

# Grasshopper Club

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY360499
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 June 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Patricia Bowler
<b>Setting Address</b>	School House, Mount Pleasant, Castle Donington, DERBY, DE74 2LN
<b>Telephone number</b>	07713 244528
<b>E-mail</b>	stephaseldine@btinternet.com
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Grasshopper Club
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](http://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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Grasshopper Club opened in 1984 and registered at these premises in 2007. The playgroup is based in a converted house on the Castle Donington Community College campus, Castle Donington, Derbyshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open from 09:00 to 15:00 each weekday during term-time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 74 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 54 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The playgroup employs seven members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are protected from infection through diligent daily routines. These are effectively implemented by staff who have considerable knowledge of health and hygiene issues, which are supported through excellent policies to maintain children's health. Robust routines ensure all areas accessed by children are clean and well maintained. Children are extremely able and demonstrate a real desire to become independent in their personal care. They access the facilities independently and know to wash their hands 'to wash off the germs'. Children wash their hands before coming to the snack bar.

Parents are well informed about health issues, sickness and accidents through meticulous recording systems, and regularly updated information ensures they can be contacted in an emergency. Staff are trained in first aid and a fully stocked first aid kit on both levels ensures children receive appropriate care in the event of any accidents. Staff receive training for specific procedures such as epipen use in the case of allergic reactions.

Children enjoy daily access to outside play and benefit from proactive opportunities to take part in physical activities, in the two areas to the side and rear of the setting. They enthusiastically partake in very well planned sessions including riding wheeled toys, which they pedal and steer with age appropriate skills and eagerly join in organised games where they run, hop and skip. The outdoor area enables children to benefit from free flow play. They move confidently, making independent choices between indoor and outdoor table and floor activities and natural resources, such as sand and water. An organised visit to a grassed area within the college grounds provides opportunities to enjoy open areas. Children giggle delightfully as they join staff in running races. They shake balls on the parachute as they lift and lower this quickly and gently and laugh as the balls roll and bounce.

A nutritious diet is provided as children enjoy various foods at snack time. Interesting conversations develop as they discuss where various fruits grow as they help to prepare fresh pineapple and enjoy carrot sticks, grapes and apples. Children learn about the nutritional content of foods through meaningful activities. They have helped to plant and cultivate lettuce, radish and onions in the small outdoor greenhouse. They observe growing processes and develop their knowledge of the need for water and sun to make them grow. They enjoyed eating the produce at snack time. Other activities involving food preparation have included making Chinese soup during celebrations for the New Year. Children chopped various vegetables and prepared noodles before eating this and re-create cooking and eating processes with woks and chopsticks in the role play Chinese restaurant.

Children's dietary needs are met effectively as these are discussed and recorded in detail with parents. Water is provided as an alternative to milk which is actively encouraged as children develop an awareness of vitamins to help with physical growth. They attend the snack bar during the session and develop dexterity as they independently access crockery and cutlery and pour their own drinks.

Drinking water is available throughout the day for children to independently address their thirst needs.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Diligent assessments, where risks are substantially minimised, ensure children play in a safe and secure environment. Significant attention is shown to the structure and presentation of activities to ensure children can move around freely and independently within the three rooms. Children know to walk carefully and hold onto low-level hand rails as they use the stairs to the first floor. Safety gates to the top and bottom ensure children cannot access these unsupervised. Core activities, such as sand and water are presented in the outside area so do not pose a risk to children slipping indoors minimising possible accidents.

Children use high quality equipment which is systematically checked to ensure it is safe for purpose, age and developmentally appropriate. Resources are stored in low-level units to be accessible to children as they access when required to supplement activities. They independently obtain resources at the creative activity, from a nearby drawer unit to support their play. Staff have acute understanding of encouraging children to be independent whilst setting safe limits, to maintain their safety. For example, they remind children to walk within the setting giving clear explanations as to why this is important for their own safety and that of others.

A very strong emphasis is given to helping children to understand how to keep themselves safe and they remind each other about taking care on the stairs. They take part in regular emergency evacuation practices and know to meet at the designated meeting point. Clear arrangements are established if they are unable to return to the premises so that children can be cared for safely until collected by parents. Imaginative activities, including a visit from the local fire brigade, alert children to community safety services. They refer to photographs and quote advice including 'stop, drop and roll'. A recent activity about keeping safe when out and about includes road safety. Children know about pedestrian crossings and talk knowledgeably about this as they walk within the college campus.

Staff have an excellent, professional understanding of child protection issues, including the referral process which is detailed in the written policy. The policy is comprehensive and clear and is shared with parents to ensure they are fully informed about staff roles and responsibilities to protect children from harm. Excellent recruitment and employment procedures ensure children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff suitable for their role. Robust procedures are carried out to ensure children are protected from non-vetted persons, as visitors are not left alone with children and new staff are supervised during the vetting procedure.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children's progress is effectively planned, making excellent use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage planning. Close and caring relationships are established with staff to increase children's sense of trust and self-worth. They benefit from the visually rich and stimulating environment, with pictures, posters and displays to extend and support their development. Children interact positively with peers as they are supported in acquiring skills to negotiate and take turns as they play.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. An excellent knowledge and implementation of the Foundation Stage ensures children are highly motivated and challenged to make rapid progress in their development. The rich and varied activities meet the needs of individual children exceedingly well, in a stimulating and welcoming environment which reflects their

backgrounds and the wider community. Activities are purposeful and developmentally appropriate for each individual. Children's behaviour is managed extremely well as staff skilfully implement a positive behaviour policy to create a harmonious environment. Innovative teaching methods and rigorous assessment support children's development and the information gained is used extremely effectively to guide the planning. An excellent use of time and resources and diligent monitoring procedures enable staff to maintain the high standards of teaching.

Children make excellent progress because they are recognised as unique individuals. Time at registration is made to welcome children as they respond to an individual greeting and a group song at the beginning and end of the day. They develop confidence and self-esteem as they address their personal care needs and make active choices about their play using the free flow indoor and outdoor play opportunities.

An extensive range of rich and stimulating activities captivate children's imagination and challenge their thoughts in three separate rooms. All areas incorporates core activities, with sand and water also provided in the outside area. Children at the water tray use water wheels and containers as they develop skills in pouring and early concepts of capacity.

The setting is currently presented to reflect the theme of travel. A collage activity captivates their interest as they use travel brochures and use a range of tools skilfully, including scissors and glue spreaders to create decorative pictures. A child looking for a picture of Cinderella looks through a brochure and says 'look that's Denny's Diner where we had our lunch on holiday in America' spotting this in the brochure. She progresses towards the end of the brochure and says 'oh this is just information about hotels and flights now' and moves to a new brochure in her search.

A travel agents in the role play area successfully links the theme and a wall mounted world map is used by children as they identify and name different countries. A child recognises England and points out where 'Castle Donington is in the middle of England'. Children use a range of travel brochures, booking forms, computer keyboard, mark making materials, currency for different countries, passports and tickets as they take on roles including customers. They add to the resources when a child asks where the computer screen is to go with the keyboard. A staff member asks if he would like to make one, providing an empty cardboard box. A small group of children gather eagerly together. They seal the box using masking tape 'to make the square for the screen' and work cooperatively to decorate the box with chalk in the outside area. They choose and mount a picture to denote the screen and add this to the role play area. Children enjoy an inflatable submarine and a large wooden boat in the outside area as they use their imaginations extremely well to reach different holiday destinations. During a group discussion children talk about various transport modes. A child suggests a 'magic carpet to fly on holiday' and children eagerly use small floor mats to reach destinations such as 'Northern Ireland'. They discuss different weather conditions they encounter on their journeys including cloud formation and a child says 'I hope it doesn't thunder or lighten or we might crash'.

Children make excellent progress in mathematics. Size, shapes and prepositions are naturally introduced and developed. They recognise shapes in the pre-school room which they have created and given names. For example, Sally star and Timmy triangle and others are attractively displayed to encourage their recognition skills. They count in every day situations, including counting to four in Spanish to denote the age of a puppet used in an excellent narrated story and a large world floor mat game encourages colour recognition as they match the rolled dice with different countries denoted by colour. They recognise shapes in the pre-school room which they have created and given names.

Children develop an acute awareness of written text and phonics as this is displayed throughout the setting. Older children spend time in small groups in the pre-school room which is planned with floor and table activities. They use the 'jolly phonics system' to aid their recognition and assist in early letter formation. Children's creativity and interest in animals, including a recent farm visit, is used effectively to create a wall display where children group various animals according to size and number. They recognise their names at snack time. Mark making activities are available at all times and children are beginning to form recognisable letters. Some older children can write their names as they practise emergent writing.

Communication skills are given high priority as children receive skilful support and interaction from staff. They happily chatter to each other and engage confidently in conversations with adults.

Children learn about the natural world through practical activities using visual aids as they look and listen for wildlife in the outside area. Good support and open questions help them to use resources such as binoculars, magnifying glasses and specimen jars to observe and discuss their findings. They hunt for creatures in the outside 'bug tank' discussing features as they match them to pictures and listen and look for birds. They develop care and concern as they release a ladybird following their observations.

Personal, social and emotional development is a strong element. Children are very determined in their personal care. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic as they make active choices about their play. Children are sensitively supported in gaining high levels of self-control. They have an excellent awareness of right and wrong in line with their stage of development. Effective intervention from staff enables them to negotiate and become sensitive and respectful in their interaction with others.

Overall, all children make outstanding progress in their levels of achievement.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a robust equal opportunities policy which works exceptionally well in practice. Individual needs are discussed and recorded on detailed children's records to ensure their specific needs are met well. A strong commitment from staff ensures the inclusion of every child and they work collaboratively with parents and other agencies to meet children's individual needs. Children engage in new and exciting activities to enhance their confidence and self-esteem and foster their sense of worth and belonging. Attractive pictures and posters provide children with information about other cultures and they enjoy role play situations, such as the Chinese restaurant to increase their knowledge and awareness. This is linked successfully to Chinese New Year celebrations and children experience excellent opportunities to make and eat Chinese meals.

Children gain high levels of self-control as they follow consistent methods and boundaries to increase their understanding of right from wrong. Picture prompts are displayed within the setting and children implement some simple rules as they play. They understand about sharing and taking turns and remind each other not to throw sand 'because it gets in your eyes'. They respond positively to gentle staff interaction when a dispute over a doll erupts and accept compromises as they learn to share. Children know when it is time to tidy away as they are given a verbal prompt by staff that this time is approaching. This enables them to bring to a close any activities that they are involved in before ably assisting with this task. Children respond

extremely well to staff's use of praise and encouragement to promote a harmonious atmosphere based on positive contribution.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. A comprehensive prospectus provides detailed information about the group and gives them an understanding about policies and working practice. They are fully aware of current legislation, successfully implemented by staff, which influences the high quality of care provided. Children receive consistent care in line with parental wishes as parents are actively involved in the initial assessment to clearly identify what children can do on entry. Regular meetings with key persons ensure they are fully informed about children's progress and development. Parents receive written reports at the end of each term completed in line with 'Birth to three matters' or Foundation stage outcomes. They are invited to add comments and joint agreements clearly identify children's next steps in learning. Parents assist children in fund raising activities and a recent 'Summer Hunt', where various items were collected on a sponsor form providing additional funding for new equipment. Children have also been involved in charity fundraising for events such as Comic Relief and learn, through sensitive discussion, about children less fortunate than themselves.

Parents can join sessions on a voluntary basis to experience activities first hand, to assist in children's enjoyment and achievement, enhance their awareness of what children do and the value of learning through good quality play. Partnerships are further enhanced through informal discussions as parents arrive and collect their children.

Children enjoy extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them. They enjoy the 'bug tank' in the outside area searching for, and matching models of mini beasts to pictures on the wall. They use magnifying glasses to study insects which they collect in specimen jars and use binoculars to look for birds in the 'look and listen' areas. Children learn about other countries in activities, such as the Travel Agent role play area. Wall and floor maps of the world are used to identify different countries and children enjoy a very well narrated story about a hand held puppet travelling on holiday to Spain. They learn simple Spanish phrases such as 'hello' and join in singing 'Happy Birthday' in Spanish as the 'puppet' celebrates his birthday.

Children develop care and concern during 'bring your pet to pre-school' as they carefully handle small animals such as hamsters and safely interact with dogs. A recent visit to a local farm enhances their awareness of farm animals and bi-products such as milk.

Very good opportunities are made to increase children's awareness of community services, and they eagerly discuss a visit from the local fire brigade. Children learn about different cultures as they engage in innovative activities and celebrations. Attractive pictures and posters provide children with information about other cultures and they enjoy role play situations, such as the Chinese restaurant to increase their knowledge and awareness. This is linked successfully to Chinese New Year celebrations and children experience excellent opportunities to make and eat Chinese meals.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Robust procedures for recruitment and employment are rigorously implemented and maintained through initial induction periods and annual appraisal reports. Staff are deployed effectively

to support children's overall care and the key person system ensures their individual needs are met and pertinent information is shared with parents. Excellent policies, which are successfully implemented, form a strong foundation to the exceptionally high quality of care which children receive. Training and development needs are supported as staff attend various courses and events to further enhance their extremely high standards.

Registration systems accurately record children's attendance as parents sign them in and out as they arrive and collect their children.

All required documentation that contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is established and regularly reviewed. Confidentiality is rigorously maintained whilst ensuring parents are well informed and involved in children's care and learning.

Leadership and management is outstanding. Children benefit from a well organised routine and an excellent range of activities presented in a stimulating and highly motivated environment to maximise play opportunities. They spend their time purposefully as they are enthusiastically supported in their play, learning and development.

The care and education children receive is significantly enhanced because staff have a sound understanding of nursery education and a commitment to implement this effectively. The leader is totally committed to enhancing and developing the setting through her own working practice and attendance at further training. She successfully motivates staff to identify areas of strength and improvement, and works conscientiously to ensure recording systems to monitor children's progress give clear direction for their ongoing learning and development. Individual learning outcomes are incorporated into the planning to ensure each child is highly valued and consequently make excellent progress towards the early learning goals.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting was required to improve the documentation to include a procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost and the times of staff and children's arrival and departure. These have been successfully introduced, including procedures for parents to sign children in and out of the setting in addition to staff registration documents to ensure clear documentation is maintained and children's safety is supported. Staff attendance is clearly documented.

The setting was also required to develop the existing plans to show clearly what children are intended to learn at their activities and review the snack-time routine to ensure its structure and length sustain the children's interest and promote continued good behaviour. Significant progress has been made to planning procedures and recording systems to ensure learning intentions are clearly identified. Evaluation processes work very well in practice to support children's ongoing development. The introduction and successful snack bar system enables children to make choices about when they have their snack. Their behaviour is actively supported as a staff member sits with children to encourage their social interaction and respect for others.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required Ofsted or the provider 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)