

Lordswood Under 5s Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103823
Inspection date	15 May 2007
Inspector	Karen Scott
Setting Address	Lordswood Under 5s Playgroup Play Hut, Rear of 181 Ballens Road, Chatham, Kent, ME5 8PG
Telephone number	01634 867386
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Registered person	Lordswood Under Fives
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lordswood Under Fives Playgroup is committee run. It opened in 1976 and operates from two rooms in a single storey building. It is situated in a parkland setting, in Lordswood, Chatham. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:15 to 15:00, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 60 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs 10 members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications. Of these 4 are working towards further qualifications. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is compromised as the setting has not retained parents consent to medication or the records of medicines administered to them over the last two years. This is a breach of regulations. Children who are infectious do not attend thus preventing the spread of infection. The setting follows good hygiene practices as children routinely wash their hands before preparing and eating food, after visiting the toilet and after messy play. Although children generally do not sleep while at the setting staff show a good understanding of children's needs and have ensured there are places for them to rest when required. Children understand the need for regular physical exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle, playing outside daily, whatever the weather. Staff hold first aid certificates enabling them to administer first aid in the event of an accident. Staff are aware of procedures for obtaining emergency medical advice or treatment for a child in case of an emergency but they have not received written parental permission to do so.

The setting has an understanding of healthy eating and encourages children to try new foods in order to help them establish a healthy eating pattern. Children choose from a range of snacks such as fruit, vegetables and toast. Their independence is promoted as they are encouraged to spread their own toppings on bread, for example. However, they are not trusted to pour their own drinks from very full jugs of squash and water. Parents are encouraged to send healthy packed lunches. Children help themselves to a drink of water whenever they need one, helping them to remain hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and a reasonable understanding of the procedures to follow should they suspect it. A written child protection policy is shared with parents but it does not include the information on what the setting will do if they suspect abuse or who the designated person is should they need support or advice. Parents and carers are not aware of what the group will do if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Children play in a safe environment as precautions are in place to minimise the risks. For example, concrete bollards at the bottom of the sloping playground are covered with padding and children are closely supervised when playing outside. There is a clearly defined procedure for evacuation of the building. It is practised regularly, helping to keep children safe from harm. Inside steps have been taken to minimise risks to children and they cannot access rooms or items that could be dangerous. Parents are aware of the procedure involved should they fail to collect their child. Although there is a written procedure in place should a child become lost this is not shared with parents and carers, meaning they are unaware of what the setting would do.

When playing indoors children chose from a limited range of resources and activities that the adults have arranged around the room. However requests to play with other toys are met. When playing outside children chose from a vast range of toys and resources to meet their developmental needs. Toys and resources are carefully selected to make sure there are no broken parts.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, relaxed and confident. They enjoy their time at the playgroup and relate well to each other and the staff who are warm and affectionate, making them feel comfortable and valued. Children make choices about what they wish to play with. Children are encouraged to do things for themselves but are given support when learning new skills. Children may choose whether they wish to play indoors or outside, regardless of the weather. They particularly enjoy playing outside where many learning opportunities are available to them. Indoors children enjoy participating in adult led activities such as cookery and planting seeds. Greater emphasis is placed on outside play where children make choices from a range of activities that develop all areas of learning. However free play indoors is limited and not displayed attractively to children in order to enhance their development and enjoyment. The setting has just started to use the Birth to three matters framework to plan for the younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Plans show a range of activities. Staff make observations of children and place them in their portfolios but have not used them to establish children's stages of development or their next steps of learning. Consequently, children's individual learning needs are not planned for. Children display high levels of involvement in activities of their choosing.

Children greet their friends enthusiastically and play together. They confidently try new activities, support each other when playing and take turns during games. Children self-register, recognising their names. They are encouraged to write their names on their drawings and help themselves to copies of their names to support themselves in this task, receiving praise for their efforts. However, there are limited opportunities for them to practise their pre-writing skills elsewhere in the environment. Children enjoy group stories, joining in with their favourite parts. They see many examples of written word in the environment. Staff engage the children in conversations, expanding their vocabulary.

Staff involve children in games that encourage them to recognise and name numbers, to count and to calculate. However, they do not see many numbers displayed in the environment. Shape recognition is promoted through every day activities such as lunchtime when children and adults discuss the shapes of sandwiches. Children show an awareness of time. They understand the structure of the group's day and the times that events happen. They explore the natural world, gardening and playing outside. Children enjoy constructing and show pride in what they make. There are many posters reflecting the differences in society, however the group's selection of toys and resources reflecting positive images is small.

Children enjoy playing outside where they show a good sense of space as they run, cycle and balance, avoiding obstacles. They show an awareness of health and body, asking for coats when they become cold and helping themselves to drinks when warm. They use a range of tools and equipment, developing their fine motor skills. Children enjoy playing with a range of musical instruments, exploring the different sounds that they make. They are not afforded regular opportunities to partake in art and craft, to be creative. They are encouraged to use their imaginations when playing outside and with small world toys. However, other opportunities to use and extend their imaginations, such as through role-play, are not regularly available.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Staff engage children in conversations about things that are important to them such as family celebrations and outings. There are many photographs of children partaking in activities on display and children enjoy looking at them. They also use them to identify resources that they enjoyed playing with before and would like to play with again. Children have access to a reasonable range of toys and resources reflecting positive images of diversity within society and occasionally celebrate the festivals of other cultures. The setting has some experience and a fair understanding of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff discuss children's developmental needs with their parents and carers and work with outside agencies to offer children the care and support that they require. This ensures consistency of care for the child. A written statement informs parents and carers of this but not whom the special needs co-ordinator is meaning that they are unaware of whom to approach should they need support or guidance. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement. Appropriate strategies such as one to one support and calm intervention help children to understand right from wrong. Before the end of each session children are given a warning that they are due to tidy up and therefore do so willingly, having been given time to complete the activities that they are involved in. A written behaviour statement is shared with parents but it does not include the name of the delegated person resulting in parents and carers not being aware of whom to approach regarding behaviour management.

Partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. A written complaints procedure is shared with parents and carers. However the information is insufficient as it does not include the regulators details or information as to how the setting will deal with any written complaints that they may receive. The group does not have a log in place ready to record any complaints and the outcomes of them in order that they may share them with parents and carers. This is a breach of regulations as there is a lack of information for parents. Before children are placed in their care the group gathers relevant information to enable them to be cared for appropriately. Parents and carers tell the group about siblings and pets, for example, helping staff to talk to children about things and people that are important to them. Parents are informed about the setting through daily chats, newsletters and a notice board. Some policies and procedures are shared with parents and carers but they omit helpful information such as who the delegated member of staff is that parents can approach for support and advice regarding children's behaviour, for example. Overall parents and carers are happy with the care that their children receive. They say that staff are warm, caring and fun and that their children enjoy attending the playgroup.

Each child has their own portfolio which parents and carers are free to look at whenever they wish. However, they are not easy to access, do not contain much information about each child's stage of development and are generally shared with parents only when the child leaves the setting to start school. Parents and carers do not contribute to the portfolios resulting in the setting missing their valuable input. Plans show what activities the children are due to participate in but these are not always fully completed and are displayed in an area that not all parents see on a regular basis. Helpful information about the Foundation Stage is on display for parents and carers to read as they wish.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Parents and carers are given copies of the group's policies and procedures. However, some omit helpful and important information resulting in parents and carers not being fully informed of the group's services. The missing information about how the setting will deal with any complaints they receive and what they will do if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff are breaches in regulations. The setting has failed to retain written records of medication that they have given to children. Records are stored securely and confidentially and the importance of this is explained to parents and carers in a written statement. However, they are easily accessible when needed.

Staff are keen to update their knowledge, attending further training and workshops. They use what they have learnt to enhance the setting and the activities that they offer to children. Children, staff and visitors times of arrival and departure are recorded, meaning that there is an accurate record of attendance should it be needed.

Leadership and management is inadequate. The supervisors have a clear vision for the setting and are in the process of making changes to the outside play area and the group's policies and procedures. However, recommendations made at the last inspection of nursery education have not been fully addressed. Staff have regular meetings to monitor and review the education but children's portfolios are incomplete and sufficient time for planning is not always available.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspections, two recommendations were identified for progress within nursery education and one for progress within care.

For progress within nursery education it was recommended that the setting ensure planning includes details of what children are expected to learn, differentiation for the more able children and how children's next steps are identified. It was also recommended that the group continue to share children's progress with parents and involve them in planning children's next steps.

Planning includes details of the expected learning outcome for each activity. Planning does not differentiate for children that are more able and children's next steps are not identified. The group observes children but does not use the observations to inform their planning. Therefore, they are not meeting children's individual learning needs. Parents and carers are free to ask to see their children's records of learning. However they are not asked to contribute to them. Therefore it is recommended that the setting continues to make improvements.

For progress within care, it was recommended that the group ensure the policies and procedures are reviewed and updated in line with full day care requirements, are understood by staff and made available to parents. The group is in the process of updating their policies and procedures. However, there is still some improvement needed to bring them in line with current regulations. They are understood by staff and are available to parents and carers who receive their own copies.

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.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- keep a written record of medicines given to children and maintain a record of parent's consent
- review and update the Child Protection policy to include a procedure to be followed if an allegation is made about a member of staff, ensure that parents and carers are aware of who the designated member of staff is and the procedures to be followed when abuse is suspected
- ensure that Ofsted's details and the procedure to be followed when a complaint is made are included in the written statement
- ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are shared with parents including arrangements for requesting permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve the use of children's assessments records to plan appropriate activities that take account of children's individual needs and evaluate what they have learnt
- enable parents to contribute towards their children's learning, keeping them informed about their progress and achievements.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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