large number of children, for example eight children participated in a mermaid show, whilst three others watched with a member of staff. They negotiate their roles in imaginary play and familiar with information and communication technology they press the buttons on a telephone and pretend to have a conversation with a friend. They are beginning to use simple computer programmes and staff are on hand to provide an example and offer advice where necessary. Children say they enjoy being at playgroup and explain that if they are upset staff will offer a cuddle.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children have a sense of belonging as they each have a folder for their art work, a book bag and their art work is neatly displayed around the premises. Confidence is developed as they are praised for each achievement and activities are pitched at an appropriate level. All children are valued and included, and staff work in close partnership with parents and others to meet children's additional needs. Staff are sensitive to children's individual needs and when a child says they are sad, they are quickly distracted and given additional adult support. The proactive approach of staff ensures that children are clear about what is right and wrong, so that they are well behaved. Unwanted behaviour is sensitively managed and staff work in close partnership with parents. Children are polite, able to share, take turns and are beginning to use negotiation skills. They show respect for the environment by tidying away toys when they hear the 'tidy up' music, wash their own plates after snack and tidy away the contents of their lunch boxes.

Children learn about the wider world. They understand a little about items which can be recycled and as part of a project on recycling all children worked together to create two papier-mâché bowls which are now used for fruit. As a way of helping children to learn about those less fortunate than themselves staff organised a fund day for Comic Relief and funds were raised. Staff also took the time to explain to children about 'Fair Trade' so they begin to develop some understanding. Children learn about life cycles as they plant herbs, sunflowers and tomatoes in the garden and watch them grow. Until recently they have observed the birds at a bird table and in winter make bird cakes. They learn to respect animals as staff bring in a pet rabbit, gerbil and tortoise, and children visit Grimsby Farm where they have an opportunity to touch the sheep. Children understand a little about the local community as they receive visits from a

police officer and dental hygienist. There are regular visits to the adjacent school and church, for example at harvest and Christmas. Twice a term they join reception class children for a specific activity. As most children will transfer to the school, the transition from one setting to another is less traumatic as they will already be familiar with the environment and staff. They visit 'Hop, Skip and Jump', a centre for children with additional needs and remember their walk to the post office in Kingswood. They took photographs using a digital camera. The photographs have now been used to create a map showing what they saw on route. Children develop a positive attitude to difference as they play with readily accessible resources reflecting positive images of diversity. They learn about their own culture and Christianity as they join in with simple prayers twice a day. They begin to appreciate that other cultures are different as they acknowledge festivals, such as St David's Day, Chinese New Year and Japanese Children's Day.

The partnership with parents is good and parents comment positively about the provision. Children are emotionally secure in the relaxed relationship between their parents and staff. Parents are provided with a fully detailed information pack when children commence at the playgroup and are regularly updated, both verbally and in writing; notice boards, newsletters and a communication book. Staff have been proactive in seeking parents' views via regular questionnaires and adapting practices accordingly. Parents are well informed about the education programme as there are specifically quarterly newsletters about forthcoming topics. There are invites to information evenings which focus on different topics, such as stages of development and positive parenting. Parents are encouraged to be involved in children's learning by assisting at sessions and through regular outings to places Avon Valley Country Park and Hop, Skip and Jump. There are also many occasions during the year when parents are invited to attend events within the group, such as Christmas Nativity Play and sports day. The education programme is enhanced through parents sharing their specific skills, for example cooking rice dishes with children. Parents are encouraged to continue children's learning at home through the library scheme.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. There is a system in place for notifying the regulator of significant changes. Recruitment procedures, as required in the October 2005 Revision to the National Standards, are not sufficiently rigorous to check the suitability of staff to work with children and this is a breach of regulations. There is a thorough induction procedure and ongoing suitability of staff to work with children is checked via annual appraisal. Clear communication systems ensure that staff are clear about their role and responsibilities. Staff are proactive and keen to extend practice have sought the views of parents and undertaken much training since the last inspection. Children receive consistency of care as turnover of staff is low. Adult to child ratios are above minimum requirements so that children receive a high level of support. Good organisation of space, staff and time ensures that children are actively occupied at all times. Staff provide a warm and welcoming child focussed environment which provides space for relaxation, play and physical activity. Staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage facilitates children making good educational progress, but staff now need to extend their knowledge of Birth to three matters which they use to promote learning of younger children. Documentation is well organised, regularly reviewed, confidentially maintained and where appropriate shared with parents. However, although all staff are aware of what would happen in the event of a child being lost, this has not yet been written down.

Leadership and management are good. The leader has been proactive in ensuring that staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. She is able to identify strengths within the education programme as the broad curriculum, staff working as a team and the relaxed relationship with parents. Since the last inspection the most significant improvement has been extending children's learning opportunities outdoors and utilising snack time to extend children's skills. Further developments are planned for the future, for example an interactive number table. As staff feed into planning sessions about the requirements of their key children, the leader had not recognised the significance of ensuring that children's progress is recorded in the tracking document and that this could lead to potential problems in pitching the education programme at an appropriate level.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

The provider has made good progress against the two recommendations made at the last care inspection in May 2004. Children are now further protected as registration arrangements have been improved; there is a record of visitors and children's actual time of arrival and departure are recorded. In the winter months quilted covers are now placed over radiators so children do not get burnt.

Education

Similarly, staff have made met the requirements of the two key issues which were agreed at the last education inspection, also held in May 2004. There is now a system in place for ensuring that children receive a balanced curriculum, with regular opportunities for counting. Children are given good opportunities to sound letters and have access to mark making materials outdoors, in the home corner and book area. In addition, activities are also organised so that there are sufficient challenges for older and more able children.

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 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):

- improve staff knowledge and understanding of how to monitor the progress of children under three years, for example by using Birth to three matters
- formalise the policy for lost children by providing a written procedure
- ensure there are rigorous recruitment procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children

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):

- ensure that children's progress records are regularly monitored and used to plan for children's next stage in learning.

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