

# Ladybird Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY245317
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Penny Wood
<b>Setting Address</b>	Manor School Grounds, Lydalls Close, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7LB
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<b>Registered person</b>	Ladybird Preschool
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ladybird Preschool opened in their current premises in 2003 and the setting is managed as a public limited company. The setting operates from purpose-built premises in the grounds of Manor School, Didcot, and serves the local and wider communities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

The preschool opens on weekdays all year around, with the exception of bank holidays and over the Christmas period. The preschool opens at 08:00 and sessions are held from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15, with an optional lunch club available. Extended care, comprising a breakfast and after school club, is provided for children up to 11 years old during school term time.

The preschool employs 18 members of staff, nine of whom hold an early years qualification. The other nine are undergoing relevant training. There are currently 102 children on roll, 53 of whom are funded to receive nursery education. The preschool supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing an understanding of appropriate hygiene routines which reduce the spread of germs and infections. For example, they independently wash their hands prior to eating and after craft activities. Staff adopt suitable hygiene procedures during the daily routines. They wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies, and mop up spills as these occur. However, not all toys are sufficiently clean to ensure they are hygienic and suitable for children's use.

Appropriate procedures promote children's physical health. Information displayed in the entrance hall informs parents of when to be vigilant, and exclusion times are in place to reduce the spread of contagious illness, such as sickness or diarrhoea. Children receive appropriate medical care because staff are trained in both first aid and specific medical procedures, such as the use of epipens. However, the group do not have prior written consent to use plasters on cuts or grazes. Documentation is in place to record accidents and medication administered to children, but not all of these records are shared with parents to inform them of the care their children receive. Written consent to allow the group to seek further professional advice or treatment ensures children receive appropriate care following a more serious accident or illness.

Children benefit from opportunities to be physically active both indoors and out. They enjoy free access to the enclosed play area outside, with a sheltered area enabling the group to maximise outdoor play in both inclement and hot weather. Children enjoy opportunities to develop their coordination skills on the good range of outdoor equipment. They enjoy balancing as they walk along beams. They climb small trees and enjoy splashing in puddles in their Wellington boots.

Children are developing an understanding of healthy eating habits. They enjoy snacks of fruit and sandwiches during the morning and afternoon sessions and at the after school club. Children have a hot meal or are provided with a packed lunch by their parents. Hot meals include healthy options, and children are encouraged to develop their independence when using knives and forks to eat. Drinks are readily available throughout the session, which ensures children do not become thirsty.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

There are defined areas for different types of play, such as a home corner. Large low-level windows enable even the smallest children to see outside, particularly over the pond and the outside play area. All children enjoy access to a suitable range of toys and equipment which are maintained in a safe condition.

Children's safety is promoted. Plug sockets are covered, the pond is suitably enclosed, and doors have double handles in order to restrict children's access to unsuitable areas. Risk assessments carried out on both a daily and annual basis highlight concerns, and action is taken when necessary to reduce the risk of harm to children. Staff have a clear understanding of the procedure to follow should an emergency occur, and practise emergency evacuations with the children. Exits are clearly marked and kept free of obstruction.

During outings, appropriate procedures ensure children have suitable supervision and enjoy the outing in safety. Staff understand the group's child protection policy. Management have a secure understanding of the action to take in order to protect children from harm and to promote their welfare and safety.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff provide support to help new and less confident children settle into the group. Time set aside at the beginning and end of each session allows children to gather into small groups, in which they complete activities with their key workers and children of a similar age. Activities within these small groups support children's learning and are aimed at the varying abilities and levels of understanding of the children within that group. However, when providing large group activities which are open to all children, not all activities take place with sufficient numbers of staff or are appropriately prepared in advance to ensure all children are quickly engaged and supported in their learning. For example, a music and movement activity provided by a sole member of staff at one point attracted up to 15 children. The ribbon sticks used during the activity took some time to unravel and be handed out, which resulted in children waiting some time with little to do.

All children enjoy access to a good range of adult-led activities which are provided both indoors and out, although not all children are consistently engaged in activities throughout the session. Children are able to independently access a range of toys within low-level storage units. However, little use is made of the top of these units or spare tables to provide additional activities which children may access independently, or to promote a welcoming learning environment. Within the after school provision, children engage in an appropriate range of activities which are provided both within the preschool building and the adjoining school. Children enjoy using the school computers and participating in games either within the sports hall or on the large playing field outside. Children form good relationships with each other and the staff, coming together to enjoy the games and play opportunities provided.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff plan a good range of activities for children to experience which cover all areas of learning. However, some activities are too adult directed and do not provide the more able children with sufficient challenge in order to maximise their learning potential. For example, shapes for craft activities are pre-cut by staff as opposed to encouraging children to draw and cut out shapes for themselves.

Staff observe children and evaluate activities. The observations are recorded in children's individual records of development and used to plan the next steps in their learning. Staff have input into the overall planning system for the whole group, which is displayed on a notice board within the playroom. However, not all staff refer to this information prior to engaging in activities to ensure they are aware of the intended learning for that activity. Within their key worker groups, staff plan additional activities to complete at the beginning and end of each session which are relevant to the age and stage of development within that group. Children benefit from these small group activities, which are delivered by staff who know the children well, and which are tailored to ensure individual progress.

Children form good relationships with each other and the staff. They happily engage in discussion with each other about their play. Appropriate questioning techniques adopted by staff encourage

children to develop their thinking skills. For example, when looking at pictures of people who help us, staff asked children who they thought the person was, what they did and how they helped others.

During games such as 'Keeper of the Keys' children are developing good use of their listening skills. They enjoy story time and when in their small groups they enjoy contributing by predicting what happens next. Children are developing their pencil control skills through opportunities to draw and colour, with some children able to name their own work. However, when looking at the written word, there is little opportunity for children to link the letters to the sound they make.

Children are developing their small muscle control through the use of equipment, such as scissors, and they enjoy manipulating and exploring media such as sand, clay and gloop. Children enjoy using their imaginations to build objects with Duplo and towers with bricks. On a larger scale they create through junk modelling.

Opportunities to count in small groups develop children's comprehension of number, with further activities provided to promote their recognition of numbers in writing and matching numbers to groups of objects. Children are able to recognise and name common shapes and colours. The recent introduction of a computer enables children to operate equipment and to develop their understanding of how to complete a simple program. Outside, a sensory garden allows children to develop an understanding of how things grow.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing an appropriate understanding of the world around them through the celebration of cultural festivals which are relevant to the children within their care. Access to a suitable range of resources which depict positive images of diversity enables children to develop their awareness naturally through play.

Appropriate systems identify and support children with additional needs to ensure they make progress. Children are developing good manners, such as saying 'please' when they would like more snack, and saying 'thank you' on receipt. Children generally behave well, and there are appropriate systems to encourage good behaviour. As a result of a recent parent questionnaire, the group have encouraged staff to attend further training in behaviour management.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents have access to a range of information in the entrance hall which relates to aspects of the care their children receive and the provision of nursery education. A prospectus informs parents and carers about the provision available within both the preschool and after school.

Parents receive regular updates about their children's progress in learning, although not all parents are aware that they are able to view their child's development records at any time. Staff gather general information about each child on entry to the group, but this information does not relate specifically to children's stages of development and their abilities. Parents regularly receive information about learning topics, with suggestions on how they may extend children's learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Appropriate systems ensure all age groups benefit from qualified and experienced staff, with staff participating in ongoing training relevant to the Foundation Stage. Information gained from such training opportunities is cascaded through to the remaining staff through general discussion. Staff are provided with time during the week to update children's records, reducing the burden for them to complete records within their own time.

The group have systems in place to conduct staff appraisals, which review staff's practice and development. An effective system encourages all staff to have an active input into the provision during staff meetings. Management take action on issues discussed within staff meetings in order to improve the provision of care, education and the working environment for the staff.

Children are developing good relationships with the staff, who are either qualified or undergoing training in early years care and education. Most of the time children receive appropriate levels of support from staff, particularly during small group activities. Appropriate recruitment and induction procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Information displayed on the notice board ensures staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities for each session. All regulatory documentation is in place, but registration systems do not always clearly identify the times of visitors' arrival and the exact numbers of children present, particularly within the after school club. All documentation is stored appropriately and available for inspection. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Based on the recommendations that were raised at their last inspections for care and nursery education the group have made some improvements.

At the last care inspection six recommendations were made. First, the group was asked to ensure that staff effectively manage children and space in the main playroom so that a calm and settled environment is maintained. This recommendation has been addressed, and children now enjoy dedicated areas for play and activities. The group was also requested to develop the outdoor area to ensure that it is an inviting and purposeful play space. As a result, the group has installed wooden play equipment, introduced a small wooded area and a sensory garden. A further recommendation to ensure that the complaints policy includes Ofsted's name, address and telephone number has been addressed, enabling parents to raise concerns should they wish. The group was requested to ensure that the child protection policy includes procedures to follow in the event of allegations being made against a staff member. There are now clearly defined procedures to follow. Finally, the group was asked to ensure that staff give appropriate support to children who are involved in free play activities, and to ensure that accident records are always signed by a parent or carer. These are both areas for ongoing improvement and have been raised again as recommendations for improvement at this inspection.

At the last inspection for nursery education, two recommendations were made. The first was to review development profiles regularly to ensure that the children are making progress in all areas of the curriculum and to use these to inform planning. Staff now update children's records on a weekly basis in order to ensure they accurately reflect where children are within their learning journey. Children's records are used when planning for children's next steps in learning.

The group was also asked to provide both planned and everyday opportunities for children to develop calculation skills in mathematics. This is now done.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **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 toys remain clean and suitable for children's use
- ensure all necessary health documentation is in place and appropriately maintained
- improve the organisation of the premises in order to promote a welcoming learning environment
- ensure activities are appropriately prepared in advance, supervised by sufficient staff and encourage all children to be engaged throughout the session
- improve the registration system for both visitors and the after school provision.

#### **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 staff familiarise themselves with the learning intentions for activities and that all children experience appropriate levels of challenge
- improve the opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the links between sounds and letters through everyday activities
- work with parents/carers to establish children's starting points in their learning and ensure all parents are aware that children's records are available at all times.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)