

Ross Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 223586 |
| Inspection date | 15 November 2007 |
| Inspector | Josephine Mary Hammick |

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| Setting Address | Larruperz Community Centre, Grammar School Close, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7AQ |
| Telephone number | 01989565465 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Ross 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 satisfactory. 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?

Ross Pre-School opened in 1970. It operates from two rooms within the Larruperz Community Centre in the town of Ross-on-Wye. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 43 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 19 nursery education grant-funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:30 every weekday with a lunch club operating from 12:30 until 13:25 on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Three full-time and seven part-time staff work with the children. Half of the staff have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and has achieved a bronze quality assurance award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and are protected from infection because staff have procedures in place to protect them. For example, tables are wiped prior to being used for snack and meal times and cloths are colour coded for designated tasks. Children are learning why routines are important through everyday conversations with staff. For example, older children are beginning to know how germs spread if they don't wash their hands thoroughly or wipe the table properly.

Children are well cared for in the event of an accident. Sufficient staff hold first aid qualifications to enable them to deal with accidents effectively. Appropriate documentation is kept and shared with parents to safeguard children, including reporting of accidents and administration of medicines. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through regular routines for washing their hands before snacks and lunch times, after using the toilet and playing outside.

Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday practical experiences. At snack time children enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables together with toast, milk and low sugar squash. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. Snack menus are varied so that children have many opportunities to experience different tastes and textures. Although parents provide packed lunches for their children, they are learning to make healthy choices about the foods they eat through discussions with staff and through planned activities. Attractive displays of children's art work and posters further promote the five-a-day healthy eating message.

All children benefit from the strong emphasis on physical development. They enjoy a range of indoor and outdoor activities which promote their physical development. For example, they frequently play outside using a range of equipment such as bikes, building bricks and climbing frames. In the summer months activities are based in the shaded garden outside. A fully resourced trolley containing equipment covering all areas of learning is taken outside with them so that nursery education can be extended outside in the fresh air. The children enjoy creating their own garden. They grow their plants in different themed flower beds. For example, one plot of flowers and vegetables represents Peter Rabbit's garden, others a town window box, a salad garden and a wildflower garden. Their entry won an award in the local 'Ross in Bloom' competition. Through these experiences they learn how things grow and how food is produced. Music and movement sessions ensure that children benefit from opportunities to stretch and let off steam when they can't go outside. Once a week older children bring in a change of clothing for an exercise session. They are given opportunities to climb, crawl, tunnel and balance on apparatus. They love following the staff as they stand on one leg, hop, jump and act out stories, songs and rhymes. All children delight in the exercise and tell each other how they feel 'puffed out' and can feel their heart beating. The wide provision of resources ensures that activities provide sufficient physical challenges to children of all ages. Children also have opportunities to use cutters, scissors, paintbrushes and other small tools to develop their manipulative skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an adequately maintained and child-focused environment. Staff prepare the room for younger children with a sound range of appropriate resources before they arrive each day. Older children choose what they want to play with the next day by looking through

photographs of all the equipment and deciding what they want out. This creates a stimulating and personal environment for them. Children access a range of developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. As a result they play safely and are happily occupied.

Children's safety is enhanced by sound safety procedures which are used to restrict access to the setting. For example, access is restricted into the nursery by the door being locked and visitors are supervised at all times. Children enjoy well planned outings to places such as the seaside or farm park. Full risk assessments are carried out before each visit and a high adult-to-child ratio is adhered to at all times. This helps children to remain safe. Children's safety in case of fire is promoted. Regular discussions and fire drills help children to learn how they could evacuate the premises safely to protect themselves. Children's welfare is well protected. The group have a written policy on child protection and are aware of their duty to protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy to attend, they enjoy their time in the stimulating and well resourced environment. Children throughout the setting are happy, confident and have built secure relationships with each other and their carers. Staff provide a good balance of child-initiated and group projects to ensure that children have access to a range of stimulating activities. For example, stories and songs during circle time ensure that play is linked in with the theme of nursery rhymes or festivals; the painting and gluing activities stimulate interest and extend learning in a fun and informal way. The children are keen and motivated by what is available to them and demonstrate a sound understanding of the overall theme.

Children's play and learning is very well supported by staff who have a good understanding of how children learn, making links with the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' frameworks. Staff consistently interact with children to extend their learning and play. Children's confidence and self-esteem are developed through the attention and praise they receive for their achievements. Staff value children's creations, displaying them attractively on wall displays or by including them in their own progress books.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy being in the setting. They are enthusiastic about the range of activities provided. Older children are able to concentrate and persevere well, whether playing alone or when benefiting from interaction with their peers or adults. For example, all children are supported well when taking part in activities. Staff are sensitive to their personal preferences and make experiences stimulating and exciting. Funded children are confident to express opinions or suggest ideas. Staff ensure children have plenty of opportunities for conversation and discussions, while the less articulate children have good support to help them join in. Good use is made of questions to foster children's thinking and inspire curiosity.

Children enjoy stories and rhymes. However, very young children have an impact on the three-year-olds' ability to concentrate in group situations. For example, very young children are restless and find it difficult to concentrate. The story becomes disrupted and the older children are unable to have a quality experience. Older three and four-year-olds listen attentively and contribute well to discussions about features of stories; for example, they join in with repetitive text and make appropriate animal sounds when they have the story of the nativity.

Larger format books and story sacks help children to concentrate and enjoy different aspects of stories. Children sing tunefully and with enthusiasm; rhymes are used imaginatively to reinforce aspects of the topic. Children also enjoy mark-making in different contexts, whether they are forming patterns in paint or drawing their faces on self-portraits.

Counting and number recognition activities are practical and fun for children. Many count confidently beyond ten. During routines, play activities and discussions, children get plenty of opportunities to consolidate their understanding of one-to-one correspondence. Children enjoy working out simple number problems, such as how many more cartons of milk are needed at each table at snack time and how much taller one child is than another. They benefit from opportunities to weigh cooking ingredients and learn about shapes as they cut their biscuits ready for baking. Stories and rhymes are also used well to support children's awareness of simple number operations. Staff encourage children to check their answers so that, for example, they often spontaneously count using their fingers.

Children are inquisitive, keen and interested in how things work. They explore different materials, such as wet and dry sand and play-dough. They find out how different construction toys and other items fit together. They enjoy using technology, for example, by using the computer, printer and mouse, and the use of the tape recorder and digital camera. Children confidently handle tools such as scissors. Children design and make models of apple and honey plates to celebrate the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashana. They make mendi patterns to celebrate the Muslim festival of Eid-el-fitr. Children use mathematical language to describe their creations' appearance and the position of key features.

A wide and varied range of collage and creative materials encourage children's imaginative painting and craft work. They often draw and paint expressively, trying out different techniques and using colour well. Role play areas are available throughout the session to enable children to fully develop their own ideas. The scenarios that are provided are realistically resourced and promote children's meaningful play. For example, good use is made of props and equipment to stimulate children's imaginations, mathematical understanding and writing skills as they play in the shoe shop, act out crossing the road using a pelican crossing, or use the microwave oven and kettle in the home corner.

Planning and assessment effectively support children's learning. Topics are fun, interesting and relevant to children. Staff spend time researching topics to ensure ideas are exciting. During the current topic on festivals, children enthusiastically recall their own family experiences during discussions and through role play, art and craft work and modelling activities. Plans have clear learning outcomes which are followed through organised, focused activities which stimulate children. Assessment procedures ensure a clear audit trail of children's progress whilst they attend the pre-school. Parental contributions and early observations help staff to compile an initial profile on each child, but from then on assessments are based on formal observations of children during play and activities. Staff have systems to check children's progress in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals; they adapt activities to suit children's differing levels of skill or individual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual personalities and needs are well known and respected within the setting. The group seek a wide range of information from parents such as children's special interests, festivals that they celebrate at home and things that are special to the family. This information

is used to ensure that children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs. It also ensures that all children are valued and included in the life of the setting. Children's play is supported by a wide range of resources such as books, dressing-up outfits and dolls which are aimed at promoting positive images of people from a wide range of cultures. For example, familiar objects are labelled in several languages; there are multilingual welcoming posters, high quality wall displays of children's work and pictures promoting positive images of diversity.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recognised and well supported by experienced and caring staff. Daily records are kept of children's progress and shared with parents and outside agencies to ensure that the children's changing needs are recognised and can continue to be met. Children generally behave well, care for each other and are encouraged and supported to share and take turns. Children are developing a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to play happily within clearly set boundaries. Children benefit from excellent settling-in procedures which are based around their individual needs, to support them in the transition between home and the setting. For example, parents and carers are actively encouraged to stay with their children until they are settled. This helps children to feel secure and confident in the group.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The well thought out information booklet includes information on the Foundation Stage framework and the six areas of learning. Photographs and labels on displays help parents and carers to learn about what educational aspects of learning are possible in any activity. Newsletters and notices on the information board keep parents and carers informed about activities or the many social events. Parents are always welcome to view or discuss their child's diary informally or formally through appointments. All parents receive a copy of their child's progress record which they are invited to comment upon. This enables parents to be involved and enhance their own child's learning.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are well organised and sound use is made of the space available. All staff work well together and demonstrate enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates children of all ages. They have a good knowledge and understanding of children's developmental needs, and work well as a team and are clear about their individual responsibilities. Although the manager is in breach of a regulation by not having a Level 3 qualification, over half of the staff do have relevant qualifications to level three or above and rigorous procedures are in place for the vetting of all staff. This means that children's safety and well-being is well maintained.

Policies and procedures are clear, comprehensive and regularly updated. All staff are familiar with their content to ensure children are well cared for. There is a high emphasis on staff training and working with other professionals, such as those from the local authority. As a result, children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. There is a strong commitment by staff to develop the provision to promote learning in all areas; they are competent within their roles and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. These skills and knowledge support the children's learning and development well.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to ensure that all supervisors hold minimum qualifications. Since then, over half the staff have completed training in order to meet regulatory requirements. Two staff have Diplomas in Pre-school practice and another has completed her foundation degree in childcare and education. Another has a Level 2 in child care and education and is working towards her Level 3. One member of staff does not hold the required level of training to support a supervisory role. However, she has been active in accessing a wide and balanced range of training courses in order to update and extend her knowledge.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure the manager meets the minimum qualification requirements.

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 younger children have opportunities to concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate.

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