



Absolute Beginners

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137266
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Inspector	Claire Jean Douglas
Setting Address	St Giles Community Centre, Farnborough Village, Farnborough, Kent, br6 7ar
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Registered person	D Pedder
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?

Absolute Beginners Pre-school is a privately owned service which has been registered since 1994. The group operates from St Giles Community Centre, located in Farnborough Village in Kent and serves the local community. The pre-school is open from 09:15 to 12:15 from Monday to Friday, term time only.

There are currently 35 children aged under five years on roll. Of these 27 children receive funding for nursery education. The group accept children aged from two and a half years. There is one main play room with a separate room used for structured activities and small group sessions.

The setting employs six staff who work with the children, four of which are present each day, of these two have a relevant childcare qualification and two are currently working towards a qualification.

The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and or disabilities (LDD). The setting receives support from the local authority through an early years advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part in some regular physical activity, within the setting, that contributes to a healthy lifestyle as there is no outdoor area, equipment is set up with in the play room during the second session, for instance the children enjoy climbing up the ladder to a small slide and sliding down, balancing along beams, walking with stilts and throwing soft skittles. Children smiled and laughed as they danced and jumped to the beat of a music tape whilst they played instruments.

Children benefit from a healthy diet that meets their nutritional needs as they have a snack of fresh fruit each day. Individual dietary needs are taken into account. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection and the daily routine helps children begin to understand simple good health and hygiene practices. However learning opportunities were missed as no discussions on the benefits of healthy eating or why they should wash their hands took place.

Staff can respond appropriately to children who have minor injuries or accidents because there is always a member of staff with first aid training on duty. Systems are in place for the recording of accidents. Records include full names of the child concerned and details of what happened and what treatment was given, with appropriate sections for parental signatures. This ensures children's health is fully protected.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, bright and welcoming environment. Safety precautions such as socket covers and finger protectors all promote children's safety and well-being. This means they are able to move around safely and independently.

Possibilities of accidental injury are identified and minimised by staff, through effective daily risk assessments. The staff are appropriately deployed ensuring children are always well supervised, for instance, escorting children whilst they move from one area to another. Children are familiar with the evacuation procedure, as fire drills are regularly carried out, promoting children's safety.

Children have access to a good range of clean, safe resources and equipment suitable for their age and stage of development which means they can play safely. All toys and play resources are checked each time they are used for safety and cleanliness and appropriate action is then

taken. During holiday periods staff spend time thoroughly checking and washing play resources, so they are ready for the new term.

Children are protected by staff, who have a competent knowledge of child protection policies and procedures and give priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the pre-school have good relationships with staff, which helps them to settle quickly and grow in confidence. Children take part in a varied routine throughout the morning which keeps them busy and interested and helps them to achieve well. Younger children are able to make good use of the activities and experiences provided, because the staff are beginning to use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to adapt activities to the needs of all children. This supports their progress. Staff join in with children's play and support the development of their communication skills through appropriate questioning and by listening to what the children have to say.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the overall expectations for children's learning. They plan and create an environment where children are active learners. This means activities are planned that children are interested in and motivated by, which supports their progress well. However, some possibilities are missed to encourage independence, for example, children were not involved in the preparation of snacks or given the opportunity to develop self esteem, by pouring out their own drinks.

Children come in to the pre-school happily, with confidence, and they are eager to join in. Children are keen to communicate and use language well to start conversations with their friends and talk about their experiences. For example, when a child tells his friends what he is going to wear to a fancy dress party. Children practise writing their names, they use their emerging writing skills to help create signs and labels for their work and to send a letter home to themselves, as they find out about the village they live in. Children look at books independently and listen intently to stories which are read with enthusiasm and excitement, encouraging children to confidently predict what will happen next. The children show an interest in numbers when they count how many children are at pre-school today, and are encouraged to solve problems during everyday routines, such as working out how many pieces of paper are needed for each child around the table.

Children have opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. They talk about the date, the day of the week, the season and the weather at circle time each morning. They share news and talk about their lives and families. Children question why things happen and how they work when they experiment with basic programmable toys and shop tills, for example, clicking on buttons to cause things to happen.

Children use their imagination and express themselves in a variety of ways. They act out stories during role play, using basic props for inspiration such as play phones.

Planning shows evidence of a stimulating range of activities and resources which cover the Foundation Stage. Children are keen to take part in activities and are motivated to learn. Children are enjoying their time at the setting. Staff are competent and they have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities. Staff have built good relationships with the children and as a result their care, welfare and learning needs are met within the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed in to the setting and play a full part in the pre-school, staff value and respect each child's individuality and family context, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Information about children's individual needs is gathered through discussion with parents before they start. Children benefit from activities and resources which help them value diversity, such as finding out about Chinese New Year and celebrating Diwali. This helps children develop a positive view of the wider community. Staff have a calm and consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. Children are familiar with the rules and expectations of the setting, which staff consistently reinforce. Overall, this results in a calm atmosphere which helps children to behave well. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children show growing levels of independence throughout pre-school. They confidently choose from the activities on offer, take themselves to the toilet and are encouraged to tidy-up activities themselves. They begin to work harmoniously together as they learn to share and take turns, making sure that bricks are shared so everybody can build a tower, or showing concern for their friend by getting a tissue for him when required.

The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for nursery education is good. All parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and regular newsletter about activities and topics, including ideas to extend their child's learning at home. There is an 'open door' policy which means parents can discuss their child's progress when they feel it is necessary. Parents are happy with the service provided they have good relationships with staff throughout the setting and find them friendly and approachable.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by appropriately qualified staff who are suitable to work with children. Staff work well together as a team and have clear roles and responsibilities. Staff have an understanding of child development which helps them meet children's individual needs. Children are cared for by consistent staff that they know well.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager, is committed to development and is aware of areas which need improvement. The manager is

open to advice and tries to make use of external support for raising standards. Staff are given support to develop their skills and knowledge through on-going training, however, this is usually achieved by one member of staff, who will then share the information she has learnt, with the rest of the staff team. The manager has an understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and knows how to use it in practise to support children's development.

Most required records, policies and procedures which contribute to children's health, safety and welfare are in place. The induction training ensures that all staff understand these policies and procedures and can refer to them when necessary. The manager is aware of the new regulations with regards to Complaints procedures, however the system for logging complaints requires updating. Space, staff and resources are well organised throughout the setting. There is an established daily routine that ensures children are occupied and stimulated throughout their time at the pre-school, and the range of the activities provided ensures they enjoy what they do and achieve appropriately, however, the plans do not give clear directions of the intended learning outcomes or highlight from observations, focus activities for the development of the children's next steps in their learning. Consequently, there is a possibility, that children's progress is overlooked. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to make improvements to the organisation, by seeking parental consents, for emergency medical advice or treatment. Parents wishes in the event of an emergency are now clear, as the manager has put an effective system into place.

At the last inspection for nursery education the setting was asked to make improvements to the provision of arts and crafts, to allow children more opportunities to experiment freely. Progress has been made in this area as children were observed to be enjoying and achieving experimentation with arts and crafts freely throughout this inspection.

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):

- improve knowledge and understanding of the regulations relating to Complaints procedures and update Complaints procedure information
- raise children's awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and good hygiene practices.

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):

- revise plans so that staff have a clear direction of the intended learning outcome and make more effective use of observations and planning so that children can move on to their next steps in learning
- increase the opportunities available for children to develop their independence and ensure the organisation of resources does not restrict children's learning opportunities.

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