

Lovat Hall Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141835
Inspection date	24 January 2008
Inspector	Dorcas Forgan
Setting Address	Lovat Hall,, Silver Street, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, MK16 0EJ
Telephone number	07950 791952
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Lovat Hall Playgroup
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?

Lovat Hall Playgroup has been registered since 1974 and runs in a room attached to a church hall close to the town centre of Newport Pagnell. Children attend from the locality and surrounding areas. A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group is open Monday to Friday, term time only, from 09:20 until 11:50 and on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:20 until 14:50. The Monday morning session is for children who will be starting school during the year.

There are currently 21 children from two and a half to five years on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup is managed by a parents committee. They employ six members of staff, five of whom are qualified and one is attending training.

The group are accredited with the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children remain healthy because practitioners follow current environmental health and hygiene guidance, policies and procedures extremely well. There is a designated member of staff who takes the responsibility of coordinating the good practise. Staff ensure they follow thorough routines, such as when cleaning they use anti-bacterial spray. Children are gaining an exceptionally good understanding of personal hygiene. They follow the daily routine of washing their hands before eating their snacks and they wash their hands independently at other times. They have carried out experiments covering their hands in glitter and oil to show how difficult it is to clean hands effectively without soap and warm water. They are becoming increasingly independent in their own care.

The playgroup follow a healthy eating practise. They ask the parents to supply the majority of the snacks. Children are learning that they can keep themselves healthy by eating fresh nutritional foods such as fruit and raw vegetables with additional items like bread sticks and plain popcorn. Whilst eating their snacks other areas of learning are also introduced such as maths, they match the number of fruit with a written numeral. The children pour their own drinks of milk or water. Good manners and polite behaviour are endorsed. Drinks are available for children to help themselves throughout the session as they feel thirsty.

Children take part in physical activities daily which they thoroughly enjoy; these are normally in the fresh air. Staff plan the activities so that they are varied and include all types of physical play. A very popular activity was 'Wellie Wednesday' when they all wore their boots to splash in the puddles. They play in the garden with a good range of equipment including bikes, scooters, climbing frames and soft play cubes, they also take part in an obstacle course. Children are beginning to understand the physical effects of exercise on their bodies. They discovered that after jumping on the trampoline their pulse becomes faster and they become hotter. Children are gaining an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through eating well, good hygiene routines and physical exercise in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a cheerful, welcoming environment that is safe and secure. The room is quite small but extremely well organised so that children have access to a very wide range of interesting and stimulating activities, that are very well planned. Children move around safely as they have free access to all areas. The room is made to look attractive with the displays of the children's work such as the patterns they have created and the many posters with information. Children are becoming familiar with the printed words through the labelling and interesting use of signs for the children's information. Staff carry out daily checks to ensure that the risk of accidents are minimised. They carry out risk assessments with all new activities and outings. Security is extremely good which includes the alarms that are on each door to alert staff if they are opened. The staff follow effective security measures to supervise the collection of children.

Children use a very wide range of suitable and appropriate equipment and resources. The room is divided into many separate areas where the children can initiate their own games such as the role play areas of home corner and greengrocers shop, along with the dressing up clothes. They

can choose to sit and look at books independently in the bookbus. One area is kept clear so that children can take out their own choice of equipment such as construction or puzzles. They help themselves to drawing and craft resources along with mixing their own paints at the easel. Children learn to keep themselves safe and avoid accidental injuries. Staff show them how to walk safely when near cars and talk to them about the dangers of moving cars. They frequently practice the emergency evacuation but the fire procedure is not displayed in the main room.

Staff understand their responsibility to the children to safeguard them from harm. They have very clear knowledge of the correct procedures to follow if they have concerns. Up to date guidance and phone numbers are kept close at hand in case they need to be referred to at any time. Parents are made aware of the safeguarding policy. Children are protected from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Individual children's needs are met very well. They are all settled and happy in the playgroup, children who need extra support receive it. Because the group is small, staff know all of the children well and ensure that they are welcomed and involved. The children are interested and inquisitive, they are very keen to take part in the activities; there is a happy, lively atmosphere. Children approach the staff with confidence; they show affection and ask for help when necessary, they are forming trusting relationships. Many of the children have formed friendships and seek each other out at activities. The youngest children take part in the same activities as the older children, but these are sometimes adapted or the children receive more support from the adults. At the session for the older children on a Monday activities are slightly more focused with more challenging learning intentions.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are gaining independence and confidence as they choose which activities to take part in and make their own decisions about what they want to achieve. Staff encourage the children to think for themselves and express their thoughts, they are learning to have self-control. Senior staff have very competent knowledge of the Early years Curriculum. The planning is clear and ensures that all areas of learning are included daily with focused activities having more specific objectives. Observations are made of the children as they play to record that learning intentions are met and to make sure children are making progress, but staff do not record children's next steps of learning. Staff use very good teaching methods to be sure that the children remain interested and involved. They talk with the children giving them time to think about their reply and listening with care. They ask open-ended questions and provide practical challenging activities. They have high expectations of the children's abilities.

Staff start the day with registration which includes a game, children are eager to take part individually but they look out for others and help them. Children work cooperatively, they pose for others to take photographs as they play. Some like to play on their own, such as at the water tray. They find their own aprons and take the resources that they want from the basket, such as the sea creatures, and make up their own story. They play here until they are satisfied, they can persist for as long as they wish. Concentration is being developed well. Children are encouraged to talk in front of other children, such as a child who was asked to describe how she made popcorn at home. Their listening skills are being developed very well through a variety of activities like listening to a musical instrument and guessing which one is being played. Children enjoy looking at books individually and with friends, they handle them well and follow

the picture sequences they know their favourite books well. They listen intently to stories that are read to them, they answer questions confidently and anticipate what will happen. New vocabulary is introduced effectively. Children have many opportunities to recognise letters, to use phonics and to write their own names or mark make.

Mathematical language is used throughout the session and children use it naturally. They are becoming confident at counting and recognising the numerals which are displayed in many areas. They use the caterpillar number line to endorse their counting and the numbered trucks in the gravel tray provide many different games and the use of language to describe sizes and weights. Children calculate how many plates they need at one table so that all the children can have one. They talk about numbers 'more than' and 'less than' another. They all join in enthusiastically with the number songs such as Goldilocks, Four Little Ducks and Eight Fat Sausages Frying in a Pan.

Children explore and investigate a wide range of media; they grow their own sunflowers, explore light and dark, observe worms in the wormery and make volcanoes. They are able to use a very wide range of information and communication technology. They are becoming very proficient at using the camera and the computer along with the remote control bumble bee and tape recorder. They take photographs during the session, download them to the computer and print them out with the support of an adult. They are beginning to understand the concepts of time. Staff plan physical activities very well to enhance the children's gross and fine motor skills from bouncing on trampolines to threading fruit onto skewers. Children express themselves creatively in several ways; through paintings and drawings and building creations from a wide range of resources. They are very familiar with the musical instruments and use them when they wish. Children express themselves very well through the role play areas, they use their imaginations freely. Staff plan these with great imagination from the very well stocked greengrocers to the swimming pool. Children have the opportunity to respond to and describe experiences using their senses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children gain a sense of belonging to the group, they are all included in all activities and are made to feel welcome and special. Children have many opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the wider world. This is achieved through planned themes, walks in the local area, taking part in community projects and learning about other cultures, festivals and traditions. They invite parents into the group to share their interests and tell them about their work, such as fire fighting, or to bring in a new baby. Children take part in a wide variety of events from Red Nose Day, making poppies at Remembrance Day and celebrating Chinese New Year. There is a very good range of resources to illustrate diversity which include dressing up clothes, small world figures and books. The staff have effective arrangements in place to care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities although none currently attend. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are very well behaved. Staff are very good role models who act in a calm and patient way, explaining to the children and encouraging them to behave cooperatively. Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour; they know when they need to be quiet and listen and when to help tidy away toys and activities. They work harmoniously together and are learning to negotiate and take turns. Children are developing self-esteem and respect for others.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's care is enhanced by the very good partnerships that are being made between the staff and parents. Parents receive comprehensive written information which includes newsletters with information about what the children will be doing in future weeks. Parents are invited to take part in sessions if they wish. They can discuss their child at any time or to make appointments with their child's key worker for more in depth conversations. They receive written reports and are invited to open days. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. Their views are sought and acted on.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from their care being very well organised. The committee follow rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure children are well protected. Along with the staff they carry out a continuous cycle of reviewing the policies and procedures to make sure they are relevant. The operational plan is available for everyone to see. The daily routine is organised very well to ensure children have the opportunity to choose and take part in various activities that they can complete to their satisfaction. The effective organisation of the premises and the equipment provides a dynamic environment. The committee maintain very good staff ratios so that staff can provide individual attention as necessary.

Leadership and management is good. The committee and manager work closely together to ensure the smooth running of the group and the effective development and participation of the children. The dedicated staff work cooperatively, they all take on responsibilities gaining areas of expertise. The staff are encouraged and supported to attend additional training when ever possible to ensure their knowledge is up to date. They all receive regular supervision and support. All involved in the group monitor and carry out evaluations to assess their performance; they are all committed to improvement. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the Children Act inspection recommendations were made that a record should be kept of all visitors and that parents should be informed of how to make a complaint. Both of these have been achieved in full to enhance the children's safety and wellbeing.

At the Nursery Education inspection issues raised were the need to extend the assessment and evaluation procedures and to provide further opportunities for children to practise writing and number calculation. It was also said that observations made of the children should be improved. The planning is now comprehensive and includes evaluations. Observations made of the children are good and include books to record all the different areas of learning with the individual stepping stones. Children are now making very good progress in forming letters, writing and calculation through the many opportunities they have at each session to practise.

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.

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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 fire evacuation policy is displayed in main room so that all are aware

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 individual children's next steps of learning are recorded and used 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