

# Abbeymead Under Fives Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101450
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Shirley Ann Jackson / Bridgette Williams
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Church Centre, Larkhay Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL3 3SB
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<b>Registered person</b>	Abbeymead Under Fives 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abbeymead Under Fives Playgroup opened in 1992. It operates from temporary premises in the grounds of The Church Centre, Hucclecote near Gloucester. The playgroup uses two, large playrooms, kitchen and toilet facilities. Outside there is grass and a hard surfaced area. There are currently 59 children from two to four years. This includes 49 funded children. Children are offered a minimum of two sessions each week. The group supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times from 09:15 to 11:45. Extra sessions for pre-school children are run from January to July on Mondays to Thursdays from 11:55 until 14:40. The playgroup is run by a parent committee that employs seven part-time members of staff to work with the children. Of these, five hold recognised early years qualifications. Parents help out on a voluntary basis. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted as staff help them to become aware of managing their own personal care and the reasons for it. For example, children are becoming aware of why they need to wash their hands, "to get rid of the germs". All staff hold current first aid certificates and a first aid box is readily available. All accidents are appropriately recorded and shared with parents.

Children are offered mostly healthy snacks at the group. Staff consider children's dietary requirements when planning which snacks to offer. Children sit together to enjoy their snack, this promotes their social skills. However, children have little active participation in the preparation or serving of the snack, which is not helping to develop their independence skills. Drinking water is freely available to the children during each session.

Children move freely and confidently around the available space, for example, jumping in and out of large empty boxes. They judge body space in relation to the spaces available, such as using the parachute. Children show a growing awareness of their own needs with regard to eating and hygiene practices.

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

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is at risk due to a lack of rigorous risk assessments being carried out. This means that sometimes items which are unsuitable are left within reach of the children, posing a risk to their safety. Potential hazards indoors and outdoors have not been identified and minimised to protect children from harm. Children are cared for in premises which are secure and reasonably well maintained. Children have plenty of space to move around freely and the children attending the morning sessions choose which room they want to play in. This gives them choice and freedom in their play. Children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe as they listen to frequent reminders from staff. For example, when playing in the boxes, children were reminded about other children underneath or nearby.

A suitable range of toys and resources are available for the children. These are good quality, well maintained and are suitable for the ages and stages of the children's development. However, children's choice is limited to what staff set out before they arrive. Children then choose from this selection. Children are able to independently select some resources from low level storage.

Children's welfare is promoted as all staff working with the children have attended child protection training. They are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect. A policy is in place which outlines the procedures to be followed if staff have any concerns about a child in their care. This helps to safeguard the children attending.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settle well at the group with mostly effective support from staff. Children build positive relationships with staff and seek them out to show them what they have done or if they are unsure. They play contentedly alongside their peers and friendships are obvious

as they seek one another out to take part in activities. For example, children had fun climbing in and out of boxes and exploring what they could do with them. Children generally take part in a range of stimulating activities. However, some large group times do not work effectively and the younger children are not always engaged or involved.

Everyday routines are not used to develop children's language and mathematical thinking, such as circle time and snack time. This is mostly due to the large group size when all children take part. Children do enjoy singing maths songs, such as 10 empty bottles. Children's creativity is well fostered as art and craft resources are freely accessible to them during the morning session. This encourages the children to express themselves through a variety of media, such as, paint, play dough and making models.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children benefit from play leaders having a sound knowledge in the Foundation Stage. A range of activities are offered to cover the six areas of learning. The play group has two separate rooms; they use one for messy activities such as painting, play dough, sticking and water play. The second room is used for activities such as role play, working with jigsaws and the use of the book corner. However the children have few numerals to see and work with and there is a limited amount of print used for labelling. Time, resources and space are not used to their full potential to support children's learning. For example, children have long periods of waiting before snacks and some children become restless during the large adult led groups. During the morning session the children move confidently and freely between the two rooms and choose which activity they would like to be involved in. However during the afternoon sessions the possibility of free choice for the children is very limited, for example, when choosing construction toys they choose as a group, and they have few opportunities to rotate and play with the other toys. This leads to the children having limited opportunities to develop their independent learning skills, and prevents them from making their own choice. Although the setting has a wide range of resources, the children are not able to access them freely for themselves but limited to the resources put out by the staff. This does not encourage the children to use their own ideas to extend or initiate their own learning.

Some members of staff are involved in planning; this is done on a short term basis. The staff relate their planning to topics which are shared with the parents. However, the planning it is not effectively linked to the stepping stones. This means, that some members of staff are not always clear on what the learning intentions are for each activity.

Staff make observations of children and this information is shared with other members of staff and parents. The group has not yet developed an effective system to evaluate the children's individual learning and to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum. For example, during a maths session in the afternoon, all four groups of children were covering the same maths topic of sorting and counting. There were few opportunities for differentiation within the activity. Consequently for some children the activity was too hard and for the more able they were not being sufficiently challenged.

The children settle well when working on their activities, they are aware of their behaviour expectations, resulting in a calm learning environment. They are gaining an understanding of their independent skills and are able to dress and undress themselves, go to the toilet and understand the importance of washing their hands.

Some children are developing confident communication skills. They are happy to talk in small and large groups and to both familiar and unfamiliar adults. Able talkers confidently recall past experiences for example, one little boy happily talked about a bird's nest they had previously seen. However opportunities for extending their spoken language are often limited due to the size of the groups.

The children are confident and enjoy looking at reading material in the 'book corner' with their peers, members of staff and individually. For example, one child sat contentedly reading a newspaper on the sofa in the book corner. Children enjoy listening to stories and some are able to enthusiastically recite favourite parts of the story. However due to the group size the children's learning opportunities are sometimes limited and not all the children remain truly engaged in the story being told. Children are able to draw and paint developing control when using writing implements. The children at the afternoon session are encouraged to write their own name on their name card, when entering the play group, but are not helped to form their letters correctly. There are limited words available for the children to see in the setting with no labelling of equipment.

The children enjoy singing number rhymes, counting and sorting objects into

different groups and enjoy making towers of different sizes, using construction toys. However, there are limited opportunities for the children to develop their calculating skills as part of their daily routine.

Children happily design and construct their own models using junk materials and explore the different ways they can fix the materials together. They persevere until they have successfully produced a model and are proud of their achievement. Children enjoy playing in the role corner, suitable resources are available but these are not managed effectively by staff. The lack of effective storage often results in misuse of resources. The children respond well to music and are beginning to understand how their bodies move.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the culture and lives of others through celebrating different festivals. The group has a suitable range of resources which reflect the wider community. This helps children to develop a positive attitude to others. Children attending who speak English as an additional language are not always helped to interact fully in the activities offered. The staff member with responsibility for supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities has little training for this role. Consequently children may not be well supported to fully participate in activities.

Adults in the group are positive role models for the children. They get down to children's level to talk to them and talk to them in a calm and re-assuring manner. They treat the children and each other with respect. Children follow this lead and behaviour is generally good. Staff use praise and encouragement to promote children's self-esteem. A photograph board showing who is present is displayed at every session giving the children a sense of belonging.

Children settle quickly into the group and are keen to start their play. In the morning sessions they choose their own free play activities from those set out and from some accessible storage. This decision making begins to build confidence and promotes their self-esteem. Children seek

others out to share experiences and to work together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The staff are developing positive links with parents to promote two way communication. There is an informative notice board, with details of forthcoming themes. The parents are provided with information relating to the Foundation Stage at an open afternoon. Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress and record their thoughts about how they feel their child is progressing to form part of their assessments.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

Limited organisation has resulted in the group not fully meeting the National Standards. The children's play environment is not always free from hazards and practice within the group does not always promote children's welfare and safety. Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Staff do not fully utilise the potential of the available space, time and resources. The organisation of large group and transition times is sometimes limited and can leave younger children un-focused and not engaged in the activity offered. Older children are not always sufficiently challenged. Children spend periods of time waiting, for example, at snack time and waiting to wash their hands for snack.

There are sound procedures in place for recruiting and vetting new staff. The person in charge of the setting is appropriately qualified to lead the group. Staff work well together and there is a clear structure to the team. The staff are supported by parent helpers. This ensures that mandatory ratios are well maintained. The staff team are committed to further training to aid their professional development as well as improving the care and education offered.

Leadership and management of the group are satisfactory. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They regularly review their practice following training or support visits from the Local Authority. Staff are supported by an enthusiastic committee. Both work together to improve the service offered to children and parents. Links have been formed with the nearby school to ease children's transition from one setting to another.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the group agreed to: develop an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met; ensure a daily record of the hours of attendance of the children looked after and the names of person who look after them is kept and provide regular opportunities for parents and staff to share the records on children's development and progress.

At the last education inspection the group agreed to: enable all staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones so they can fully challenge children and extend opportunities to show an interest in writing, and in print in the environment; encourage children's own responses to what they see and hear through art and free use of musical instruments in creative development and provide meaningful information to help parents learn about the early learning goals in the six areas of learning, and offer regular opportunities to share their child's progress in these areas.

The committee and staff have changed since the last inspection. No action plan was found relating to the last inspection.

Staff at the group meet the qualification requirements. Children's safety has improved as there is a clear record in place of who is present at each session. Parents are given regular opportunities to share their child's progress records. This helps to keep parents informed and involved.

Most staff have an understanding of the stepping stones but children are still not fully challenged. Opportunities for children to see print in the environment are limited. Children do not have regular opportunities to freely use musical instruments.

### **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.

## **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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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

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

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents
- improve use of time to minimise periods of waiting and to maximise learning

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

#### **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 opportunities for children to choose self-initiated activities
- use daily activities and routines to develop children's calculating skills and to use mathematical language
- further develop opportunities for the children's spoken language and for them to become familiar with written words in their environment

- extend planning to monitor and meet specific individual learning needs across the six areas of learning

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)