

# Abington Vale PlaySchool

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	220115
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Rachael Mankiewicz
<b>Setting Address</b>	10 Bridgewater Drive, Bridgewater Drive, Northampton, Northants, NN3 3AF
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<b>Registered person</b>	Abington Vale Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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?

Abington Vale Playschool opened in 1969. It operates from a mobile on the campus of the primary school in Bridgewater Drive, Northampton. There is access to an outdoor play area. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The playschool opens five days a week in school term time and sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:15 to 14:45. There are currently 28 children on roll; of these 19 are in receipt of funding. The group is able to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. A total of five staff work with the children. Two staff members are qualified to NVQ Level 3, another has a Level 2 qualification and two are working towards appropriate qualifications. The group receives support from an advisory teacher from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted and they benefit from a clean and generally child-friendly environment in the shared building. They are protected from infection through the effective hygiene routines carried out by the staff which the children try to imitate. Children learn the importance of good hygiene practices in promoting their health as they readily wash their hands after using the toilet, before snack and after messy play. Older children have a secure awareness of how and why they need to wash their hands as they talk about the germs that they might have on their hands after playing in the sand. Many children access the tissue box as they need to and appropriately dispose of the used tissues. This sustained level of hygiene helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge in the event of any accidents. Accidents are recorded clearly and a parental signature is sought the same day. There are clear procedures for when a child becomes unwell during a session and parents give their written consent for staff to seek medical advice or treatment in the event of an emergency. Written consent is also sought before medication is administered and accurate records are maintained.

Children have an excellent understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet in promoting their growth and development as they eat snacks of fruit, vegetables and nutritious snacks. They choose and pour their own drinks and clear the tables when they have finished. Children are able to help themselves to water at other times which ensures that they remain well hydrated and comfortable. Special dietary requirements are complied with in partnership with the parents. Children are encouraged to try new foods and are helped to begin to understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. They show preferences and talk about flavours and textures, and this is extended as they try different foods at tastings and when celebrating different festivals.

Children enjoy some good opportunities to develop their physical skills which contribute to their good health. They benefit from fresh air as often as possible when they play on the grass or playground. Children expertly show different ways of moving around the room during the shark game and enthusiastically dance and do action games. They move spontaneously around the hall as they develop a good awareness of the space around them and the close proximity of others. Large and small equipment, including climbing frames, parachutes and tunnels to explore and items to throw and catch, are used well to allow children to develop good control over their bodies. They deftly handle tools, small machines, construction resources and malleable materials all safely and with increasing control. This develops children's hand to eye coordination and strengthens small muscles effectively.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where risks are identified and action is taken to minimise them. Staff are aware of children's developing abilities and so ensure that appropriate measures are in place to avoid dangerous situations. This includes their use of risk assessments which cover all areas of the building, the outdoor play areas and taking children on outings. Staff and management ensure that furniture and equipment, in particular the large apparatus, are of suitable design and condition, well-maintained and conform to safety standards. The staff's good understanding of safety allows children freedom to choose activities

that offer variety and challenge within safe limits. For example, they move safely between the hall and the shared toilet area because the premises are secure and children are unable to leave unsupervised. Activities are challenging but controlled as children climb and balance on the static equipment and play with water. They safely and deftly manipulate tools and implements as they use playdough. Their good hand/eye coordination develops as they responsibly carry and safely use scissors and other craft tools in many activities. Children learn about safety and begin to take responsibility for their personal safety. They learn about road safety as an activity and transfer their knowledge as they walk around the local environment. Children are reminded about keeping themselves safe and safe adults when they have visits from fire officers. Practising emergency evacuation procedures helps children learn how to protect themselves from possible danger in case of a fire.

Children are well protected because staff have a clear understanding of the local child protection guidelines and have up to date training in this area. Safety and welfare is further enhanced by excellent security of the premises and daily checks of all equipment. All visitors must provide identification and sign the visitors book. A password is used if anyone other than the child's parents or carer collects them. Lost and uncollected child procedures are in place and would be implemented immediately if concerns were raised.

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

The provision is good.

Children are settled and enjoy their time in the company of friends and adults at the setting. They are motivated and enthusiastic about the activities and play opportunities provided. Younger children benefit from the support and care of knowledgeable and experienced staff which enables younger children to take part in all their chosen activities. The needs of these younger children are met through effective organisation and planning for the progress by staff who have good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children under three follow the same curriculum as older children who are funded for their nursery education. Assessment of the development of the younger children is made using the 'Birth to three matters' framework instead of the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance.

Children's self-esteem and confidence are consistently promoted because staff are sensitive to each child's needs. They listen and communicate well with each other and with the adults which enables them to contribute to the social activities in the setting. This helps the children develop positive relationships. Children begin to develop their independence and learn to play in groups as they participate in a range of interesting activities. For example, they play together harmoniously making and flying space ships and rockets as they use construction materials together. Meanwhile other children take time on their own to play in the sand or look at a book.

Children explore a variety of interesting materials which stimulate their curiosity. For example, they eagerly develop their senses as they create shapes with playdough and feel the difference to cornflakes when they add water to the tray. Children use their imaginations well and with enthusiasm as they take part in role play. They respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings where appropriate as they talk about their home life. Their perseverance with activities and their confidence to share feelings develops as they play games and complete jigsaws.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because most staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. They have effective systems to use time and resources well to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. They effectively support children in a mixture of adult and child-initiated activities. Children are encouraged to make the most of their experiences by the staff's careful consideration of what the child might be able to learn. This is supported through good questioning and enabling by the knowledgeable key worker staff. The planning and assessment cycle which ensures children are making good progress is at an early stage of development. Systems for planning for the individual child's progress are being developed as challenge and individual targets are highlighted to show next steps for children. Information gained from the parents both verbally and from comments in individual communications books is used to inform planning. Parents are given some advice about how they can extend their children's learning at home ensuring that everyone is working co-operatively for the benefit of the child.

Children are keen to offer their ideas and respond well to new activities when they are introduced to them by staff. They have some opportunities to take the initiative to develop their play as they ask for water to be added to the sand tray. Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore a variety of materials and discover why things happen and how they work. For example, they use keyboards and tills in role play but know how a computer works when they experience programmes which consolidate their learning. They manipulate a range of different tools and implements, including cookery and playdough tools. Creative and imaginative skills are being promoted with a good range of art resources, and the children take pride in their potato print pictures and collages.

Children's mathematical learning is developed through practical activities. For example, they weigh ingredients on scales, watching objects float or sink in water and pouring their own drinks. They take pride in their constructed models as they measure the size and use language such as more and less and 'as tall as me' with ease. Children count confidently and show increasing skill in recognising and using numbers to support their play. For example, they successfully count backwards from 10 when the rocket ships are heading for blast-off. Children recognise numerals and begin to know what they mean and how they are used. They compare two numbers as they count during number games and sorting opportunities. Children understand that print has meaning and make marks freely throughout their activities. For example, they use their emerging writing skills for real purpose as they write their names on their drawings and write lists in the role play area. Some children practise writing their name with support from staff and others fetch their name cards to copy without being prompted. Reading skills are developing as they recognise their own name and the names of friends. Children enjoy looking at books alone, in small groups and in a whole group situation. They know how books work and handle them with care.

Children are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses through planned and unplanned activities. They begin to understand why their hearts pump their blood around more quickly as they exercise and move around the room in different ways. They begin to explore the wider world through visits to the school and outings further afield. Children look at holiday destinations and take part in the celebration of festivals.

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

The provision is good.

Children are confident in their relationships with staff because they are valued and respected as individuals. This promotes a sense of well-being and aids their emotional development. Welcoming staff ensure that children are settled and that their needs are met. The very good levels of support help children feel included in the pre-school and that they receive individual attention. The opportunity to choose between playing inside, or outside when weather permits, benefits the children. There is good access to further resources indoors particularly in the creative and graphics areas. Children are able to develop independence in other ways. For example, they access the hand washing area independently and tidy up at times during the session.

Children learn about the diversity of the world in which we live through planned activities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. For example they celebrate Chinese New Year and Easter and enjoy meeting people as they visit the setting. Older children are aware of their own needs and begin to respect the needs of others. They make sure their friends are included in activities and are aware that some children have different needs to themselves. Children behave very well. Older children have some understanding of rules, begin to negotiate when there is a problem and show respect for each other as they play and share. All children enjoy the security of pre-school routines. They respond well to the consistent boundaries set them and the encouragement to behave well given by the caring staff who act as good role models. Some older children are developing friendship groups and choose to eat their snack together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The children's well-being at the pre-school is enhanced by the good partnerships with parents. Written agreements with parents are clear and detailed. Parents are informed about how the setting operates through a starter pack, written notices, newsletters and displays and information about the care of the children. They are able to easily access the policies and procedures, including a comprehensive procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints. A complaints record is maintained.

Staff obtain information about the children's needs on entry particularly regarding words used for personal care and likes and dislikes, which helps ensure consistency of care. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail. Any special requirements or information are discussed and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. The needs of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recognised and met sensitively. The group is able to support children who have English as an additional language. Good information sharing on a daily basis is seen as important, including verbal information sharing and written exchange of records after meetings with keyworkers. Written information is exchanged through individual communication books. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in the running of the setting as members of the management committee. Parents and carers are able to help children settle in to the group and some help by offering their time and skills. Children enjoy the involvement of their parents and other adults and this contributes to their sense of assurance and belonging.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. This contributes greatly to the children's progress in the pre-school. Parents receive comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage in general and specifically about their own children. Key workers inform all parents about their children's progress towards the early

learning goals and seek their views. Comments made by parents about achievements of their children and observations made at home are used to plan the next stages in learning. Parents are encouraged to extend their children's learning at home including a book sharing system. Children benefit from parents being made fully aware of their child's progress and achievements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The good quality of care and education offered to the children is based on effective organisation throughout the setting. The leadership and management of the nursery education for funded children is good.

Day to day practices within the pre-school protect children and effectively promote all outcomes for children. Their play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space and resources which ensures that children are offered a wide range of activities and opportunities and their varying needs can be met. Staff support children well during activities while children under three, particularly, receive caring support and encouragement as they begin to develop basic skills. This is helped by the good staff to child ratios. Children's care and welfare is further supported by the comprehensive documentation and record keeping systems. Children's welfare is promoted effectively because staff are qualified and experienced in early years care to level three or are working towards appropriate qualifications. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and extend their own professional development through access to training and local short courses. The management team have a suitable and rigorous system in place to ensure children are cared for by staff with appropriate qualifications and experience. Procedures to ensure continued suitability of staff are not yet formalised which impacts on the protection of children. All documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place to ensure that the individual care plans are met. The policies and procedures which form part of the operational plan are reviewed regularly to reflect current good practice and professional guidance.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The staff team and the management committee work very well together and are committed to the continuous improvement and development of the setting. They have systems in place to discuss and reflect on their practice and evaluate the provision of nursery education. They monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and ensure children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff positively take advice from other professionals. Children's individual needs are continuously assessed and discussed by the child's keyworker and parents. Staff support and encourage children very well during activities while still allowing them time and space to initiate their own learning. Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to review their policies and procedures regarding a lost/uncollected child and the complaints system. These have been reviewed and updated as part of the annual review of the required documentation. Staff have developed their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. These changes have helped ensure the well-being and welfare of children is not compromised.

At the last inspection of the nursery education, the setting was asked to develop their planning and assessment systems. This has been done through a review of their practice, taking advice from advisory teachers and attending further training. This has helped ensure that children are

able to make progress. A further recommendation is made as an outcome of this inspection to review and consolidate the good practice that is now in place.

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

Since 1 April 2004 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 induction and appraisal systems for the manager and staff to ensure that they remain suitable to work with children and their training and development continues to support the educational needs of the children.

#### **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):

- consolidate use of the framework which informs the assessment and planning cycle to ensure that all children make progress, including exploring further opportunities for parents to be involved.

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)