

Lordswood Under 5s Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103823
Inspection date	03 June 2008
Inspector	Linda Patricia Coccia

Setting Address	Lordswood Under 5s Playgroup Play Hut, Rear of 181 Ballens Road, Chatham, Kent, ME5 8PG
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Telephone number	01634 867386
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E-mail

Registered person	Lordswood Under Fives
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care
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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?

Lordswood Under Fives Playgroup is owned by parents and is committee run. It opened in 1976 and operates from two rooms in a single storey building. It is situated in a parkland setting, in Lordswood, Chatham. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:15 to 15:00, term time only. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area.

There are currently 64 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 35 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The group currently supports a few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 11 members of staff, 10 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and one who is working towards a further qualification. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children use suitable procedures for taking themselves to the toilet if they feel confident enough. Younger children are accompanied by staff. Children are also kept safe from the spread of infection by a well written sick child policy and gentle reminders from well placed posters. Medication and accident records are well maintained and which include parents in the administration. Children's physical health is protected.

Children are offered a suitable selection of food which is healthy and nutritious. They choose from a selection of fruit and toast with different spreads, during snack time. The children are proficient in pouring their own drinks and spreading their own toast. They talk to staff about what foods are good for them. Parents provide packed lunches for children who stay to lunch and the majority of parents provide healthy food options in the packs. Staff are aware of children with allergies and can cater for children's individual dietary needs. Children are beginning to have an awareness of healthy eating issues.

Children enjoy playing in the well maintained outdoor play area, whatever the weather. Appropriate outdoor clothing is provided for them. They have access to ride on toys, a planting and digging area and a range of activities which help them test and control their bodies. For example, photographic evidence shows children rolling large tyres to each other. Indoors, there is plenty of space for them to use construction equipment and perform action rhymes or move to music. Children participate in regular physical activity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play within an organised, safe environment and can move freely between indoors and outside. The staff carry out a full observational risk assessment each morning on the premises, prior to the children entering the building. Children learn about safety as they receive reminders from staff about how to use equipment safely. The toys and equipment are checked regularly to ensure they stay clean and suitable. Children use equipment appropriately.

Children are regularly involved in practising the group's suitable emergency evacuation procedures. The drills are recorded and evaluated. For the children who don't speak English, staff have provided pictorial time lines showing them what to do during a drill. Staff have discussed these with parents. Children have the opportunity to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

Children are protected by the group's policy and procedures regarding child protection. The policy is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures. All staff have attended recent safeguarding training. The group has a child protection officer who can support parents and children through the referral processes. Staff record children's existing injuries. Children's well-being is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children and their parents are warmly welcomed onto the premises and are eager to play. Children enjoy their time at each session and the company of the staff. Children interact well with staff as they play together. Music is used throughout each session, and the walls are decorated with children's work, as well as with brightly coloured information posters, all helping to make the atmosphere homely, friendly and welcoming. Children settle easily each morning.

Staff have good regard to the Birth to three matters framework and provide appropriate toys and activities covering the appropriate areas of development, such as, the role play area for imaginary play and the various creative areas where they can experiment with different craft mediums. Children are becoming competent learners. There is also a quiet area where the children can relax and read books and which is utilised as a sleep area for children who stay all day. Children are able to choose their own activities and utilise them well. For example, children select pirate hats from the dressing up area to enhance their play in the outdoor area. The relaxed atmosphere allows children to develop at their own pace but they are always active and busy. Children are interested in the activities they choose.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making suitable progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and provide suitable activities. They carry out initial assessments on the children to identify their starting points and do regular observations on the children and the activities to ensure that the children's next steps are clearly identified. The next steps are then used to inform the planning. However, the planning does not always clearly show which children are being catered for. Evaluations of the activities show some degree of differentiation of the abilities of the different age ranges of children. The staff work well as a team and high staff ratios ensure children always get the support they need for learning.

Children develop their creativity as they use the large construction area for junk modelling. They access paint and drawing materials easily and their work is displayed around the walls. They obtain a suitable knowledge and understanding of the world as they plant seeds in the growing area and are competent in the use of magnets and play computers. However, the real computer is not readily available for them to use on their own as children are unable to free-flow to it.

Children are competent in self care, such as taking themselves to the toilet and blowing their own noses. They have contributed to a nice range of displays centred around themselves and their identity. For example, they have all provided pictures of themselves as babies and have talked about what they looked like. They show great confidence in talking to adults and visitors. They have plenty of opportunity for measuring and weighing as they prepare the ingredients for cooking activities or playing mathematical based games in the maths area. They regularly count items and can identify some shapes. However, staff do not always extend the children by using mathematical language for calculation and measurement with them.

Children have the opportunity to investigate language with staff. They compare words that rhyme and talk about things that are similar. For example, one child compared the cake dough he was making to marshmallows and mashed potatoes. Children's comments and thoughts are recorded on their work and on the wall displays. However, the book area is not used fully by

children, by themselves, despite the fact that they like listening to stories there at story time. Children love the outdoor area and have lots of physical exercise. Activities range from digging in the sand area for gold when playing pirates, to ably using the climbing frame and other large equipment to gain greater control of their bodies. For example, photographic evidence shows children ably using balancing equipment. Overall, children have suitable opportunities for learning in each of the prescribed areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children who speak English as an additional language are well catered for. Staff have prepared lists of phonetic words to help them communicate with the children and have created pictorial time lines so that children can see what comes next during the session. The children see a nice range of pictures and posters and play with toys which give them positive images of race and culture. However, there are few images of gender and disability. The group has a qualified Special Educational Needs Coordinator who prepares individual play plans to help individual children when required. Children's individual needs are promoted.

Children are well behaved, cooperate well with staff and play very well together. They know the group rules, which are displayed in pictorial fashion around the playroom, and remind each other about acceptable behaviour. For example, one child told another 'Say please' whilst trying to access some cars. Staff readily praise good behaviour and when the occasion arises, affirm individual good behaviour to the rest of the group. Children learn about acceptable behaviour.

Children show concern for each other. For example, one child hugged another and said 'well done' when she had successfully played ring-a roses. The second child did not understand English, therefore it was all the more important through the first child's actions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from their parents working together with staff. Parents receive a variety of written information regarding the running of the group, regular newsletters and have the policies explained to them when they first register. The parents' notice board contains information on local amenities and services. Parents commented that staff are 'brilliant' and 'dedicated'. Children's individual needs are catered for through regular communication between staff and parents.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents of children in receipt of nursery education funding are able to see details of the stepping stones which are displayed on the notice board. They report they have regular meetings with their child's key worker, who keeps them appraised of their child's progress. They also agree that they are involved in their children's learning as they regularly provide items for projects and activities. Most of the parents questioned said they know where to find their child's observational record and special activity book.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision displays its registration certificate. The current staff members have all worked in the group for a number of years, giving the children who attend a great deal of stability. The provision has recruitment and vetting procedures and staff discipline procedures. However, copies of the procedures are not available in the operational plan but are kept elsewhere with individual committee members. This has not had a great impact on the children due to staff

remaining in post. All staff have been vetted and hold Criminal Record Bureau checks. Staff are regularly monitored and supervised and have annual appraisals.

The joint supervisors ensure that all regulatory paperwork is well maintained and up to date. For example, children who arrive late or leave early have the individual times recorded and the child record forms are regularly presented to parents to update them. However, the operational plan is out of date and contains copies of old procedures and policies where many have been reviewed. The complaints log is available to parents upon request. Children's records are maintained confidentially and stored appropriately in a lockable cabinet. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The parent committee employ two supervisors who oversee the day-to-day running of the group. The committee fundraise for funds to provide suitable equipment and toys for the children to use. They also provide funds and opportunities for staff to attend regular training events and courses to keep their knowledge base up to date. The committee also encourage staff to hold regular staff meetings. The supervisors ensure that staffing ratios are maintained to a high level, and monitor the staff's supervision of the children. They also regularly review how staff deliver the Foundation Stage and offer support to staff, parents and children as needed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision received a number of Actions to improve. They were to; improve the use of children's assessments records to plan appropriate activities that take account of children's individual needs and evaluate what they have learnt and enable parents to contribute towards their children's learning, keeping them informed about their progress and achievements. Staff now use appropriate systems for observations and planning and have taken steps to invite parents to participate in the processes. Children participate in planned activities suitable to their individual learning needs.

The provision was also asked to ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are shared with parents, including arrangements for requesting permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and keep a written record of medicines given to children and maintain a record of parent's consent. This has now been addressed and staff are using appropriate recording methods. Children's health is being promoted.

Finally, the provision was asked to; ensure that Ofsted's details and the procedure to be followed when a complaint is made are included in the written statement; review and update the Child Protection policy to include a procedure to be followed if an allegation is made about a member of staff; ensure that parents and carers are aware of who the designated member of staff for CP is and the procedures to be followed when abuse is suspected. These have now been addressed. A full complaints procedure, and procedures for dealing with allegations which are made against a member of staff, are in place and all staff have attended Safeguarding Children training. Children's well-being is safeguarded.

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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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):

- include positive images of disability and gender in posters and displays and ensure that those toys and books with positive images of ethnicity are readily available to the children
- ensure the operational plan is up-to-date and readily available to parents

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 planning clearly shows individual children's next steps.
- investigate ways to make some of the activities more inviting to children and more readily accessible to them
- encourage staff to use more mathematical language with the children

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