

Lydd House Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127356
Inspection date	08 February 2008
Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
Setting Address	115-117 Station Road, Lydd, Kent, TN29 9LL
Telephone number	01797 329335 or 01797 320600
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Lydd House Playgroup
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lydd House Playgroup has been registered since 1989. It is run by a committee of parents and operates from the Lydd House Centre in Station Road, Lydd. All children have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. The group is open Monday to Friday from 09:30 to 13:00 during term time.

The group is registered to care for a maximum of 23 children aged two to five years. There are currently 31 children on roll attending on both a full and part time basis. Of these, 11 receive funding for their nursery education. The setting serves the local community and surrounding areas and welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs seven members of staff, five of whom have relevant qualifications. The supervisor and deputy are both qualified to NVQ level III. The group receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well supported to learn about the importance of good nutrition. Healthy snacks are provided by the setting and packed lunches are sent in by parents and carers. Snacks generally include a selection of fruits and are served to children as they sit on chairs for circle time. Each day one child is chosen to help prepare the food and walks around the circle offering the plate to each child to allowing them choose what they want to eat. Children clearly enjoy their snacks, however this process is fairly time consuming. Whilst children generally sit very patiently this arrangement does little to create a sociable experience for children. This is in contrast however to the lunch arrangements. At this time children sit at tables with their friends and chat happily as they eat. Water is constantly available for children to access themselves and milk is offered with snacks.

Children play in a clean, well presented environment. Staff ensure that the group rooms are tidy before children arrive each day and tables are cleaned regularly with anti-bacterial spray after messy activities and before food is served. Children are developing good personal hygiene routines and self care skills. They routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Older children independently take tissues to blow their noses and younger children are given support as required.

Staff with first aid qualifications are present each day to ensure that children can be effectively treated in case of a minor accident and records are generally well maintained. The arrangements in place to care for sick children and to administer medication are entirely appropriate.

Children enjoy very good opportunities for physical exercise each day and have access to an extremely good range of resources to support their play. They make very good use of the outdoor play area which contains climbing equipment, a large wooden play train and a sensory area. There is also a section of the garden set out as a road way complete with traffic lights. Children thoroughly enjoy using the ride-on toys in this area and steer very confidently. They are supported to develop specific skills such as throwing and catching.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play with a very good range of toys and resources. These are well maintained and large selection are set out before the group opens. Children are also confident to select items that they wish to play with from the low level storage trays.

Children are protected by a number of effective safety precautions in place around the setting. A safety gate is used to restrict children's access to the kitchen and covers are fitted in all unused sockets. Staff are vigilant in their supervision and this allows children a very good level of independence.

The group has good arrangements in place to protect children in case of a fire. Evacuation procedures are clearly displayed and emergency exits free from obstruction. Smoke detectors are fitted and fire fighting equipment is in place. Children take part in regular practise evacuation drills and a written record is maintained.

Children are extremely well supported to learn how to keep themselves safe. They move sensibly around the setting and respond to gentle prompts and reminders from staff. They also benefit from well planned activities to teach them specific skills such as safe road crossing, using the roadway facilities set out on the garden. Children also take part in topic work about the safety issues and enjoy visits from the local services such as community wardens and the coast guard.

The manager acts as the child protection co-ordinator and is clear on the responsibilities attached to this role. She has attended specific training along with three other members of staff. All the relevant contact details needed to make a referral are held on site; as a result children are effectively safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled in the child-centred pre-school environment. Those who experience difficulty separating from their parents or carers are treated with great sensitivity. As a result, they settle quickly and are having fun with their friends within a very short time. They readily approach adults for support and attention when needed and are generally very confident to explore their environment and choose the activities they want to take part in.

A large portion of the session is set aside for free play and a very wide range of activities and resources are available to the children. Staff are generally very skilful at supporting children's freely chosen play. They act promptly to ensure that children have the resources they need to extend their play. However, on occasion the level of adult intervention in the art and craft activities is excessive and restricts children's creativity. This generally only applies when children are producing pieces to display or take home as part of their topic work. An example of this includes a display to mark Spring in which children were given a high level of direction to produce bees and ladybirds. This contrasts completely to the freedom that children receive at other times. They have very regular opportunities when they produce extremely expressive and individual pieces of art.

All children play together and there is a very strong feeling of camaraderie amongst the whole group. This results in children feeling secure in their environment and developing very good self esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The setting lacks an effective system to record children's progress and formally identify their individual next steps. The staff demonstrate a good understanding of the personality and developmental needs of the children but have a tendency to exchange a good deal of information verbally. This arrangement is not sufficiently robust to support the setting in monitoring whether children are progressing at an appropriate rate. However, children are generally well supported to become independent learners as they enjoy many opportunities to investigate and explore for themselves.

Children are developing very good vocabularies and general knowledge as a result of the lively and interested conversations that take place almost constantly. They benefit from the humorous responses and interaction of staff. In addition to extending their language skills, this creates a lively and friendly environment. They listen with great enthusiasm to the very well read stories and confidently request their favourites. They also make good use of the comfortable book corner during their free play time.

Children have access to a table with a range of resources to support them in practising their writing and mark making skills. However, the presentation of this area is not as inviting and inspiring as the rest of the group room. The table is visited throughout the session by several children but is generally less popular than other activities. Children are given support to develop pencil control and many are beginning to form recognisable letters.

There is a good range of resources to support children's mathematical development. They count very confidently and routinely engage in activities such as sorting, matching and sequencing. Children have regular access to a computer and are learning to use the keyboard and mouse to operate simple programs.

Creatively children are progressing well. They enjoy regular opportunities to take part in activities such as painting, gluing and sticking. They also make extremely good use of the wonderful role play facilities. They play very charming and complex games and show a very impressive attention to detail. They thoroughly enjoy playing with their friends and staff act very promptly to support their games without interfering.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their individual personalities are very well understood by staff. As a result, their self-esteem is very effectively promoted. They play with a range of resources that promote positive images of people from throughout the community and wider world. They also take part in activities to mark a range of festivals and special days.

The behaviour of the children attending the setting is extremely good. Staff act as extremely good role models and are calm, caring and consistent. Children are very well supported to learn to share, negotiate and diffuse situations by using humour. Minor disputes are easily and positively sorted out and children are encouraged to say sorry and make friends.

The manager and staff team have a very positive attitude towards meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective systems are in place to identify and address children's individual needs. The group is also able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Those whose children receive funding for their nursery education are given written information about the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum. However, staff do not routinely discuss this with parents or invite them to contribute any observations from home. All parents are regularly invited into the setting to meet with their child's key worker. They are also provided with a good range of written information about the setting including the procedures to follow should they wish to make a complaint. There is always a member of staff available to speak with parents as they drop off or collect their child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The routine of the day is well managed to ensure that children are able to play freely and have sufficient time to complete all the activities they choose. Space is also very well used to allow a wide selection of equipment to be set out whilst still ensuring that children have room to play and are able to move around safely.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The staff work very effectively as a team and this creates a relaxing and harmonious environment for children. The procedures in place to recruit staff are entirely appropriate. They are vetted to ensure their suitability and are inducted in all policies and procedures. The chair of the management committee meets regularly with the manager to discuss all aspects of the service offered including areas for development or improvement.

Whilst there are weaknesses in the systems for recording against the Foundation Stage, all other records are present and well maintained. There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place and these are reviewed regularly.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection a number of recommendations were made. The setting has successfully addressed all areas of concern. Staff have attended child protection training and improvements have been made to the procedures for recruiting and vetting staff. As a result, children are more effectively safeguarded. A system has also been introduced to display details of children's individual dietary requirements in the kitchen so that staff can check when preparing snacks. This promotes children's good health.

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 to other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- review the organisation of some planned creative activities to offer children more opportunities to explore and express themselves. (This also applies to Nursery Education.)

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):

- review and improve the arrangements for assessing and monitoring children's progress to ensure that the next step is more clearly identified
- consider re-organising the presentation of mark making resources to inspire children to practise writing in their free play.

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