

Lucky Ducks Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	301856
Inspection date	05 July 2007
Inspector	Ann Marie Lefevre

Setting Address	Scremerston First School, Scremerston, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 2RB
Telephone number	01289 307536
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Registered person	Lucky Ducks Pre-School
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?

Lucky Ducks Pre-School was registered 1996. The setting provides places for a maximum of 24 children at any one time; there are currently 19 children on the roll. Children are aged from two to under five years. The group participates in the Foundation Stage of Learning initiative. Children who experience learning difficulties are supported.

The premises are located within Scremerston First School in a small rural village, which is on the outskirts of Berwick town. Child care is provided in a designated classroom and in the school hall. There are facilities in the playroom for the provision of refreshments. Toilets are easily accessible. The school grounds are used for outside play activities.

The pre-school offers care for all children within the appropriate age range, however, most of the placements are from the local community. Child care sessions are held during term time only and are available from 8.45 until 11.45 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 9.30 until 12.30 on a Wednesday.

Overall responsibility for the pre-school group lies with the management committee of parents of the children attending. There are four regular staff members and of these, three have a

suitable early years qualification. All staff members are suitably experienced and have completed a variety of training courses. Students are welcomed into the group; they are appropriately cleared and supervised. The group also has support through a liaison programme with the school reception class teacher and from local authority early years advisors.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a variety of opportunities to develop their understanding of the importance of health and hygiene in their daily routines and activities. They are happy to help tidy small playthings away and respond enthusiastically to requests from staff. Children are encouraged to take responsibility in relation to personal cleanliness and wash their hands appropriately before handling food and after messy play or going to the toilet. Older children may gain independence as they use the washroom, which is adjacent to the main playroom. The use of paper towels after the hand washing process helps to prevent cross infection. At present, there is only cold water piped to the wash room basins and to the playroom sink. Hot water to wash dishes is provided by the school kitchen. There are plans for a hot water system to be made available for the pre-school.

Staff are keen to ensure that children benefit from being cared for in a clean and healthy environment. Children gain awareness of keeping their bodies healthy in ongoing discussions with staff and from the good example demonstrated by them. They learn about dental health, wearing appropriate clothing for the weather and participate in other 'all about me' type activities to give them an age appropriate understanding. Children also participate in 'Dansi' activities which help them to learn about serious topics in an entertaining way.

Children's health requirements are highlighted in the detailed recording systems and policies, in relation to their needs. The records are generally well maintained and ensure that parents and staff members are kept informed about any health issues. Staff are aware of how accident and medication records need to be kept, however, a small number of the entries are not dated and signed appropriately. Various staff members have completed appropriate first aid and food and nutrition training. There is a first aid kit which is checked and replenished when necessary. Following discussions during the inspection, staff are now aware of the need to check expiry dates on dressings. In addition, there is access to the school first aid kit.

Children benefit from the healthy eating policy in the pre-school setting and within the school. They enjoy food, such as fresh fruit, cucumber and toast at snack time. Children are able to attend school lunch one day a week in preparation for their progression to their school careers. Staff ensure that any special dietary needs are adhered to; they work closely with parents and obtain any necessary information about the children to make sure that they have the correct nutritional balance for positive growth. Children have drinks of milk or water with their food and additional drinks on demand. Meal times are social events with children enjoying their time with staff and peers. Children also learn about how food arrives on the table as they participate in simple cookery tasks.

Children develop their physical and emotional well-being as they participate in stimulating activities and projects which exercise their bodies as well as develop their thinking skills. They are confident as they use the wide range of large and small play equipment. Children benefit from being outdoors in the fresh air as they use the well equipped grounds in the school for

planned activities or just running around and having fun. In addition, children do a range of physical activities in the playroom as they enthusiastically join in movement, songs and rhymes to help them with their learning as well as exercising their bodies. Children also develop emotionally as they build positive relationships and socialise with other children and adults.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children access the designated childcare areas with effective, close, age appropriate supervision and support from the staff. They are encouraged to be aware of safety, both inside and outside the setting, in daily routines and activities. The premises are very comfortable and welcoming with the main playroom being well organised for children to use safely. Staff ensure the premises are safe and secure so that children are protected. Many safety measures have been taken, for example, there are secure entry systems to the building, socket covers are in place and the heater is securely guarded in the playroom. Children learn about keeping safe in practical ways, for example, being careful when using play equipment and craft tools. They are closely supervised in the playroom and in the school grounds when enjoying their energetic activities.

Staff take many steps to ensure that children do not gain access to hazardous areas or materials. Formal risk assessments are undertaken in the setting each session to make sure the premises and grounds are kept safe and hazard free. Fire exit signs and appropriate fire fighting equipment are in place and fire drills are undertaken on a regular basis in conjunction with the school. Staff are really vigilant and ensure that play resources, equipment and furniture are maintained in a safe and clean condition for the children attending; all items are checked frequently. Staff ensure that the toys and activities comply with safety standards and are appropriate for the age and stage of development of each child.

Children are well protected as there is carefully planned and maintained documentation in relation to child safety in the setting. Recording systems are used in conjunction with written policies and procedures, including child protection, to ensure consistency of care for each child. Children are also protected as various staff continue to develop their awareness, knowledge and skills by participating in training, including child protection. Although staff have had no concerns to date in relation to child protection issues arising in the setting, they have a clear understanding of what to be aware of, who to contact and what to record.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's development is well supported by staff who have a wealth of varied experience in childcare. All children thrive and progress well as they participate in the many stimulating activities and projects that introduce new learning opportunities as well as develop their existing skills. The activities are in keeping with the children's age and stage of development. Children explore and use their imaginations in various enjoyable and educational ways as they are sensitively guided and encouraged by the staff members. They build positive relationships with staff who respond skilfully to the age range of the children attending and their individual needs. They settle well and benefit from the staff's affectionate and calm approach to their care and learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is creative planning in place which is used effectively with the children. Children benefit from the many planned and incidental education opportunities which occur throughout each session. Staff monitor the children as they participate in activities and this informs future planning and practice. Many good teaching aids and methods are used to enlighten, for example, wall posters and other displays, consistent letter case for labelling and resources for activities being readily accessible. Play resources are used skilfully to provide many learning and life experiences. Children gain a sense of achievement as they complete individual work books in relation to aspects of the six areas of learning.

Children build confidence in relating to their peers and adults. They are encouraged to take a very active role in the group to help them develop their growing sense of independence. Equipment and playthings are organised to allow for flexibility and spontaneity, which enables each child to choose what they want to do and introduce their own ideas. Children are enthusiastic in their use of the play areas, which allows them to develop in fun and exciting ways.

Children participate fully in circle time, concentrate well and take an active part in discussions. They become familiar with the spoken word in many ways and listen attentively to guidance from adults. Children practice formative mark making using a variety of tools and media. They enjoy group story times and are respectful as they select books to look at individually. Children learn about numbers and simple mathematical concepts in many activities. They develop their number recognition and counting skills using a range of resources. They learn to identify shapes and patterns as well as gain an awareness of concepts relating to dimension.

Creative development features highly in the setting. Children enjoy activities, such as creating lovely paintings or moulding and cutting interesting play dough shapes. They engage in role play, for example, making and serving a pretend meal. They happily join in lots of song, rhyme and movement activities, which are fun and also provide valuable learning experiences. There are opportunities for children to measure, mix and pour as they participate in some cookery and prepare biscuits or decorate buns. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the natural world as they learn about animals and growing things, for example, while participating in the planting of seeds to tend or finding out about mini-beasts. They participate in simple science activities, such as chalking on the playground and pouring water on the chalk to see what happens.

Staff are skilled at using clear and simple language and guidance, which enables the children to learn and progress. They have a clear understanding of how children gain independence. They generally help children consolidate what they have learnt and extend their awareness. However, there are few opportunities for children to extend their awareness of modern technology. There is a computer and large touch screen for some planned activities, but children do not use the mouse or keyboard as the computer table is not suitable for the children to sit at. Although children have many learning experiences, they are not always encouraged to extend these, for example, in snack time tasks or in some outdoor play sessions when there are prolonged periods of sitting upon toys.

Staff ensure that the setting is well organised with resources which allow the children to have many effective learning experiences as well as lots of fun. There is a balanced range of activities and designated play areas reinforce children's understanding and knowledge. Staff prepare very well for the sessions and ensure that all necessary materials and equipment are in place both for the planned activities and additional free-play. Staff are sensitive to the differing

needs of each child. There is a close partnership between staff, parents and the school to ensure that each child really benefits from their placement in this setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's positive attitude towards equal opportunities and respecting individual and differing needs. There is a positive community spirit in the pre-school group and within the school. Children are also building their awareness of the wider world and different cultures. They participate in many creative activities about Elmer the African elephant, have made lovely Rangoli patterns which reflect Indian art forms and taste foods which originate in different countries. They experience familiar celebrations and festivals, such as learning about the meaning of Christmas as well as making craft items. They also gain an insight into what may be less familiar religious and cultural celebrations, for example, as they make Diwali lanterns. There is a variety of resources in the setting which reflect differing backgrounds. Stereotyping is discouraged and all children have the opportunity to participate in age appropriate activities according to their stages of development.

Children learn about sharing and valuing others from the good role models provided by the staff. Staff gently and sensitively support, praise and encourage all children in their daily routines and activities which helps them to develop their self-esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging. Children are happy and relaxed in the group and they respond well to the clear guidance from the staff. Children freely make choices in their play and daily routines and are confident as they select playthings and participate fully. All children are clearly valued by the staff, who have a sound knowledge of the children to ensure there is consistency and continuity so that each child can thrive and progress effectively.

The partnership with parents, carers and staff members is good. Parents participate in the exchange of information necessary for their child's care. They are kept well informed about daily issues and are aware of planning and topics for activities. There is a pre-school booklet with information about the setting, some guidance about policies and the areas of learning covered in activities. Notice boards and verbal updates provide useful guidance and information about the care of the children. Development files are maintained in relation to each child. Children borrow a chosen book to take home each week to share with family members. Many lovely examples of the children's work are displayed in the setting and children take lots of their art and other craft projects home to show what they have achieved. Children may choose a book to take home each week in their book bags and are able to enjoy these with family members. Parents are really positive in their comments about how their children are progressing and are very happy with their care in the setting.

The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good, which ensures that smooth, consistent practice is in place for the benefit of all the children and their parents and carers. Staff are focussed, caring and dedicated in their approach to their work in the daily care of the children. This is reflected in the setting; in the well organised child care areas, in the many safety measures taken and in the range of good quality resources, activities and equipment provided, which help children

learn and develop effectively. Clearly defined and sensitive daily routines enable children to settle well and feel secure.

Informative files, notice boards and many other means are available to enlighten staff and parents. A wide range of policies and procedures, such as child protection, behaviour management, complaints and equal opportunities are used to inform practice and protect the children. The policies have recently been updated and there are plans to consult parents about the content before they are finalised. There are detailed recording systems in place, including individual child records. Staff continue to update and develop these for the benefit of children attending, their parents and for the staff team. There are firm procedures to record child, staff and visitor attendance.

Children clearly benefit from the care provided and from the staff's positive attitude towards their own training and personal development. Various staff members have completed a wide range of relevant training relating to the health, welfare, safety and educational needs of the children. They continue to look at further development to enhance their existing good practice.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation made at the last care inspection in relation to further developing the range of activities in the outside play areas. This has been partly addressed as there is now a wide range of outdoor activities for the benefit of the children attending, however, outdoor activities could be further developed to reinforce and extend children's learning.

There was one recommendation made at the last education inspection in relation to ensuring that all parents being regularly informed about their child's progress and what they are learning. This recommendation has been addressed as child development recording systems have been improved and current planning is displayed so that parents are made aware of their child's progress.

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 the 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 that all accident and medication consent records are appropriately signed and dated

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 have further opportunities to reinforce and extend their awareness in daily routines, outdoor activities and in modern technology.

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