

Liberal House Pre School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137313
Inspection date	13 September 2007
Inspector	Susan Linda Capon
Setting Address	Liberal House, Station Road, Orpington, Kent, BR6 0RZ
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Liberal House Pre School Group has been managed by its current owner since 1985. The pre school operates from premises used by the Liberal Democrat Party, close to Orpington High Street, in the London Borough of Bromley. The group is privately owned and employs a day to day manager. The pre school uses a large room and additional attached room. There are associated toilets and kitchen. The group has a secure garden area available for outdoor play.

The pre school opens each weekday during term-time only between 09.15 and 12.15. Nursery education is offered for 38 weeks each year.

The pre school is registered to care for a maximum of 25 children at any one time. There are currently 31 children on roll. Of these, 18 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community and may attend a variety of sessions.

A team of seven staff work directly with the children. Of these, three hold a relevant childcare qualification equivalent to NVQ Level 2 or 3. Four staff are currently working towards an NVQ Level 2 or 3.

The pre school receives support from the local Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean environment free from infection. The daily cleaner ensures the premises are suitable for the children's use each day. Staff check the toilets throughout the session and use anti-bacterial spray to clean the tables between activities. They wear gloves for nappy changing and immediately dispose of the dirty nappy in a covered bin to prevent the spread of infection.

Children generally use good hygiene routines during the session. They wash their hands after using the toilets and any messy activities. Some children are able to blow their nose, using a tissue which they put into the bin after use, helping to prevent the spread of infection. However, children are not free from cross-contamination as they do not clean their hands before eating their snacks.

Staff regularly check the sand is clean and safe for the children's use. The children are aware they must not throw the sand when they are playing together.

Staff follow good procedures for administering any medication required. They label the medication and store it out of children's reach. Staff have collated information about a number of specific needs, keeping themselves informed of how to manage them appropriately. For example, sickle cell anaemia, asthma and diabetes. All medication administered is recorded.

Children receive appropriate treatment when they have an accident. Several staff hold a first aid qualification and a suitably replenished first aid kit is readily available for use. This is stored out of the children's reach. Staff record all accidents and parents see the record. However, a few incidents are recorded in the accident book, preventing staff from monitoring specific situations, for example, biting and pushing.

Parents know they must not send their sick child to the pre school to help prevent the spread of infection. Staff inform parents of any known infectious illness in the group by placing a notice on the parents' board. They follow good procedures for managing a child who becomes unwell while attending the group, helping to keep the other children free from infection.

All the children enjoy regular physical exercise and fresh air. They play in the garden whenever the weather is suitable. The children particularly enjoy using the coloured circular rope as a train travelling to Bromley, London and France. They take it in turns to be the driver as they recognise driver's need to take a rest for their safety. Other children enjoy practising their throwing and catching skills and playing with the parachute.

Fresh drinking water is readily accessible to all the children throughout the session. Children pour their own drinks, disposing of their beaker after use to prevent cross-contamination.

All the children enjoy healthy snacks provided by their parents, during the morning. Staff provide milk or water to drink. They are aware of any specific dietary needs, ensuring children receive appropriate food and drink for their individual needs.

The children sit together for their snack enjoying the social occasion as they chat about their day. They are encouraged to open their own boxes to develop their independence skills. However, staff pour the children's drinks. The children take as long as they wish to eat and enjoy their snack.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children spend their morning in clean, bright and generally well-maintained premises. The staff work hard to make them their own as they set out and put away all the toys and equipment each session. They display the children's work, making the premises child-orientated. Staff cheerfully greet each parent and child on arrival, making them feel welcome and part of the group.

The children access suitable toilets which are not immediately off the main playroom. Staff ensure the children are in their sight at all times while maintaining the children's privacy. This keeps the children safe and secure.

The children have ample space to move around their environment freely as staff leave sufficient space between table activities to prevent accidents. They are aware of the rules indoors and outdoors and good staff deployment ensures the children are safe and secure at all times. For example, children do not access the kitchen and only use the garden under direct supervision.

Staff organise the premises well, providing suitable areas for playing, resting, messy activities and time outdoors. They use the adjoining room for some small group activities or outdoors close to the main entrance, supervising the children closely. Children play with a good range of toys, activities and equipment on a daily basis. The range available ensures all areas of development are incorporated. Staff regularly rotate the equipment to provide a stimulating and interesting environment for the children. Staff check the toys are clean, suitable and safe on a daily basis. They remove any broken or damaged toys for repair or discarding.

Staff have identified all the potential hazards indoors and outdoors, taking suitable steps to minimise these to prevent accidents. For example, radiators are inaccessible and the garden gate is bolted. Staff remind children of the importance of taking care when using scissors to prevent accidents.

Staff monitor the main door, during arrival and departure times, preventing children leaving the premises unnoticed. They count the children in and out of the premises for garden play and supervise the areas well, ensuring the children are safe and secure. Good procedures are in place for outings. Staff buddy any parent helpers, maintaining a high adult to child ratio at all times.

Children participate in regular fire drills each term, ensuring they understand the importance of listening carefully to instructions in an emergency to keep themselves safe. All fire fighting equipment is suitably maintained and staff are aware of their individual role and responsibilities should the situation arise.

Children are protected through the staff's sound knowledge and understanding of how to manage child protection issues appropriately. The group has well-written guidelines and local information readily available for help and advice. Parents are aware of the policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All the children are developing confidence and self-esteem in the setting. They separate easily from their carers, quickly becoming absorbed in an activity of their choice. For example, completing puzzles or playing with the numerous cars and aeroplanes. Children are developing good relationships with the staff and other children. Staff incorporate the Birth to three matters and Foundations Stage frameworks into their curriculum, providing suitable activities, toys and equipment relevant to the individual needs of all the children attending. Some activities are organised in small groups relating to individual needs. However, some whole group activities require reviewing to ensure all the children are fully supported, enabling them to participate fully, providing them with a meaningful experience.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress through all the early learning goals. They are keen, interested and motivated to learn and they eagerly choose their own activities for much of the session. Many are able to concentrate for long periods of time completing 24 piece puzzles without help or making their own models. They are able to sit quietly at registration and story time. During change over periods they listen carefully, following instructions to tidy the toys away. They actively participate in discussions during whole group time. For example, children talked about going on a bus or a train. Older children are developing an awareness of the needs of the other children as they share the toys and equipment or help a child to undo their lunchbox. They are developing good independence skills as they put on their own coats, use the toilet independently or pick up the pens they have dropped without a reminder from staff. Many children have made special friends and some are missing those who have recently transferred to school.

The children are developing good language skills as they use good sentence construction and are able to make themselves understood. Some confidently speak in a large group and sing nursery rhymes to the other children. Older children are aware they must let people finish what they are saying without interrupting them. All the children enthusiastically join in with rhymes and songs they know, for example, 'The wheels on the bus'. Some are enthusiastic and regularly ask questions. They enjoy learning new words, for example, sputnik when they are building space models. They keenly share their interests, using their imagination to talk about rockets going to the moon. Some children are able to link letters to sounds using phonetics, for example, a child knew Z was for zebra. Children are able to write their names, using recognisable letters in the correct order. Others enjoy mark making in the home corner as they make shopping lists or write menus for the café. All the children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. They all join in eagerly with the 'Three Billy goats gruff' refrain.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to develop their mathematical learning. They enjoy counting the number of children each day and recognise the numbers one to 10 when they complete the number puzzle. Many are able to compare more or less as they discuss the number of children required for singing activities. For example, they knew they needed one more child to make five for 'Five green and speckled frogs'. They enjoy using the measuring bears, recognising the difference between the small, medium and large bears as they sort them. Children are developing an understanding of mathematical positional language as they line up to go outdoors and travel under, over and through the large apparatus in the garden. They all recognise an extensive range of shapes and patterns. Many know that two semi-circles make one circle. Children suggest a crescent shape looks like a moustache. Other children use shapes in their

pictures, for example, a child drew a triangle and was able to name the shape. Children recognise a wide range of colours and discuss where they have seen stripes at home, for example, on their toothpaste.

Children are developing a good understanding of the world about them. They enjoy looking at similarities in patterns, for example, large and small spots. Children discuss the changes they observe as they add water to the corn flour or sand. They are keen to understand how the cogs all move when they turn the wheel at the construction activities. Children enjoy using programmable toys on a regular basis, including calculators and telephones. They have occasionally used the newly acquired computer with many children able to competently use the mouse. Children enjoy talking about past and present events as they discuss going swimming tomorrow or collecting their big sister from school yesterday. They explore a wide range of resources on a regular basis, including sand, water, play dough, rice and paint. In the garden they discuss the seasons with the staff and are aware that the bird bath is important for the birds to have a drink. They know ice and snow melt and bees collect the nectar from the flowers. Some children know you should wear a helmet when you ride a motorbike to protect your head.

All the children move around confidently indoors and outdoors. They demonstrate good co-ordination as they practise their running, sliding, climbing, throwing and catching skills. The children do not bump into one another as they play. Children are developing a good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy. They know fresh air is good for them and that they should eat healthy food each day, including fresh fruit and vegetable. Staff discuss how good 'corn on the cob' is for you when children play imaginatively with them in the home corner. Children are developing an understanding of how their body works as they remove their coat when they get hot or take a rest after running in the garden. All the children are developing their large and small muscles through the varied tools and equipment they access daily, for example, scissors and climbing equipment. They particularly enjoyed the parachute games and the egg and spoon race at the Teddy Bears Picnic.

Children are developing their creative skills as they explore a range of materials, including different textures, for example, paint, glue and sand. They regularly make three dimensional models. Regular musical activities enable them to explore different sounds as they play instruments and sing. A specialist visiting musical activity is occasionally incorporated into the groups programme. Children use their imagination as they paint, draw, role play in the home corner. They particularly enjoy using the child-size mop and bucket to clean the home corner. Other children enjoy dressing-up and making themselves beautiful with the necklaces, bracelets and rings.

Staff plan the curriculum using long, medium and short term planning. It is topic based, incorporating all the early learning goals equally. The stepping stones are included into the terms planning. All the staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage, helping the children to build on their prior learning and understanding through good support. For example, staff use 'open ended' questions to help the children think for themselves and take notice of children's own interests. Some one to one activities are included, helping staff focus on particular areas of development. There is a good balance of adult led and free choice activities each session. Staff regularly observe the children, although they do not clearly identify the next steps for development and progression. They make written progress and development records for each child and give a detailed report to the parents when the child progresses to school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff implement the group's equal opportunities policy at all times. They respect all the families attending, treating each child as an individual. For example, staff gave each triplet a booklet for mummy.

Children attend from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Staff carefully gather detailed information for each child, including any additional languages spoken and the family's religion. This helps staff identify any additional help parents or children may need. For example, information in a different language or words staff can learn to help children to settle.

Children access a good range of toys and equipment, promoting positive images for all areas of equal opportunities. They enjoy learning about different festivals and learning to speak French. Children are developing their awareness of their local community through visits to the Metro bus station and from the local librarian and dentist.

New children settle quickly through the excellent procedures implemented by the group. Initially parents stay with their child for a short time, helping them and their child to develop confidence and a rapport with the staff team. The group uses a staggered settling-in routine, enabling staff to give individual attention and care to the new children. Children arrive slightly later and leave earlier than the main group for an initial period of time, helping them to develop confidence in the setting.

Staff incorporate each child's individual routine into their daily programme. A good range of younger toys and equipment is readily available for exploration and nappy changes are incorporated as required. Some children enjoy having their personal comfort toy with them throughout the session as they gain confidence and security.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the staff's knowledge and understanding in this area. The SENCO works closely with the child's parents and any other professionals to support individual children's developmental needs. They write individual plans with small steps for development and progression, incorporating these into the group's programme. Staff provide one to one care when required, supporting children appropriately and meeting their individual needs. Staff continue to attend relevant training opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding in this area, for example, speech and language and behaviour management courses.

Regular use of Makaton signs and 'what's in the box' activities help children to understand the routine for the day and interact with one another. Staff label areas of the room with pictorial images, depicting the number of children allowed to play at any one time, for example, six children in the home corner and four children on the play mat.

This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

All the children behave well. Staff implement the group's policy and procedures, acknowledging that some younger children may have difficulty managing their behaviour when they first attend, particularly those with limited language skills. Minimal behaviour management is required, during the sessions as children know the rules. The children share the toys and equipment well, recognising the need to take turns and play co-operatively with one another. The atmosphere is calm, relaxing and harmonious. Children proudly show their models and drawings to the staff. Staff reward them with praise and encouragement for their efforts.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff develop good relationships with all the parents. They make themselves readily available at the beginning and end of each session, enabling parents to discuss any concerns or share information about their child. Parents are encouraged to be as fully involved as they would like. For example, some parents help in the group and others participate in fundraising activities to help the group purchase new equipment. For example, parents collected vouchers, enabling the group to buy a CD player for musical activities.

Parents are very happy with the group and would recommend it to friends. They find the staff really nice, friendly, helpful, approachable and firm but fair. Initial information gathered about their child includes an 'all about me booklet', helping staff identify the child's individual needs. Parents continue to receive regular newsletters and information via the notice board, keeping them fully informed about the group's activities. They can speak to their child's key worker and see any written information at any time. All parents are aware of how to complain through the group's complaints policy and procedure.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider attends several days a week and her manager manages the group each day. This provides continuity of care for the children. Rigorous employment checks ensure all staff are suitable to work with children, keeping them safe and secure.

A high adult to child staff ratio is available each day, enabling children to enjoy some one to one attention, during the morning. This helps children and staff develop good relationships with one another. It particularly helps younger, less confident children to develop confidence and self-esteem in the setting.

The dedicated staff team work well together with several staff working at the group for a number of years. Newly employed staff have settled in well, bringing new skills and ideas to the setting. All the staff are happy in their work and enjoy their time with the children. Staff rotas ensure everyone is fully aware of their individual role and responsibilities each session. All staff take their responsibilities seriously, demonstrating their professional approach to their job as they attend additional training opportunities to improve their childcare skills.

The overall operational plan works well. Staff organise the setting daily, providing a balanced range of activities for the children to explore. They implement the group's policies and procedures, providing continuity of care for the children.

Staff implement good arrival and departure procedures, ensuring the children's safety at all times. Children collect their own name card on arrival and staff maintain a daily register. Arrival and departure times are incorporated into the daily register, staff sign in and out of the premises and a visitors' book is maintained. This ensures the safety of everyone on the premises should there be an emergency.

The leadership and management is good. The provider has a clear understanding of her personal role and responsibilities as owner of the group. She ensures her staff work to a high standard, providing good care for the children. Regular appraisals identify individual strengths and weaknesses. She encourages staff to continue to improve their childcare skills and supports any additional training required. The provider continues to work hard to improve and help children enjoy their time at the pre school as they develop and learn.

The group maintains all the required records and policies and procedures which promote the children's care, welfare and learning. These are securely stored, maintaining confidentiality. Parents only see their child's record.

The provider keeps abreast of all changes to the National Standards. For example, the complaints record and inspection report are readily available to all parents.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group were required to make a number of improvements following their last inspection. They have worked hard to address all the areas raised.

The group now has suitable policy and procedures for nappy changing to ensure the individual needs of the children attending are met.

They now record the children's arrival and departure times daily and ensure all visitors to the setting sign in and out. This ensures the children's safety at all times.

The low level mirror has now been removed, making it inaccessible to the children and the premises safe.

The group have added more opportunities for children to develop their use of information and communication technology each term. They have recently acquired a computer which will add to this equipment.

The group have developed their written observations on the children, incorporating the information into some focused activities. A new recommendation has been raised for the group to continue to identify children's next steps for development and incorporate this into the whole curriculum planning. This should ensure the individual needs of the children are always taken into consideration, helping them to progress and develop appropriately.

The group makes less use of work sheets, enabling children to learn through more meaningful experiences as they use the range of equipment regularly available.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action 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 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):

- ensure children clean their hands before eating their snack, keeping them free from infection
- review whole group time activities using the large chairs to ensure all children are fully supported and able to participate fully (this includes Nursery Education)

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 improve the use of each child's observations and incorporate their next steps more clearly into the overall activity plans and focus activities

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