

# Milborne Ladybirds Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspection date</b>	09/12/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Carol Johnstone
<b>Setting address</b>	Milborne St Andrew Village Hall, Milborne St Andrew, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 0JX
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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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## Description of the setting

Milborne Ladybirds playgroup registered in 2002 and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. It operates from the village hall in Milborne St Andrew, in Dorset, and serves the small rural community. Children have use of the main hall with toilet and wash basin facilities accessible off this room. There is a separate kitchen situated off the hall. A small area outside the hall is cordoned off for outdoor play and the group also make use of the adjacent playing field.

The group is open Monday to Friday during school term time only, with a breakfast club from 8.45am to 9.15am, a main session from 9.15am to 11.45am and a lunch club from 11.45am to 12.45pm. The group is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 20 children at any one time from the age of two years to the end of the early years age group. There are currently 12 children on roll. There are four staff employed, all of whom hold appropriate qualifications in childcare. The manager has recently achieved Early Years Professional status. There are four voluntary workers who assist staff on a daily basis. The group receive support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and comfortable with staff and they are able to choose from a range of activities each day. Their welfare needs are met appropriately and their safety is prioritised. Children make satisfactory progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). However, there are inconsistencies in both the staff interaction with the children and the quality of learning assessments. Children's required next steps in learning are not consistently identified and planned for. The manager has identified some areas of practice that need improvement and development. However, a regular process of self-evaluation involving all of the staff team is not yet in place.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the systems for observing and assessing children's achievements to make sure a clear picture is obtained of their progress in all areas of learning and that their next steps in learning are consistently identified
- use the planning more effectively to facilitate each child's next steps in learning
- review the organisation of sessions and the deployment of staff to ensure that they are clear of their roles in both supporting the children's learning through focussed interaction and in dealing with behavioural issues consistently
- implement a secure process of self-evaluation which involves all of the staff

team in order to identify areas for improvement within all aspects of the provision

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The manager who is the designated Safeguarding officer has a sound understanding of the types and signs of child abuse and who to contact in the event of a concern arising. She makes sure that all of the staff team also attend regular safeguarding training and that they carry contact cards with the relevant details on should they have an urgent concern in her absence. Consequently, children at risk of harm would be quickly identified and the appropriate support gained for them. All staff and volunteers have thorough suitability checks carried before they can start working with the children, such as criminal record checks. There is also a policy that no staff or volunteers are left alone with children at any time. These measures, along with a probationary period for all new staff, help to ensure that children are protected from having unsuitable persons working with them. Staff have annual appraisals, during which time they reflect on their own practice in order to help them identify any training needs.

Written risk assessments are done regularly to identify any potential hazards. These are also done when there are outings. In addition, staff do a visual risk assessment each day as they set out the equipment. Staff make sure that the front door is kept secured and a visitor's book is used to monitor who comes to the group.

There are friendly relationships with parents. There is an informal chat each day on collection of the children to let them know the day's events and what the children have enjoyed. There are regular newsletters sent out and many parents help out at the group on a regular basis. The policies and procedures of the group are available to parents on the parent table, including the safeguarding and complaints policy. Parents are able to see children's assessment records if they wish to. However, there are currently no arrangements in place for regular meetings to discuss children's progress other than in the term before they leave. There is also limited information given to parents about the EYFS and the activities planned to deliver it. Consequently, there are missed opportunities for some parents to be actively involved in the children's learning.

There are strong links with external support agencies such as Portage and the speech therapy department who regularly visit and consult with the staff when the need arises. Children who have special educational needs and disabilities are supported well. The dedicated one-to-one worker gets to know the children thoroughly and makes sure she is clear of how to work with specific exercises or targets suggested by external professionals. Children are included in all of the activities and there is ongoing discussion with parents. Children who have English as an additional language are effectively supported through staff obtaining key words and dual language books to use. Photos of the activities are also used if necessary. Children learn about different countries and cultures through different topics. For example, they are currently learning about Africa and have made an

African Christmas Tree and have hung zebras, monkeys and elephants, made from pipe cleaners, foam and clay on it. There are also visits from a musician who brings in African instruments for the children to try out.

The manager is aware of the need to share children's assessments with other providers who share the care of the children, such as other groups or childminders, and has plans in place should this occur. The manager tries to support the individual needs of families, offering flexible care when extenuating circumstances arise.

The manager has identified some areas of practice that need improvement and has planned how to address these. However, a regular and consistent process of self-evaluation covering all aspects of practice is not yet in place. Some recommendations made at the last inspection have not been met. These include issues relating to learning objectives, planning and regularly sharing children's progress records with parents.

Staff make the environment as bright and welcoming as possible, using display boards for children's work. Resources are plentiful, but not always used as imaginatively as they could be. For example, using the role-play equipment to create a variety of environments to help children use their imagination and practise their mark making skills. Although staff ratios are met, staff deployment is sometimes ineffective, with some staff not seeming clear about what their role is for that session. This means that at times, children are not getting consistent and focused adult support during the activities and the session becomes disorganised. When this occurs, behaviour deteriorates and children do not engage in the activities for longer than a few minutes. Although staff deal with serious behavioural incidents quickly, some children who display low key challenging behaviour are not always dealt with consistently.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children are offered a range of resources each day. The sand tray is always out, there are construction toys, painting materials, play dough, a book corner and an art and craft trolley. In addition, there is one adult led activity each day, such as making a Christmas cake or examining ice to see how it changes when it melts. However, the adult led activities are not always organised to the best effect due to the inconsistency of staff deployment.

Most staff use very effective questioning such as: 'which is the biggest and which is the smallest?', 'what does that feel like?', 'do you notice how that looks different?', 'what's special about this?'. However, not all staff use this type of interaction during all of the activities. Observation and assessment records are also inconsistent. Many observations are clear and meaningful, but some are not. Some records show use of the observations to make assessments of the children's achievements, but this is not always the case and in general, the records are untidy. When children are identified as having specific areas needing support, their next steps are linked in to the weekly planning. However, this is not the case for all

children in all areas of learning and currently, the planning is not being consistently used to help ensure that children's next steps are facilitated. Most staff have a generally clear knowledge verbally of where their key children are within the areas of learning. However, staff do not consistently know about each other's key children unless there are specific areas of concern, where all staff are involved in providing particular support.

Children benefit from healthy lifestyles being promoted in the group. They are given healthy snacks and get to try more unusual fruits such as mango and figs. Staff regularly remind parents to send healthy choices in for packed lunch boxes. There are discussions during snack time about what food is good for you, what parts of the body need to be exercised and what makes you strong. Children have daily fresh air and exercise in the play area and when the weather is very bad, they use a balancing beam or have dancing in the main hall. Personal hygiene is effectively promoted and a hand washing poster helps children understand how to wash their hands properly after the toilet and before eating. Children are also reminded to go and get a tissue if they have a runny nose. A member of staff has recently attended food hygiene training and makes sure that all staff follow the correct hygiene procedures when preparing snacks and drinks, making sure a 'due diligence' checklist is followed.

Children learn about their personal safety through rules such as not running inside and not climbing the outdoor fence. Staff are vigilant in supervising outdoor play as the area backs on to a public field and children know that they must not go past a certain point. There are regular visits from the police community safety officer who talks to the children about stranger danger and how to be careful of the road. There have also been visits from the local fire station and staff practise the fire drill regularly with the children so that they will know what to do should an emergency occur. Recently, a nurse visited the group to talk to the children about being careful around dogs and not to approach them in case they are bitten.

Staff are clear of the procedures to follow when giving medication and recording accidents. Children who are unwell are excluded from the group so that other children are protected and there are clear guidelines for parents in the sickness policy which is given to them when the children first attend.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*  
*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*  
*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*  
*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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