

Ladybirds Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205384
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Inspector	Saida Cummings
Setting Address	Lyppard Grange Community Centre, Ankerage Green, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR4 0DZ
Telephone number	01905616841 or 01905357691
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Registered person	Ladybirds Pre-School
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 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 Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents and carers of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. The group opened in 1993 and operates from a large community centre hall in the Warndon Villages area situated on the outskirts of Worcester city. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the surrounding area. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. Children from the age of two to under five years of age attend the setting. The pre-school is open each weekday all year. Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:00 Monday to Friday and from 12:10 to 14:40 Monday to Thursday.

There are currently 51 children aged from two years and ten months to four years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for early education. The setting offers support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 11 members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and is also a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning to gain control of their bodies and move confidently around the setting. They take part in planned and spontaneous indoor physical activities to help use different parts of their bodies. For example, they enjoy joining in with favourite games, such as 'The Farmer's in his Den' and musical statues. Children benefit from the many opportunities for daily fresh air and exercise. They are able to develop their physical skills as outdoor play is regularly timetabled into the sessions. They readily join in with planned and spontaneous physical activities, such as skilfully using the climbing frame and balancing on the low-level 'snake' bench. They are challenged when using the range of outdoor play equipment as there are different types which are suitable for the different age groups.

Children's health is protected because staff recognise and reduce any possible risks. They help children to develop an understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Children are beginning to develop self-care skills during daily hygiene routines which include washing their hands after outdoor play, toileting and before meals. The risk of infection to children is reduced as parents and carers are made aware of the guidelines followed and children are not cared for if they have an infectious illness. There are appropriate procedures in place for dealing with any accidents, administering medication if requested and initially gathering information from parents and carers concerning individual children's health needs. Children are starting to build up their independence through daily routines. However, this needs further development to ensure children are able to attempt to do more for themselves.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a varied and interesting diet. They are provided with a wide variety of nutritious and healthy snacks and drinks. Snack times are relaxed, social occasions when children and adults sit together around the tables to enjoy their food and each other's company. Filtered drinking water is available at all times. However, this is placed on high-level tables and children ask staff to pour drinks for them when they are thirsty. Children's understanding of healthy eating is well supported with cooking activities, tasting sessions and positive support ensuring they develop a clear understanding of why some foods are healthier than others.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safeguarded as there are very good collection procedures in place which are shared with all the parents and carers. Their welfare is very well promoted by a team of staff who have a good understanding of the issues surrounding child protection and recognise that this is their first priority. Staff are vigilant, aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child. Some of the staff have completed appropriate training and they are all aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. They play safely both indoors and outdoors due to vigilant staff and carefully considered safety arrangements. Detailed risk assessments ensure that all potential risks to children have been carefully considered and effective procedures and practices are put in place to minimise these. Children are able to develop their confidence in a very safe environment as the indoor furniture and equipment are set out to enable them to move freely and safely. They are also kept safe when using the outdoor play area as this is fully enclosed and outdoor safety flooring is in place. There is a high ratio of well qualified adults to the number of children present and staff are carefully deployed, ensuring children are always well supervised.

Children have access to safe, clean and age-appropriate play equipment and resources. Staff follow very good procedures to ensure all equipment is regularly cleaned and checked for safety. Children are made aware of the safety rules through appropriate discussions and during everyday routines. They are taught not to run indoors, not to climb onto chairs and how to safely use the outdoor play equipment. Children take part in regular emergency evacuation drills which helps to develop their understanding of the action they should take in the event of a fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children socialise well, are busy and engage in purposeful and meaningful activities throughout the sessions. They use the well-resourced environment to learn new skills and are very well supported by friendly and knowledgeable staff. They are able to self-select from a wide variety of age-appropriate play equipment and resources which enables them to instigate their own play and use the toys and materials to engage in meaningful play. They are given time to concentrate and complete their chosen tasks. Planned activities are adapted accordingly depending on children's abilities and stages of development. Staff know the children very well and use their observations to plan stimulating activities for individual children to ensure they are able to join in at their own level and to move on to the next stage in their development.

Children are developing their independence physically and emotionally. They separate happily from their parents and carers and are warmly greeted by the staff. Children benefit from a stimulating and exciting care and learning environment where they make very good developmental progress. They are confident and are building up their self-esteem. Staff are very attentive to children's individual needs and interact well with them. They use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan appropriate activities for this age group which ensures they have opportunities to develop and build on their knowledge and skills. The younger children play alongside the three and four-year-olds and benefit from watching and learning from their older friends. The interaction between the younger and older children helps to develop a caring, social group who learn from each other.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are motivated, enthusiastic and keen to learn. Staff plan interesting activities and make very good use of the available resources to motivate children and to help them try new and different experiences. The effectiveness of curriculum planning for all children is achieved because each staff member takes responsibility for a small group of children as their key worker. They successfully use observations and discussions with parents and carers to devise individual play plans for each child. This ensures each individual child is given the opportunity to develop at their own pace. Staff set achievable targets for each child to progress or to challenge them in specific skills. The planned activities

are effectively evaluated to ensure children's learning objectives are met and staff use this information to adapt or extend further planned activities. Consequently, children are making very good progress in all areas of learning.

Children are enthusiastic and enjoy an interesting range of well-resourced creative activities. They are able to create their own paintings and drawings as they have various opportunities to take part in art and craft activities. They take pride in their creations which are colourfully displayed around the hall. Children play imaginatively and co-operatively when they join in with the interesting range of available activities. They are very successful at linking their own experiences into their imaginative play. For example, they independently use the dressing-up clothes to engage in role play and take 'pictures' of each other using the play camera. Staff encourage children's involvement by asking open questions which encourage children to think for themselves and help them to extend their play further. Rotational planning ensures a good range of construction play equipment, media and materials are offered for children to design, build and adapt.

Children have regular opportunities to investigate, explore and use their senses. An example of this is when they recently had a visit from 'Zoo Lab' which enabled them to find out about animals. They enjoyed looking at and watching animals, such as a snail, a toad, a spider and a snake. They were able to find out about how these animals lived, such as the snail having two antennae and that it uses the shell as a home. Children have many opportunities to use information and communication technology as part of their everyday play. They confidently use programmable toys, for instance, when using the play telephones and tills during role play. Children's personal, social and emotional development is well fostered because of the staff's knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and progress. They form positive relationships with staff and each other. They are enthusiastic and eager to join in planned and spontaneous activities. The staff consistently and positively interact with the children to encourage their interest, involvement and learning. However, the organisation needs reviewing to further develop children's independence. Children's behaviour is managed very well as staff hold appropriate discussions to encourage them to play safely, think about their actions and to be kind to one another. As a result, children are generally well behaved which enables them to progress as there is a positive learning environment.

Physical development is thoroughly promoted both indoors and outdoors. They have space to explore and use their imagination when using the outdoor play facilities. They confidently use various play equipment to help them balance, climb, slide and rock. Children have opportunities for writing during specific planned activities and as part of their everyday play. Staff ensure various writing materials are made available at all times to encourage children to develop their writing skills. Communication skills are promoted very well through relaxed conversations and an interest in what children have to say. Children enjoy stories and spontaneously use the book corner to look at books which interest them. Children use number and mathematical concepts in their play and everyday routines. For example, they use language such as over and under when using the large parachute and are good at sequencing when using the different coloured building bricks for construction. Children recognise different shapes and use the correct name for the shape. Their spatial awareness is encouraged through everyday activities, such as when finding a space before physical play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a positive understanding of the wider world as they play with special resources that help them to acknowledge a diverse society. Positive role models are seen as they play with dressing-up clothes, small world toys and books. Their awareness of the world around them and the wider society is encouraged through a range of activities and outings. For example, they take part in local outings and enjoy investigating their local surroundings. Children's birthdays and cultural festivals including Chinese New Year, American Independence Day, Easter and Christmas are celebrated and these help children develop positive attitudes to our multicultural society. They receive lots of praise and encouragement to help them understand what is expected of them. They are able to follow adults' instructions and hold discussions concerning safety rules and behaviour. They work and play well together, taking turns and sharing. Staff are good role models for the children, praise and encourage children's positive behaviour and ensure there is a consistent approach. Any behavioural issues are dealt with appropriately and sensitively. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children gain confidence in an environment where they feel comfortable and secure. Their individuality is valued and staff help them to feel good about themselves by frequently providing positive support, praise and encouragement. There are plenty of opportunities for children to be valued and their individual personalities are recognised and affirmed. All children feel a strong sense of belonging because of the effective keyworker system that helps to build a close relationship with staff. Settling-in routines are organised for new children and time allowed to share information about their individual needs in order to establish arrangements for their care. Parents and carers are provided with good quality information about how the setting is organised and are made aware of the activities their children have taken part in through discussions and the displayed information.

Children are encouraged to be involved and staff ensure all children are included. There is an effective equal opportunities policy in place which is implemented by all staff. There are excellent procedures in place for caring for any children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Staff are experienced and show a very good awareness of how to ensure children's individual specific needs are met. They work alongside parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure individual care or educational plans are implemented to help all children reach their full potential. There is also an effective procedure for working with any children who speak English as an additional language. Any children with a specific need are included in the life of the setting as activities are adapted appropriately to ensure all the children are able to progress at their own pace. The setting also organise one-to-one care if required.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Staff are very aware of the importance of involving parents and carers in the life of the setting and their children's development. They work well together to fully promote children's progress by identifying their starting point and carefully planning the next steps to enable them to develop their skills. Staff establish a very good relationship with parents and carers which contributes significantly to children's well-being in the setting. The parents and carers are provided with very good quality information about the setting which includes information about nursery education and how children work through the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are kept very well informed of what their children do and their achievements through daily discussions which include the activities their children have enjoyed taking part in. Weekly activity plans are displayed for parents and carers to see and regular newsletters inform them about forthcoming topics and

themes. There are some links between home and the setting to extend and involve parents and carers in their children's learning and experiences. However, this needs further development. For instance, how they can help their children link letter sounds and recognise the written letters during everyday home routines, whilst shopping and when out walking. Parents and carers are involved in the decisions of how to help their children take the next step in their progress through regular informal verbal exchanges and involvement with their children's progress records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children enter an environment that is highly stimulating and motivates all aspects of their development. Their care is supported by enthusiastic staff and strong management. The organisation of all aspects of the setting has developed and improved with a strong focus on developing the outdoor play facilities. A happy, relaxed and friendly environment is offered where children are safe, well cared for and able to make very good progress. Staff plan stimulating activities using the broad range of interesting resources to enable children to be involved in meaningful and purposeful play. Although children's independence is encouraged most of the time, the setting's organisation needs reviewing to ensure this is further developed. Children need to be able to attempt to do more for themselves to ensure they have many opportunities to develop basic skills, such as putting on their own coats at the end of the sessions.

The service is regularly reviewed as parents' and carers' views and suggestions are taken on board and whenever possible changes are made to accommodate any requests. The effective policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety and well-being. There are many detailed documents in place which are regularly reviewed and updated, taking into consideration current legislation affecting the care of children. Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures are in place which ensures children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Parents and carers are kept fully informed of the setting's events through regular newsletters and notices. There are effective and very good systems in place for keeping the required records. Children's care is enhanced because of the expertise of staff and the good quality organisation. The professional development of staff is encouraged through a system of appraisal and training. Children benefit from the staff's commitment to further development as any new procedures or good practice is implemented into the care and education provided.

Leadership and management for nursery education are good. The management and staff are committed to developing high quality through continual review and monitoring. They have clear aims and there are good strategies in place to evolve and develop the provision. The effectiveness of curriculum planning for all funded children is very good. Staff have a good knowledge of how young children learn and incorporate this into the sessions, using effective questioning and ensuring they supervise the children without inhibiting their ideas and imagination. In this way, staff ensure children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the Early Learning Goals. They work closely together and are flexible in their teaching approach and often alter curriculum plans to allow them to make the most of spontaneous learning events and to follow children's own interests. The key workers use observations to track each child which assists with identifying children's strengths and weaknesses. Individual children's assessments help staff to provide children with individual support and personalised learning. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to develop the special needs policy and to make sure parents and carers always have opportunities to sign the accident records.

The written special needs policy has been developed and now reflects the latest legislation. All staff, parents and carers are made aware of this policy which enables all relevant parties to work together to ensure the needs of any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully met.

The staff have developed a system to ensure parents and carers are always requested to sign the accident records.

As a result of these improvements children's health, safety and well-being is assured.

Nursery Education:

There were no key issues identified at the last Nursery Education inspection but the provider was asked to give consideration to the organisation of free-standing outside play activities to ensure they do not encroach on each other, and the opportunities for more-able children to use more challenging wheeled toys.

The outdoor play facilities have improved and a new play area is now in place. This includes various fixed play equipment and children no longer have to use free-standing outdoor play equipment in this area. Therefore the issue of the organisation of free-standing outside play activities no longer applies.

The management and staff have tried to overcome the issue of making more appropriate wheeled toys available for the older and more-able children but have encountered problems due to the lack of storage facilities within the community building. This has now been resolved and the setting are in the process of purchasing appropriate large wheeled toys to offer the older and more-able children opportunities to use more challenging equipment.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents and carers, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 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):

- develop the organisation of the sessions to further encourage children's independence and to enable them to carry out tasks for themselves and develop basic skills.

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 the information shared with the parents and carers to ensure they are given further opportunities to be involved in their children's learning in a variety of ways.

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