

Ripe & Laughton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511227
Inspection date	26 March 2008
Inspector	Lisa Toole
Setting Address	Laughton Village Hall, Church Lane, Laughton, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 6AH
Telephone number	01323 811085
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Registered person	Ripe and Laughton 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ripe and Laughton Pre-school opened in 1979 and operates from a village hall in Laughton, near Lewes, East Sussex. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.10 to 12.00 on Monday to Friday and there is an additional session on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 13.00 until 15.30. There is also a lunch club which operates each day, on demand, from 12.00–13.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 14 children from two to four years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early education. Children come a wide catchment area.

The pre-school employs three members of staff; all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health, personal care and emotional needs are all being supported and safeguarded by staff. The environment is maintained to a hygienic standard and children learn important messages about keeping themselves clean. They are able to rest and relax as needed and staff are friendly and support children's emotional well-being through their care and consideration. Staff maintain up-to-date first aid certificates and ensure a first aid box is well stocked and easily accessible; they record accidents and maintain a medication record but both lack sufficient detail in some places in order to help safeguard the children's welfare.

Children enjoy a lovely range of snacks that positively promote healthy eating and also ensure children are well fed and nourished. Snacks are varied and include options such as rice cakes, bagels, cubes of cheese and fresh/dried fruit. Children's independence is encouraged and those children staying for lunch club are encouraged to manage it themselves where possible, as part of their developing skills in preparation for school. Children's health is also supported through having easy access to drinking water, ensuring they remain hydrated throughout the session.

Physically, children enjoy a range of activities to support their gross and fine motor skills both in and outdoors but staff do not currently plan specifically for the outdoors, to create a rich learning environment in the outdoor areas. Children learn how to balance, manoeuvre their bodies in different ways, play parachute games, learn to move around obstacles, stopping and changing direction quickly. They also have fun squelching in the mud out in the garden, watching how it covers their boots as they move their feet up and down. Purposeful opportunities to develop their manipulative skills, such as planting seeds and using chopsticks help develop children hand-to-eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from playing in a spacious environment where they are able to move around and play freely. Staff make effective use of all areas available to them, both indoors and outside to support the children's care, play and learning needs; this helps their overall development in all key areas. Children enjoy using a wide range of toys and play equipment, which is fairly easily accessible during the session and is well maintained to ensure it is suitable for their use. Areas of the hall are divided up in line with curriculum areas, such as an interest table, where children enjoy investigating how the tadpoles are growing. Staff also use the second hall area for one-to-one work with children, including using technology equipment such as the computer, as part of their developing knowledge and understanding of the world. Children learn to take care of their toys and environment as they are encouraged to help tidy up when the bell is rung.

Children are cared for in a secure environment, where there are safety procedures in place regarding their arrival and departure; with an effective password system in place for when other adults authorised by parents are asked to collect a child. This ensures they are kept safe at all times. Children have a little understanding of the fire evacuation procedures, with drills being practised, at least, termly. Fire evacuation procedures are clearly displayed but a written fire drill record is not currently maintained to help staff evaluate how they have gone and any impact on the children as a result. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and they help

children learn about their own safety awareness through gentle reminders and during topic work or on outings when they learn about road safety.

Although staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of child abuse, they are less familiar with the procedures to follow regarding referrals, especially if an allegation is made against a member of staff. There is also no designated staff member for child protection. Both issues impact on the welfare of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settled and well cared for in the pre-school. Staff act as positive role models, engage well with the children, offering them support and guidance with their learning to help them all make progress. Children settle quickly into their play on arrival, participate enthusiastically in a range of activities and have opportunities for both quiet and active play. However, although staff differentiate activities according to children's ability, they do not currently plan specifically for the youngest children in the group, in line with the Birth to three matters framework to ensure that activities are appropriate for their differing developmental needs. Children benefit from opportunities to decide for themselves what to do and they move confidently around the room as they play.

Nursery Education:-

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of how to support children's development. They attend training to further extend their knowledge and skills and clearly provide children with interesting and stimulating activities. Children are making satisfactory progress in their learning towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The planning includes activities such as learning about nature while on walks; tasting different foods for sensory development; cooking; re-enacting popular stories as part of their language and literacy and planting and growing seeds. The planning does not arise fully from observations and assessment of the children, or from the children's particular likes and interests and there are some weaknesses in the assessment of children. This is to ensure it is a curriculum based on the specific needs of the children currently attending the pre-school. It is not always completely balanced across all stepping stones so that children's learning is fully supported across all six areas of learning.

Children are confident to speak at group times, explaining how a tadpole will turn into a frog and talking about their news from home. They have positive relationships with their peers and adults in the group; they understand the need to share and take turns. They listen well at story times and engage in a number of activities to support their mark making skills, with some children confidently writing their first name. Children use a range of tools for investigation and exploration, for role play and for general problem solving; for example using different tools for pouring and filling with sand and water. Fun creative activities include playing with cooked spaghetti, learning about colour using water and dye and dancing with streamers. However, children have fewer regular opportunities to develop their understanding of music, rhythm and sound as part of their developing knowledge and understanding of creativity. Children have a few opportunities to learn about the past and present, primarily arising from general discussions about events happening in their own lives. They do enjoy a stimulating and enjoyable range of activities to learn about other religious beliefs and cultures, enjoying a diverse range of visitors to the group as well, which include the fire brigade and a lolly pop crossing patrol lady. Living in a rural community also enables children to enjoy first hand experiences with nature

and animals as they learn about chicks hatching and growing, observing hedgehogs and finding acorns for a maths activity while out on a walk.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to an appropriate range of toys and resources that reflect positive images of the wider world. They enjoy a rich and interesting range of activities so that they learn about culture and religious beliefs celebrated around the world, with activities such as visiting a local Chinese Restaurant, eating with chopsticks, and making a Chinese dragon as part of their celebrations for Chinese New Year. They also benefit from opportunities to learn simple words in Spanish through weekly visits from a Spanish teacher and have learnt how to wear a sari and make Diwali sweets as part of this festival to learn about the Hindu religion. Children learn important messages about equality of opportunity, about treating each other with respect, recognising that others think differently from them and have different feelings. As a result children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are included and there is a special needs coordinator in place to support children who may have additional needs. Children have opportunities to learn simple Makaton signing as another form of communication and it also helps teach them about inclusion. Children behave well; they benefit from lots of praise and encouragement from staff and this promotes their self esteem and confidence. Staff do not always use appropriate strategies for dealing with negative behaviour, using phrases such as 'don't run'. This means that children are not always given clear messages about what behaviour is expected and, at times, staff focus on the negatives rather than giving positive messages to foster children's feelings of self-worth.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The required complaints record is in place; there is a parents' notice board with key information about the group and they also receive newsletters to keep them informed. Parents are encouraged to feel part of the group through the home library system, taking 'Bernie the bear' home with their child and recording in the diary what the bear did with their child. Parents also have some opportunities to be involved in their children's learning as they are given information about topics, but little about the Foundation Stage curriculum or the Birth to three matters framework for the younger children. Staff do not go further with this by suggesting ideas that they might like to do at home with their child to reinforce the children's learning about a particular topic or providing them with up-to-date information about each child's targets for further development so parents can again support their child's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The quality of leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff work well together as a team, communicate well and provide children with a stimulating and fun range of activities to support their learning and development across the six areas. Staff recruitment, induction and appraisal systems are all in place and generally effective in supporting staff with their roles and responsibilities. All of the staff are qualified to a good level and they are encouraged to attend further training to develop their skills. There is a need for the staff to develop the curriculum further to ensure it reflects more clearly the needs and interests of the children, and that it is

carefully balanced to ensure children's opportunities to make progress through the stepping stones are fully considered.

All of the required documentation for the safe and efficient management of the pre-school is in place and is generally well maintained. A register of attendance is maintained but times of arrival and departure are not currently being recorded for staff and children; the accident and medication records lack some detail and a fire drill record is not maintained as part of the group's ongoing safety measures. The pre-school has a wide range of written policies and procedures in place which generally reflect current guidelines and requirements but there is an over-reliance on documents pre-prepared externally and this means that they do not fully reflect the practices of the actual group. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school was set three recommendations. These related to the use of the nappy changing area, how the pre-school promotes equality of opportunity and the policies. Since the last inspection the pre-school has improved the area where nappy changing takes place, ensuring that children's welfare is promoted and risks of cross infection appropriately reduced. Children now have access to a good range of resources and activities that promote equality and help the children learn about the world around them. The group's policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated, but there continues to be a need to further develop these to ensure they reflect current practices of the group and are in line with current guidelines. To this end, a further recommendation has been raised.

At the last nursery education inspection, the pre-school was set three key issues to address. These related to the activities that promote mathematical development, the provision of physical activities and the information that is shared with parents. Since the last inspection the pre-school has improved the range of activities that promote the children's mathematical and physical development though there is a need to develop these further for the benefit of the children. There also continues to be a need to develop the information that is shared with parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Further recommendations have therefore been raised at this inspection.

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.

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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):

- increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the procedures to follow regarding child protection and allegations against a member of staff and ensure that there is a designated member of staff for child protection
- improve record keeping relating to the accident record, medication record, fire drill record and the register of attendance for both children and staff and ensure that the policies and procedures reflect current guidelines and the current practices of the group
- review systems for how children's behaviour is positively promoted and encouraged
- review and develop the curriculum for the youngest children in line with the Birth to three matters framework.

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):

- increase opportunities for parents and carers to become more actively involved in their children's learning and ensure they are provided with information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum
- develop the systems for observation and assessment to clearly identify children's learning and developmental needs
- review the curriculum to provide children with more opportunities to develop their creativity through music
- develop the curriculum so that it arises from children's individual needs and interests, includes the outdoor environment and fully supports their development across the six areas of learning.

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