

Abbot House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	126951
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane
Setting Address	Seasalter Christian Centre, Faversham Road, Seasalter, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 4AX
Telephone number	01227 263366
E-mail	
Registered person	Abbot House Nursery
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?

Abbot House Nursery opened in 1998. It operates from a bungalow next to the Christian Centre in Seasalter, Whitstable. There are two playrooms, a room for messy play, toilets, office, a kitchen and a secure outside area. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding towns.

The nursery is registered to care for 23 children aged from two to under five years. There are currently 44 children on roll. This includes 32 funded three and four-year-olds.

Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The nursery supports children with special needs, and staff have experience working with children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery opens five mornings a week, and two afternoons during term time. Morning sessions are from 09.15 to 11.45, and afternoon sessions from 12.15 to 14.45.

There are eight staff working with the children. Five have early years qualifications, and all attend short courses. The nursery receives support from a Pre-School Learning Alliance fieldworker and an Early Years Advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean premises, where staff employ hygienic procedures, for example, they use colour-coded cloths in the kitchen, and disposable gloves in the toilets. Children are learning the importance of keeping themselves clean because staff set a good example, a member of staff told the children she couldn't share their food as she had not washed her hands. Clear accident and medication records promote children's good health.

There is a very strong emphasis on healthy eating, and snack time is an opportunity for children to act independently, learn about nutrition, and make healthy choices. They confidently select plates and cups, pour their drinks, cut and spread, and tidy up. As parents help provide the fruit and vegetables, their awareness is also being raised. Planned activities showing children the origin of foods, further promote healthy choices. Children have access to a jug of water during the day, so are starting to understand the need to keep their bodies hydrated.

Children take part in a wide variety of activities which challenge them physically, such as doing somersaults as part of an obstacle course. Children have regular opportunities to stretch, run, crawl, wriggle and balance, and are therefore learning spatial awareness and coordination. They are frequently encouraged to think about the effect of exercise on their bodies, listen to their heart beating and breathing, and know that it is important. Outside play is part of the daily routine, children benefit from taking part in a good range of activities in the fresh air, including gardening, riding and climbing, messy play and role play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The thoughtful layout of the environment enables children to make choices and take control of their play and learning. For example, having found out what activities are available to them, children then place their name in a pocket with a picture of their chosen activity, and can update this during the session. The outside environment is readily accessible to the children, and is in the process of completion to provide play opportunities encompassing all the areas of learning.

Toys and equipment are plentiful, and there is an especially impressive selection of story sacks, which staff use effectively to make stories come alive for children. Resources are well organised, for example, items which are used in connection with certain events such as Chinese New Year are organised into labelled bags.

Children are starting to understand that safety is important, for example, when staff explain why temporary fencing is in place in the garden. Staff are attentive to the maintenance of the building; they keep a careful ongoing record of potential hazards and actions taken, helping to ensure that children are kept safe. Great care is taken regarding children's security at arrival and collection times, and staff ensure they are aware when someone different is collecting, so children are always handed over safely to a known adult. Fire safety awareness is a strength; drills are cross-referenced with the register and take place on different days, to ensure that all children and staff are included.

Children's well-being is safeguarded because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. They keep careful records of accidents which happen

in the children's own homes, safeguarding children. There are up to date reference materials to which staff can refer, helping to ensure that they would act correctly to protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled, and cared for by staff who enjoy their company, and know their individual personalities and abilities well. Children benefit from a wide variety of play experiences, which are planned and relevant, such as looking at space and making real rockets. Children's individual needs are met, because staff make observations, and then plan activities which target their identified next steps. At several different times during the week, younger children are cared for separately from the older children, making sure that the little ones are secure, and the older ones are sufficiently challenged. Staff try to make sure they work in a way which is consistent with nearby schools, and are currently looking for a system of teaching phonics which encompasses the variety of systems used locally.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Teaching is effective because there is an emphasis on letting children decide what they want to do, and take responsibility for their own learning, set their own pace, and become independent learners. As staff plan activities as a team, they are able to check that each area of learning is given sufficient weight. Staff have a good awareness of the learning intention of activities. Children are making decisions about their own learning, and as a result, they are interested and motivated. Staff respond to children's interests, for example, an adult quickly recognised that her story was not as fascinating as the decorations outside, so she discussed their activities instead. At group times children are put into small groups, so staff can tailor the activities to their needs, for example, discussing feelings with older children, and doing simple action songs with the little ones. Staff are good at encouraging children to act independently, and giving them responsibilities, for example, an adult asked a child to show another how to turn the taps on.

There is a balance between adult directed and child initiated activities. For example, children are able to initiate their own craft activities choosing from a variety of accessible materials; a child who was making something for the wall display went on to make a slide, and staff skilfully encouraged him to problem-solve, how to make the steps. Therefore children are thinking, being challenged, working at their own pace, practising and consolidating skills.

As a result of good teaching, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Their personal, social and emotional development is well promoted. They are encouraged to learn independently and make choices, and as a result are confident to try new experiences and motivated to learn. They make friends and are encouraged to consider the feelings of others, and are therefore starting to show care and concern for others. During a discussion about feeling, a child asked if she could look after PD Bear, as he was unhappy. Children are becoming confident speakers, they are able to give confident accounts of the book they have looked at. They are learning that some people speak different languages when they sing 'happy birthday' in Cantonese. They are learning that print conveys meaning when their attention is drawn to print around them.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is increasing through constant access to programmable equipment, such as a specially designed child's computer. They learn about nature when enthusiastically digging for mini-beasts in the garden, and about caring for animals and their needs when feeding the land snails and stick insects. Their concept of time is growing, as staff give them five minutes to tidy up, (a child commented that the five minutes wasn't up yet), and refer to a timeline depicting the session's activities.

Children use their imaginations well in the role play area, pretending to peel plastic vegetables and doing the ironing. Painting and craft activities give children opportunities to be creative, and solve problems, for example, how to represent and fit steps to a slide made of boxes. Children are counting well and understanding basic calculation, such as when staff ask on a child's birthday how old she was yesterday, if she is three today.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met, because staff know them well, and observe their learning and play in order to help them make progress. Trips into the local community help children learn about their environment, for example, they have recently visited the church, and they were involved in the opening ceremony of the local shop. They experience different cultures and languages when the role play area becomes a Chinese restaurant, and when they sing 'happy birthday' in different languages.

Children are very well behaved, in control of their environment, and appropriately challenged. They are encouraged to think about how what they do affects the feelings of others, and helped find words to express their feelings. For example, staff acted out a scenario of taking something without permission, helping children to understand how this feels. The use of PD Bear, and discussions about his feelings, effectively demonstrate to children emotions such as sadness and anger. A discussion about how to make him happy when he was sad encouraged children to empathise and care. Good behaviour is promoted when staff recognise children's abilities and give them small responsibilities, such as pointing out that a child is particularly good at tidying the chairs, and giving him the job.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are making good progress, as evidenced in careful progress records. Staff work closely with their parents. Children benefit from the weekly visits from a speech and language therapist.

Partnership with parents is good.

Parents are very happy with the nursery, and the friendly staff and atmosphere. They appreciate the security procedures, so they feel their children are safe. They feel well informed about daily activities through the daily description pinned on the door. They are actively encouraged to continue their children's learning at home, as this notice gives them ideas, and they take books home regularly to read with, and to, their children. They know about their children's educational programme from posters displayed, parents' evenings, and meetings with staff to discuss their child's progress. Their views are sought via questionnaires, and there is also a parent representative on the committee and a suggestions box, ensuring parents' views are heard.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. For example, they are asked to quietly reflect on aspects of the session which they have enjoyed. Children's moral

development is well fostered, for example, during discussions about feelings they are encouraged to think about the effect of their actions on the feelings of others.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery meets the needs of the children for whom it provides care and education.

The nursery is well organised, with planning of activities and staff deployment. As a result, the sessions run smoothly, with staff clear about their individual roles. Teamwork is good, aided by weekly team meetings. For example, staff brought out the gym equipment very smoothly and quickly. The provision is being continually monitored and reviewed. An example of this occurred when staff were not sure if all children were using the outside area, so staff ticked off names as they went outside, and found that in fact they were all benefiting from its use. Children are cared for by knowledgeable staff, because they frequently attend short courses such as training on 'well-being and involvement', 'maths matters', 'problem solving and independent learning' and 'moving children forward by observations'.

All documentation required for the efficient running of the nursery is well-maintained. Records are kept confidential, and there is an extra lockable box for sensitive records such as child protection and medication. The record of attendance shows exact times of arrivals and departures, and the registration certificate is clearly displayed, informing parents of the conditions of registration.

Leadership and management is good.

Children's progress towards the early learning goals is carefully monitored. Staff record their regular observations next to the relevant aspect of the area of learning. It is then clear what children can do, and staff then use this information to plan their next steps, and demonstrate progress clearly to parents. Planning takes place when the staff team meets weekly. They plan activities at these meetings, and make effective use of their written observations of the children when they discuss their developmental progress and intended next steps. These frequent discussions result in staff who know individual children very well, and who can therefore provide activities daily which help targeted children progress.

Strong systems are in place for planning and monitoring the educational programme. For example, the staff group meet regularly, there are meetings with parents, meetings with other professionals such as the local forum, and staff training. In addition, staff keep up to date with the latest guidance, for example, they are already referring to the new Early Years Foundation Stage document. The staff group is continually reviewing and reflecting on practice, which in turn results in improved care for children. For example, the success of snack time has recently been monitored and evaluated, and improvements made.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the care of the children be improved by including more detail in the medication record. Medication administered is now recorded in sufficient detail.

It was also recommended that the nursery education be improved by the provision of a welcoming book area, and by giving the children more opportunities to use information technology. There are two book corners, with plenty of books and soft seating. Children use two computers, one

of which is attractively designed for children, and various other programmable equipment, such as a bee-bot.

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):

- further develop the range of activities available to children in the outside area (also applies to Nursery Education).

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):

- continue to develop a system to promote children's awareness and understanding of phonics.

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