



Abbey View Pre-School & Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY316208
Inspection date	29 June 2006
Inspector	Suman Willis

Setting Address	77 Holywell Hill, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 1HF
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Registered person	Jeannette Mary Burns
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care, Sessional 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 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?

Abbey View Pre-School and Nursery opened in January 2006. The property has been newly converted and consists of two large nursery rooms with a large waiting area. The nursery is situated close to St. Albans Abbey and town centre. There is a small kitchen, and an office/staff room. The nursery is open from 09:00 to 15:00 during term time, and offers morning and afternoon sessions plus all day care. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 45 children aged between two to five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 30 children aged between two to five years on roll. Of these 10 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attending the setting coming from a wide catchment area between St. Albans, Park Street and Radlett. The nursery supports children who have physical disability and children with learning disability. It also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three staff plus the principal. All staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications, the principal and the manager also have a degree in early years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which promote their health and physical development. They ride wheeled toys competently and younger children are developing their pedalling and manoeuvring skills. Some children skilfully follow directions using the chalked drawing of a road. Children engage in other outdoor games such ball games, playing with hoops, and enjoy running around stopping with control. Consequently children are continuing to develop their large physical skills, and have regular fresh air for their well-being. Older children are developing their understanding, through topic work, the importance to exercise, and the changes that occur to their bodies after exercise.

Children's health needs are very well monitored and parental permission for administering emergency aid and medication is in place. Parents are familiar with the settings sickness policy which ensures that everyone acts in the best interest of all children. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene as they independently access the toilet and wash their hands. Effective procedures such as wearing disposable gloves when changing nappies ensure that cross infection is minimised. Children's knowledge of good hygiene practices is re-enforced as visitors such as the dentist are invited.

Children are very well nourished as staff provide good information for parents to ensure that children eat healthily. Staff have a good understanding of food hygiene and store food appropriately. These are clearly labelled with the child's name, and this enables all staff to be familiar with individual children's diet. Children enjoy healthy snacks of fruit and salads. They have access to regular drinks which they bring from home. Children's individual dietary needs are met because staff use the information provided by parents appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and safe environment. The area used by children is well laid out to ensure that they move around safely. All walls are

attractively displayed with children's work and posters, thus making it inviting for children. Children have access to a wide range of resources which are in good condition and age appropriate. These are easily accessed thus promoting children's independence.

Children play safely and accidental injury is minimised because effective procedures, which are understood by all staff, are in place. Risk assessments are carried out daily and all doors are appropriately secured to ensure children's safety. Children are developing an understanding of road safety through topic work which is extended into the playground. They enjoy riding around the chalked drawing of the 'M25'. Staff are at hand to encourage them to move in the same direction thus avoiding accidents. Road signs and traffic lights made by children are well utilised during outdoor play thus extending their knowledge of keeping safe.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted because relevant procedures and documents are in place. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection and know what actions to take should they have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed at the door and settle very well upon arrival. They engage happily in their chosen activity. Children's independence is promoted as they freely move around selecting their own play materials. Children develop good self-esteem and are confident to speak up in a group as they show their personal items brought from home. Younger children are becoming confident speakers as they ask for their favourite rhymes during group time, in which they all join in enthusiastically. However, group times are sometimes disrupted by some older children. Therefore children's learning is less effective at certain times. Children are challenged as their learning is extended by staff who use their observational skills to join in appropriately. For example, staff join in at the playdough table and ask the children what they would like to make; their request for a cake is met with ease and suggestions to add candles extends their counting skills as they say six. They all count these out once they are rolled. They are then encouraged to make their own cake with candles. Consequently children are becoming confident communicators, learning to count, developing their small manipulative skills and extending their hand and eye co-ordination.

Children are interested to learn as they engage in a wide range of interesting and age appropriate activities. Activities are accommodated to meet the needs of all children. For example staff are at hand to provide appropriate support and time to enable younger and less able children to complete activities. They share their achievement of having completed a book about their height with another member of staff. Therefore all children feel valued because of the good relationship developed between adults and children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation

Stage. They plan a well balanced and varied curriculum linking all resources and activities to ensure that all six areas of learning are covered. This is further extended during outdoor play. For example, the outdoor play, is organised around the topic of transport by using road signs and traffic lights made by staff and children, around their chalk drawing of the 'M25'. Observations of children's achievements are made regularly, and pictures of their work are also kept in a book to monitor their development. Staff use appropriate profile sheets to monitor their progress through the stepping stones.

Staff are well deployed to support the children in their learning. Staff interact very positively with the children; they encourage, support and challenge them appropriately to extend their learning. Staff use effective strategies to help children learn, develop and make good progress. Children are fully engaged in the activities and enjoy exploring through a mix of free play and structured activities. Consequently, children make good progress in all areas of their learning, although some extension of children's learning through daily routine such as snack time are missed.

Children are well behaved and enjoy being given responsibilities as they are chosen to be the head girl/boy. This makes them feel valued and respected. They wear their sticker badge with pride and enjoy handing out cups, and fruit and salad pieces, during snack time. Children are beginning to make firm friends and learning to care as one child asks another if he is alright after tripping over a chair. They show a strong sense of belonging as they select toys, and are interested and eager to learn as they take part in their chosen activities.

Children enjoy developing their writing skills as they freely access writing materials from the draw unit, using name cards and the alphabet in the role play area. They enjoy reading and share books with each other retelling the story about the big bear with enthusiasm. Most children recognise their names and some competently write their own names. Children enjoy tracing around the letters of their names as they make individual height books. They are developing their mathematical skills as they competently count heads during register. Children enjoy making comparisons between their peers and adults when talking about who is taller or smaller. They make height books with enthusiasm using height charts. Children count out small balls of playdough using number cards. They sing familiar rhymes such as 'Goldilocks' to re-enforce their understanding of size.

Children celebrate festivals from around the world and use different materials to create Chinese fans and lamps. They develop an understanding of people in the community through puzzles, books and topic work. Visitors such as the dentist are welcomed into the group. Therefore children are learning to value and respect diversity and are developing an understanding of their community. They learn to explore different materials as they play with wet/dry sand and make models with clay. Children are beginning to understand the concept of time as they investigate how a sand timer works. They are excited to count with staff how long it takes for the sand to go the bottom. Children eagerly tell staff about what they had done at the weekend, thus developing their knowledge of past and present. They demonstrate confidently their skills in technology, when using a variety of electronic machines such as a till, play computer and mobile phones.

Children are given ample opportunities to be creative. They enjoy making music and use the keyboard. Some children enjoy singing using the karaoke machine. Children engage themselves in role play and enjoy being characters such as 'Tinkerbell' and 'Batman'. They use their imagination well as they act out the story of the 'Three little pigs'. Consequently children are excited to develop their creative skills. Children show increasing skills when using tools, such as scissors to cut, and rolling pins when flattening the dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very settled in their environment. They are greeted warmly by staff upon arrival. Consequently children feel a part of the setting and a sense of belonging. Staff share information with parents to enable them to meet the individual needs of all children. All children have equal access to all resources. Children with special needs are fully integrated into the group, their development monitored and shared informally with parents. All staff welcome support from parents in helping children to achieve.

Children generally behave very well and staff have clear strategies in place to enable them to work effectively with more challenging children. Staff are positive role models and manage children calmly and sensitively, through positive re-enforcement of good behaviour. Children relish being given responsibilities as they are chosen to be head girl/boy. They play and work harmoniously together amongst their peers and with adults. Children understand the need to take turns and wait patiently for their snacks and lunches. Younger children play alongside each other while older children have formed firm friendships as they ask to sit next to their friends during snack time. Children are learning to care as they ask their friends if they are alright after a fall.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation stage and are encouraged to be involved in children's learning. Information about topics is included in the newsletter. Communication is generally effective as information is shared verbally. Parents have responded positively about the provision and staff but have said they do not receive formal information about the progress their children are making. Children take home library books thus involving parents in their children's learning, which could be further enhanced by staff developing procedures to formally inform parents of the progress their children are making through the stepping stones.

The positive approach to promoting children's understanding of right and wrong, diversity in cultures and caring for others, helps to foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and welfare is very well promoted. The setting has effective procedures in place to ensure staff are suitably checked and hold appropriate

qualifications. Children benefit from the staff's ability to update their skills which they implement into their practice. Consequently children are cared for by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. All staff hold an early years qualification with some at degree level. The adult to child ratio positively support children's care learning and play. Group sizes and effective staff deployment contribute to children's good health, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Staff continue to develop their practice and are currently developing their planning to extend children's learning. Children will also benefit from staff developing their procedures for sharing information with parents, thus enhancing their care, learning and play. An effective induction checklist is in place to ensure new members of staff settle with ease. All the required documents are in place to support the good practice.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and staff team are clear about their roles and responsibilities and this underpins the smooth running of the group. Some of the team members are new to the setting but have settled in well. They all work very well together and share information effectively. Regular meetings ensure all staff are included and kept up to date. Training needs are constantly reviewed and promoted. The provision is pro-active in monitoring and evaluating their practice.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

N/A

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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):

- review the organisation of large group time to ensure the needs of all are children met.

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):

- develop planning to ensure that children's learning is extended through their daily routine
- develop procedures to ensure parents are fully informed of the progress their children are making through the stepping stones.

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