

Ladybird Play and Toddler Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY280989
Inspection date	06 March 2008
Inspector	Emma Bright
Setting Address	The Salvation Army Hall, Impington Lane, Impington, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB24 9LT
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Ladybird Play And Toddler Group
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?

Ladybird Play and Toddler group is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 2004 and operates from the Salvation Army hall. It is situated in the village of Impington on the outskirts of Cambridge. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open three days a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) from 09:15 to 11:45 during school term times. A lunch club is offered from 11:45 to 12:45 according to demand. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from two to three years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup supports children who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's nutritional needs are very well met; they help themselves, selecting from a variety of fresh fruits which are attractively laid out to encourage them to try new tastes. Children are beginning to learn about healthy eating because practitioners have a good understanding of childhood nutrition. Parents provide a variety of snacks for children to share in accordance with the setting's healthy eating policy. Children demonstrate an awareness of being healthy and are beginning to make connections about fruit being 'good for you' as they discuss their favourite foods. Children's individual dietary needs are met as clear information is gathered from parents about allergies or special dietary requirements and this ensures children can eat safely.

Children demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene, which they learn through regular routines and sensitive reminders from practitioners when necessary. However, the hand washing arrangements for messy play means that children cannot clean their hands effectively and this potentially affects their health. Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences; they competently climb large apparatus and enjoy going down the slide on their tummies. Children enjoy blowing bubbles and excitedly run after them in the wind. This means they get plenty of exercise to promote their growth and development. Children develop their small muscular skills and use a good range of tools and utensils to acquire new manipulative skills. For example, they use small rods to collect up magnetic fish with increasing control and this helps to encourage good hand and eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around freely indoors, accessing activities and they confidently select resources to support their play. Emphasis is given to making sure that the environment is welcoming and well prepared with a range of activities, which stimulates children's interest and enhances their development. Resources have been carefully selected to support children's play. They are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they remain safe and in good condition. Thorough safety policies and procedures are clearly implemented by practitioners to ensure children's safety. For example, children confidently practice coming down the slide backwards because practitioners carefully assess and supervise the activity, allowing children to take acceptable risks in a safe environment.

Children are protected and kept safe from harm as all practitioners have a sound understanding of their role in child protection so that they are able to act in children's best interests. However, practitioners have not yet updated their training in child protection, which means some of their knowledge is not completely up-to-date so children's welfare is not fully safeguarded. Children's safety is enhanced by thorough security procedures to restrict access to the setting and prevent them from leaving the premises unaccompanied; practitioners are particularly vigilant in their supervision of children to ensure their safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children arrive happy and with eager anticipation at the setting; they separate happily from their parents and carers and thoroughly enjoy their time at the playgroup. Children acquire new knowledge and skills because practitioners gently encourage them to participate in activities, using good questioning skills to help children think and develop their growing language and listening skills. For example, younger children confidently join in with older children to act out 'two little dicky birds' and excitedly run up and down flapping their 'wings'.

Children play happily together and are developing positive relationships with one another, which contribute to their sense of belonging. Children confidently offer their comments and ideas, which practitioners treat with respect and this develops their self-esteem. For example, children discuss what birds like to eat and earnestly explain to one another that 'we don't eat worms because they're yuck!' Children benefit from the warm interaction with practitioners and they have formed good relationships with them, which helps the children to settle well and feel secure in their care.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from practitioners' good understanding of the Foundation Stage and they know how the activities they provide contribute to children's progress. Practitioners monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals so that they can build on what children already know and they plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. Children's experiences are enhanced by the skilful interaction of practitioners who clearly enjoy working with them and use their good understanding of child development to support children's learning. As a result children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Planning is in place, which provides a broad range of interesting activities and experiences that cover all areas of learning. Although a well-prepared learning environment is available some routines and activities do not always enable children to fully benefit from it to extend their independent learning.

Children use their imagination, dressing up as 'menders' to 'mend motorbikes and lorries' with their 'tools'. They enjoy exploring different media as they squeeze paint through their fingers and shape playdough into big and small balls. Children observe changes in the weather and learn to care for living things. For example, they make food for birds, carefully pushing seeds in to balls of lard and explain 'it's for the birds to put in the tree'. In addition, children independently make creative use of the leftover seeds to make 'seed pictures'. Children develop their understanding of numbers and counting in practical activities and during the daily routine; they demonstrate a growing understanding as they sing simple songs, such as 'five little ducks' and they count how many 'fish' they have caught which they competently sort for colour.

Children are developing good speaking and listening skills; they confidently make valued contributions to discussions and enjoy sharing what they know. All children enjoy listening to well-read stories or looking at books alone; they select from a good range of books, which they handle with care and respect. Children's early writing skills are developing well as they use marks readily to represent their ideas. For example, they draw with chalk and explain they have 'made a circle'. Children's behaviour is good and they take turns, such as when negotiating for resources. They demonstrate awareness of the needs of others such as showing one another how to wipe their nose with a tissue and dispose of it in the bin. Some children have formed

firm friendships with one another and they participate in earnest conversations about their hairstyles, discussing who has 'spiky hair'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from good settling-in procedures that are based around their individual needs, this helps to support children in the transition between home and the setting. Parents receive information about the setting so they know about activities and events, and have daily opportunities to discuss their child with practitioners. This helps children to settle and ensures their individual needs continue to be met. All documentation is in place to share information with parents and carers so that they know about the setting's policies and procedures. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from practitioners' experience and caring support; practitioners actively work with parents, carers and other agencies to support the children's needs and this ensures that they are fully included in the life of the setting.

Children's behaviour is good. They interact confidently with adults and their peers, learning to consider the needs of others and to work together co-operatively. Practitioners set clear boundaries and consistently use positive language to help children understand what is expected of them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. All children have opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through a range of well-planned activities. The good range of resources that positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community, supports their play.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is satisfactory. Practitioners meet regularly with parents to discuss their child's progress and they receive information about playgroup activities. However, parents have less information on the Foundation Stage and fewer opportunities to support their child's learning at home. This means they are not always aware of how activities help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals, and children do not benefit from the sharing of activities with their parents that further enhance their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a very well-prepared environment that promotes positive outcomes for all children and this contributes significantly to their enjoyment at the setting. Children are happy and confident because practitioners develop warm and caring relationships with them. For example, an effective key worker system ensures that all children's needs are clearly known and met. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that practitioners are suitable and have appropriate skills and knowledge to work with children.

Practitioners work very well together as a team and demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates and challenges children of all ages. All required documentation is in place to underpin the good practice in promoting positive outcomes for children. However, some documentation is incomplete and disorganised, which means that children's welfare could potentially be affected in an emergency. Good settling-in procedures ensure that parents feel secure in the care provided and children settle readily and become confident members of the group.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. The Lead Practitioner is committed to continued development of the setting's practice to ensure that all children have access to good quality learning experiences and has begun to identify and address areas for improvement. However, systems to monitor and evaluate the provision for early education are not yet fully developed to ensure that practitioners can share good practice and children benefit from further challenge. All practitioners demonstrate a real commitment to continuously developing the setting's practice to ensure that all children have access to high quality learning experiences. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to consider the organisation of snack time and improve documentation. Snack time is organised so that children can select cups and pour their own drinks which suitably encourages their independence. The procedures for lost and uncollected children, complaints, and the child protection policy have been updated, which assures children's safety and welfare. However, following changes in legislation further amendment of the complaints procedure and the child protection policy is needed to ensure parents are informed and children are fully safeguarded.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

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):

- improve hand washing arrangements
- continue to update practitioners' knowledge and understanding of child protection issues to comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines
- review and update documentation with regard to the complaints procedure and child protection policy and ensure the daily register shows more clearly children's hours of attendance. Make sure that key documents are easily accessible.

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 develop activities and everyday routines so that all children benefit from the rich learning experiences and they are consistently challenged to enhance their independent learning (this also applies to care)
- provide further information for parents on the Foundation Stage, developing opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and enable them to contribute to their child's assessment record
- develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision for early education so that practitioners can share good practice and children benefit from further challenge.

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