

Ladybirds Pre-School Leavenheath

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251547
Inspection date	02 November 2007
Inspector	Justine Leong
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Registered person	The Trustees of Ladybirds 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?

Ladybirds Pre-school opened in 1990 and operates from the village hall in Leavenheath, Suffolk. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open from 09:30 until 12:00 on a Monday, Thursday and Friday during term time only. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 13 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide rural catchment area. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and would support children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six staff. Two of the staff, including the manager have appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and learn about the importance of effective personal hygiene through their daily routines. They wash their hands after playing outdoors or using the toilet, and before eating. They have soap, paper towels and usually fresh running water to prevent the risk of cross-infection. Staff also clean tables thoroughly with disinfectant spray before cookery activities and inform children that this will help to stop germs from spreading.

Children's good health is also promoted as there is a clear sickness policy in place which is shared with parents. Three members of staff hold current first aid certificates and there is an appropriately stocked first aid box, helping to ensure children are well cared for in the event of a medical emergency. Well maintained accident records are in place, however, there is no written parental permission for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice, potentially compromising children's health.

Children have very good opportunities to develop physical skills such as balance and coordination as they enjoy free-flow play between the inside and outdoor areas. They have access to a broad range of toys including bicycles, scooters and dolls prams. Staff also plan a range of interesting and stimulating activities such as target games using beanbags, and water play involving pipes and buckets. Wheelbarrows, trowels and other gardening tools are provided as children play a significant part in planting and maintaining the garden, further helping to develop good physical skills.

Children's individual needs with reference to food and drink are clearly met as staff provide healthy snacks in line with the setting's healthy eating policy. Children sit together to share a mid-morning snack of fruit, crackers or bread, and a drink. Staff encourage children to acquire habits which promote a healthy lifestyle as they provide opportunities for children to pick and eat vegetables they have grown in the garden. Children have constant access to fresh water to ensure they do not become dehydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a safe and secure environment. They have ample space to move around, both inside and outdoors and the premises are bright and child-friendly. Children are kept safe at the setting as staff are well aware of potential hazards and take steps to minimise risks. For example, all accessible plug sockets have suitable covers and safety gates are in place to prevent children accessing potentially dangerous areas such as the kitchen. Visitors to the setting are vetted and have their identification thoroughly checked. They are also required to sign the visitor's book.

Effective fire precautions are in place including a fire blanket in the kitchen and a written fire procedure. This is regularly practised with the children to ensure everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff frequently remind them of safety rules such as not running indoors and they are aware that this is to prevent them tripping.

Children's welfare is protected as staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary according to the Local

Safeguarding Children Board. There is a clear child protection policy in place and most staff members have undertaken child protection training to ensure they would know what to do if they had concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the pre-school eagerly and settle quickly due to the welcoming atmosphere and supportive staff. They clearly enjoy their time at the setting and make good all round progress. Children under three take part in activities with reference to the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which ensures that their developmental needs are attended to. Progression is recorded following the framework and staff adapt activities to ensure all children can access them equally.

Staff effectively support and challenge children through questioning. For example, during a cookery activity staff consistently monitor children's understanding by asking simple questions and encourage them to make links to their own experiences of cooking at home. The organisation of activities enables children to initiate their own play and participate in activities of interest to them, helping to develop independence. Children develop fine motor skills such as cutting and threading as they have access to a wide range of resources including scissors, pegs, play dough equipment and paintbrushes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff work together to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children are engaged and focused. They carefully plan activities to draw children into the setting and encourage them to participate. For instance, the play dough table is located closest to the entrance as staff have observed that quieter children enjoy playing here on arrival. All activities are based on children's interests to ensure they remain motivated.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. This knowledge is used to effectively plan activities based on weekly topics and a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities ensure that children have the opportunity to learn at their own pace. Good support is provided during activities such as asking open ended questions which extends children's learning.

Children benefit from opportunities to work together in small groups and share their understanding with others. Staff also offer individual attention to children to support and challenge them as required. A keyworker system is in place and staff make regular observations to record children's progress towards the early learning goals. However, observations are not used to identify the next steps in children's learning to inform planning, potentially hindering children's progress.

Children use speech to organise and explore real and imaginary situations. They play together in the home corner, deciding to make a shopping list and negotiating what they will buy. They enter into lively discussions with staff about their favourite foods and are beginning to listen carefully to what others have to say. Staff provide a wide variety of toys and activities to encourage children's language development and listen attentively to their responses, helping

them understand their ideas are valued. Children have access to a range of fiction and non-fiction books in the comfortable book corner and enjoy sharing stories with staff.

Staff have created a stimulating writing area including an interesting display showing writing for a variety of purposes. Children have access to a wide range of mark-making resources such as crayons, pencils and pens, helping to develop good pencil control and an understanding that writing can be used to record and communicate information.

Children play with stimulating and interesting number resources, helping to foster an enjoyment of maths. Staff provide an array of colourful counting and matching activities and also use daily routines such as registration to encourage children to practise counting in context. Staff use the cookery activity as a valuable opportunity to teach children to think about shape, size and position and encourage them to use correct mathematical language. There are colourful displays around the room involving numbers and children enjoy playing maths games on the laptop, helping to further develop good maths skills.

Children investigate objects and materials and ask questions about how things work and why things happen. They are learning about the world around them as staff provide activities and resources encouraging them to think and make connections. For instance, children create a collage using dry leaves and discuss how they feel and sound. They discuss how this is different to the leaves on the plants growing in the garden. Children also enjoy exploring water as they play with a waterway constructed from pipes and buckets.

Children have daily opportunities to be creative as staff provide an exciting array of resources such as paints, glitter, glue and natural materials. They draw and paint pictures, practise using scissors to cut a variety of materials and create interesting collages. Imagination is encouraged through the provision of vibrant dressing-up clothes and children also use their imagination during role play in the home corner.

Children develop a secure sense of place and observe and discuss features of their local environment as they participate in regular walks and outings. They have valuable opportunities to explore nature as staff take them to visit a nearby smallholding where they can observe the animals and collect leaves from the trees to use in creative collages.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and settled at this nursery. Each child has their own named peg and name card to show that they are present, helping to foster a secure sense of belonging. Children develop good self-esteem as staff listen very attentively to them and value their responses. Children benefit as staff know them and their families well and work with parents to ensure their individual needs are met. Children and their parents complete a child-friendly information booklet prior to starting at the setting which details likes, dislikes and other important information. This enables staff to provide an individual approach and care for children in line with their parents' wishes.

Children have meaningful opportunities to learn about the wider world and different cultures. They take part in a range of festivals including Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year, during which parents are encouraged to visit and share their understanding with the children. Children are developing an understanding of responsible behaviour as, for instance, they clear away their own plates and cups after snack. Staff act as positive role models for behaviour and are

consistently polite and respectful towards each other. As a result, children's behaviour at the setting is very good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The provision has very effective arrangements for supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The special needs coordinator works very closely with parents and external agencies and has undertaken training to support her good practice. All activities are adapted to meet individual needs and promote an inclusive environment in which all children are able to reach their full potential.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents and carers and encourage them to become involved in their children's learning. Daily discussions ensure that parents are kept informed of the kind of day each child has had and what activities they have been participating in. Weekly plans are displayed and staff have created an information board about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage, ensuring parents are kept informed of the educational programme. Parents are kept up to date with their children's achievements as they receive regular progress reports which they are encouraged to add their own comments to. There is an effective complaints procedure in place.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive high quality care and education at this setting as the provider implements stringent recruitment and vetting procedures when selecting staff. There are clear outlines of responsibilities for each role and new staff are given a thorough induction and undertake a three month probationary period. This ensures that children are well protected and cared for by suitable adults with substantial knowledge and understanding of child development.

Children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to play a productive part in the setting are enhanced through effective staff deployment. Staff and children often work in small groups to share their understanding, and good ratios mean staff can occasionally offer children individual attention. Staff make good use of available play space both indoors and out. As a result, children are able to move freely and independently around the play areas accessing a range of activities which support their play and learning. All required documentation is in place and this is organised effectively and stored confidentially. Some written permissions are in place although there are no written parental permissions for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice, potentially compromising children's health.

The leadership and management is good. The manager and staff are very committed and work closely together to ensure the smooth running of the setting. Staff meet on a regular basis to share ideas and evaluate practice. They are encouraged to play an active role in the day to day planning of activities and to make suggestions regarding practices which they feel could be improved. The setting has very good links with outside agencies such as the area special needs coordinator, helping to ensure practice is inclusive. Policies and procedures including the operational plan are regularly reviewed ensuring that the pre-school continues to meet the National Standards. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the complaints and child protection policy be updated to include all required information. This has now been addressed and all policies and procedures are up to date and include all relevant information.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- obtain written parental permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop systems for identifying next steps in children's learning to inform planning.

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