



Ladybirds Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 143053 |
| Inspection date | 25 September 2006 |
| Inspector | Rachael Williams |
| Setting Address | Lydeard St Lawrence Primary School, Lydeard St Lawrence, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3SF |
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| Registered person | Ladybirds 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ladybirds Playgroup is a committee run pre-school. It operates from a self-contained unit in the grounds of the village primary school in Lydeard St Lawrence, Somerset. There are kitchen and toilet facilities within the unit, and the group has access to the school playground, playing field and environmental garden, all fully enclosed. The playgroup serves a rural catchment area and children attend for a variety of sessions.

The playgroup is registered to provide 13 places for children aged two to five years. Currently there are 12 children on the roll, six of whom are in receipt of funding for early education.

The playgroup opens four days a week, 09.00 to 12.00, Monday to Thursday, during school term time. During the summer term a 'rising five' session is offered in conjunction with the school. A toddler session, run by parents, is available on Friday mornings.

There are three members of staff working directly with the children, two of which have an appropriate early years level 3 qualification.

The group receive support from the local authority and enjoy close links with the reception class teacher at the village primary school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because staff follow highly effective procedures and practices to meet children's individual health requirements well. Staff are good role models and maintain high standards of hygiene. Health and well-being is promoted effectively for instance, through consistent hand washing procedures where children are aware of why they wash their hands and do so at appropriate times without regular reminders. Children develop very good levels of personal independence such as, when younger children access the toilets independently.

Children are supported effectively by staff's good knowledge of administering first aid as they have attended appropriate training and maintain a well-stocked first aid box. Clear and informative procedures and policies, which are understood and implemented effectively by staff, ensure children are protected. For example, accident and medication records are well-documented. Thus ensuring confidential recording of information which is shared with parents to ensure consistency in care. Children's understanding of health is promoted well through excellent planning of first-hand experiences for instance, a visit from a community dentist and a visit from a parent and newborn baby where they observe bath-time.

Children are introduced to a healthy lifestyle through a range of nutritious snacks, such as, cheese and savoury biscuits, local apples and cereal. Children are well protected through robust special dietary needs arrangements to ensure that children's individual and cultural needs are addressed. For example, alternative ingredients are supplied for cooking activities to ensure that all children are fully included.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to be active through participation in an excellent range of activities that promote physical development. Children have access to a wealth of resources to develop large muscle skills and good spatial awareness. For example, children choose from a vast range of challenging, ride-on toys manoeuvring them well across the playground. They create pathways and avoid collisions confidently. Children engage in chasing games as they roll the hoop away from themselves and run after it to catch it. Children are developing their coordination skills well. For example, they skilfully throw and catch a range of different sized balls. They enjoy organising group games, such as, 'what's the time that Mr Wolf?' where they can move in a variety of ways.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The spacious, physical environment is organised well to meet the care, learning and development needs of the children attending. For example, the room is divided into areas to maximise space in order to provide children with varied experiences. The setting is colourful and bright providing children with a stimulating environment. Children benefit from an abundant range of age appropriate toys and resources, which they can access independently, through effective labelling and storage.

Risks of accident or injury to children are minimised because staff are extremely vigilant and use risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Staff closely supervise children to maintain their safety and well-being. Children receive clear explanations from staff to help them learn to protect themselves for instance, a child is reminded not to run inside as he may slip on the sand spilt on the floor. Children benefit from a safe and secure environment. There are effective collection arrangements and a visitor's record monitors attendance to ensure children are protected. Children learn about personal safety as they take part in regular fire drills which are recorded appropriately.

Children's well-being is safeguarded as staff have good knowledge of child protection issues. The procedure to follow if child abuse is suspected is clearly understood by staff and relevant contact numbers are easily accessible. Some documentation is available, however, the recent update, Local Safeguarding Children Boards, has not been accessed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled, happy and confident within the small and friendly setting. They enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities that encourages individual development through effective staff interaction and support. Staff have very good knowledge of children's abilities and challenge them effectively. Communication skills are well supported through good-quality adult/child interactions. For example, children are constantly engaged in meaningful conversations with staff so that they are able to make connections in their home/school experiences. For instance, whilst playing with the fortress a member of staff asks a child why her horse is stamping the ground and whether her pony does the same.

The well-organised learning environment encourages children to be independent and to make decisions about their play. Staff are proactive in encouraging children to develop the activities, for instance, children's imagination is able to evolve when creating a rural display. The flexibility of the planning encourages spontaneity, such as, abandoning the parachute games to access ride-on toys. Children achieve well as there is an abundant range of well-organised toys and resources which are easily accessible. Children play an active role in selecting new resources, for instance, children request John Deere tractors as they see them in the fields regularly.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their learning, particularly knowledge and understanding of the world, through staff's good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning shows a good range of stimulating and interesting activities which are evaluated appropriately to influence future planning. Planning is very flexible as staff value and support children's ideas deploying themselves effectively to meet their needs. For example, a three-year-old requests the train track and is supported by a member of staff to connect the pieces to form a circuit. However, children's progression is not sufficiently evidenced to clearly identify next steps in learning.

Staff have very good knowledge of children's stage of development and effectively challenge them in both planned activities and self-chosen experiences. For example, when a child brings in a toy crocodile staff extend his communication skills to reflect and make connections with other experiences for instance, discussing a recent visit to Australia and making visual links by looking at a world globe to see where crocodiles may live. Children are developing good social skills as skilful staff are quick to defuse potential negative experiences, for instance, the children have recently started at the playgroup and staff are vigilant at ensuring they do not sit for long periods of time and are quick to identify the initial signs, such as, fidgeting. Staff are aware that younger children find it difficult to sit still and provide a range of experiences to develop this skill. For example, during singing time children are provided with drums to help focus their attention. Children fully participate in singing their favourite songs and tapping the beat, whether loud or quiet, in time to the tune.

The setting is well-organised to encourage children's learning and to develop independence. There is a wide range of resources which are stimulating and varied providing appropriate challenge. Children are fully involved in the selection and unpacking of new resources, playing an integral part in the setting. For instance, when the new stampers arrive children keenly unpack the boxes showing curiosity in the contents. Children become engaged in printing their name, with older children identifying familiar letters. Every day routines encourage children to use counting regularly, such as, using their index finger to count how many children are going out side. Children confidently use counting in their play, for instance, a three-year-old counts wooden blocks as her horse jumps over them. Children are introduced to number problems through regular involvement in number rhymes, such as, 'Five little ducks went swimming one day'.

Children are given a wealth of opportunities to initiate activities independently, to explore imaginatively and to learn from each other. For example, children are given a variety of collage materials to use creatively and to explore texture. Children are confident to request additional resources, for instance, when the glue stick is not 'sticky' enough and the 'runny' glue is needed. Staff deploy themselves effectively to support children in self-chosen activities, thus maximising opportunities to further develop skills. Children identify their colours and confidently make new colours by either mixing with their hands to print or by mixing two paintbrushes together. Children confidently ascribe meaning to their paintings, for instance, a man with a 'wacky' nose.

Staff are excellent at extending the children's learning through effective questioning. High-quality questioning throughout a cooking activity ensures that children are aware of the process, what ingredients to add and how to use a microwave to melt chocolate. Children

consistently use their senses to explore the activity, sampling ingredients throughout the cooking process, whilst maintaining a healthy and safe environment.

Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate the local and wider community. They are able to reflect on the passage of time when comparing a newborn baby to themselves. Visitors, such as an 'Indian granny', supports children's understanding of different communities as she encourages the children to dress in a sari like herself and to taste a range of Indian cuisine. Children develop a good understanding of the natural world through their involvement in Forest School where they are able to observe nature and to create habitats.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show high levels of confidence and self-esteem as they participate in a range of activities that encourage learning and development. They arrive happily at the small, friendly setting, they settle in well and have very good relationships with the staff, showing that they feel secure and confident. They are very keen to engage and participate in activities negotiating with each other and staff to organise and develop their own ideas. Children's creations are valued for instance, an 'our work' board displays children's creativity.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children have numerous opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, such as, Forest School and regular visitors, for instance, the community dentist. There is a good range of resources, readily available, to ensure children are aware of the diversity in our society. All children receive excellent support in the fully inclusive setting. Very good resourcing and organisation of the provision ensures activities can be adapted to include all children. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure that children with special educational needs are monitored and assessed regularly. There is a regular exchange of information with parents to ensure continuity in care.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children are clear on expectations and boundaries and are given consistent support as they settle into the new environment, which encourages personal confidence. A well-written behaviour management policy is shared and understood by staff and parents to ensure continuity in care. Children are consistently praised, for instance, as they keenly help to tidy away showing pride in their environment.

Partnership with parents is good, which contributes significantly to children's well-being within the playgroup. Children benefit from the close relationships staff build with their parents. Staff have good knowledge of children's family background to ensure they are positively supported. Parents are well-informed about the provision, receiving a wealth of information, such as, relevant Foundation Stage curriculum material displayed on the informative notice board. Children's progress is regularly shared with parents. Key workers make themselves readily available to discuss children's progression. However, children's home achievements are not sufficiently used to influence future planning. Parents are actively involved in the group, for example, through the well supported voluntary committee and fundraising events. Parents are giving clear instructions when helping in the group to ensure children's needs are met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by skilful and knowledgeable staff who meet children's individual needs. Staff demonstrate good knowledge of the setting's policies and procedures and implement them effectively to ensure that children are kept safe and well. The staff are pro-active in ensuring regulatory requirements, such as, a complaints record to share with parents, are established. There are effective arrangements in place to ensure that parents receive clear instructions when helping in the group, in particular, to ensure that children are protected from persons who are not vetted. However, recruitment, suitability and induction arrangements have not been formalised to ensure appropriate staff are caring for children.

Children are closely supervised and receive a high level of support. The register has been adapted to clearly show accurate times of attendance for staff and children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. Staff and committee effectively promote children's good health, keeping them safe, providing enjoyable activities that support their learning and development and encourage them to make a positive contribution to their own and the wider community.

Leadership and management is good. Friendly and professional staff work exceptionally well as a team. They are pro-active in identifying areas for improvement, such as training needs, and address these diligently to ensure that the provision for nursery education meets children's needs. However, the assessment system has not been monitored effectively to sufficiently evidence children's progression.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup were requested to maintain appropriate documentation, policies and procedures. The group have completed effective risk assessments, lost child procedure and fire logs to ensure children's well-being is safeguarded. Good arrangements have been established to ensure parents are aware of the complaints procedure.

At the last nursery education inspection a point for consideration was raised relating to partnership with parents. Parents are fully informed of children's progress through regular key worker discussions. Parents may request to see their child's assessment records at any time, and do so frequently.

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 good. 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):

- develop further recruitment, suitability and induction arrangements

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 the system of recording observations and assessment clearly evidence children's achievements and show their progress towards the early learning goals

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