

Abbeydale Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101739
Inspection date	19 June 2007
Inspector	Shirley Ann Jackson
Setting Address	Glevum Way, Abbeydale, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL4 4BL
Telephone number	01452 301492 or 07879 258285
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Registered person	Abbeydale Playgroup
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 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abbeydale Playgroup opened in 1985. It operates from Abbeydale Community Centre in the residential area of Abbeydale in Gloucester. The playgroup has sole use of the main hall and shared use of the toilets and kitchen area during operating hours. The other main users of the centre are Tumble tots, the Rainbow, Scouts and Brownie groups and the local community. The groups never use it at the same times. There is an outdoor space with grassed areas.

The playgroup is registered to care for 26 children aged between two and five years. There are currently 80 children on roll aged between three and four years. The playgroup is in receipt of education funding and at present has 75 funded three and four-year-old children attending. The playgroup supports six children with special needs and can care for children for whom English is an additional language. Children attend from the Abbeydale and local area. The group is run by a voluntary committee of parents.

Abbeydale Playgroup is open during school term time only, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 09.15 and 11.45 hours, and between 12.00 and 14.30 hours on a Monday, Thursday and Friday and Tuesday mornings from 09.15 until 11.45 for pre-school sessions.

A team of seven members of staff are employed. The play leader has completed the National Vocational Qualification in Childcare and Education at Level 3. Parent helpers assist at the playgroup on a rota basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about hygiene as they see staff taking positive steps to keep the environment clean. For example, adults clean the tables before the children eat snack. Children follow an established daily routine to promote their health, such as washing their hands. They begin to understand the reason for this, "to get rid of the germs on them". Children become aware of the importance of using sun cream. Children's health is promoted as some staff hold current first aid certificates and a first aid box is readily accessible. Clear procedures are in place to deal with accidents and to administer medication.

Children are offered snacks at the group. Their dietary requirements are considered when planning which snacks to offer. Adults prepare the snacks in the kitchen, so children have little involvement in the process to help them to gain an understanding of the preparation. Pre-school children who attend the afternoon sessions, bring a lunch box with them. Staff and children sit together when eating to encourage interaction and social skills.

Children are able to enjoy large physical play during every session. They move freely round the available space. Children are able to mount climbing equipment using alternate feet. However, physical play is not always stimulating or challenging for the more able children. Children engage in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination, such as peg boards.

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. Staff take children outside to use the patio area without always putting a barrier in place between the patio and the car park. Bushes planted in raised flower beds in the patio area are overgrown and have stinging nettles growing through them. These issues pose a risk to children's safety and well-being.

Children are cared for in premises which are clean, bright and well maintained. The group operates in a hall which gives the children plenty of space to move around and enjoy their play. Children begin to learn about keeping themselves safe as they listen to safety reminders from staff. For example, staff tell them not to use the climbing frame if they are wearing dressing-up shoes. Children are offered a suitable range of toys and resources to play with. These are good quality and they are well maintained. However, children's choice is restricted to the resources staff put out before they arrive. Children then choose from this selection.

Staff safeguard and promote children's well-being as they have a sound awareness of the indicators of abuse. Some of them hold current child protection certificates. There are clear procedures in place for staff to follow if they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff have attended Birth to three matters framework training. However, the group is not currently caring for any children under three years of age.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. The play leader has only been in post for a few weeks and has not yet attended any training to support her in this new role. Staff do not have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage or how to implement it in practise. Staff put plans in place but these do not sufficiently cover the areas of learning or meet the needs of a significant number of children. Activities and experiences offered are not well enough matched to children's needs to provide a suitable level of challenge. Older/more able children are not sufficiently challenged or stimulated. Staff miss a number of opportunities to extend and develop the children's knowledge through everyday practical routines. Observations and assessments of children's progress are not regularly or systematically carried out. Overall, children make insufficient progress in their learning and achieve too little given their capability and starting points.

Staff provide few chances for children to distinguish one sound from another. They have limited opportunities to learn about writing for different purposes as writing materials are not always offered in the role play area. Resources for writing are not well displayed and resources lack interest or challenge. There is little labelling around the hall and there is no alphabet poster near the writing table. Children's name cards are only used for children to sit their drinks bottles on and to hang up their jackets. Consequently, children are not learning that print carries meaning. Children talk confidently to staff and follow simple instructions, such as putting their lunchboxes on the table. They listen to and join in with stories in small and large groups. Children handle books carefully and turn the pages appropriately.

Staff do not use everyday routines to develop children's interest in numbers and counting. Consequently, children are not learning through practical activities, such as counting numbers of boys and girls present. Some spontaneous adult-led activities are offered, for example, playing the game 'what's the time Mr Wolf?'. Staff do not model maths language using calculation vocabulary. Children show an interest in shape and space by building with construction toys and talking about the height of it.

Some children show an interest in information communication technology but they have few opportunities to learn how to operate simple equipment. Children can join construction materials to build and balance. They have opportunities to realise that tools can be used for a purpose; for example, scissors are freely available. Children remember and talk about significant things that have happened to them, such as going on an aeroplane. They have opportunities to show an interest in the world in which they live as they plant seeds and care for them. However, this is all done indoors. Children cannot freely explore and investigate the outdoor area.

Children begin to differentiate colours, such as the colour of the pencil they use. They make three-dimensional structures, for example, junk models. Children sing a few simple familiar songs. However, there are few chances for them to make their own sounds using musical instruments. Children use available resources to create props to support role play, such as dressing-up clothes. Older children engage in imaginative play, for example, driving a car.

Children show an interest in what they see, touch and feel as they experience different media and materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not actively encouraged to gain an awareness of different cultures, lifestyles and disability. They see few positive images to reflect the wider community or resources to value children's heritage. The staff member with responsibility for supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities has no training to support her in this role. Consequently, children may not be effectively supported to take part fully in activities. Children learn about the local community as they go for walks in the nearby area. For example, they visit the nearby play park, supermarket and the recycling centre.

Staff build children's self-esteem and confidence by rewarding positive behaviour. For example, a star chart is used at the end of each session to praise children, such as those who manage a game really well or cope well even when tired. Staff have a calm and re-assuring manner. They speak calmly and quietly to the children, even when the noise level rises. Children's behaviour is generally good.

Children have a strong exploratory impulse, such as exploring the gloop. Some children show confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance. They feel safe and secure and demonstrate a sense of trust. Children relate and make attachments to members of their group, such as children playing imaginatively on the climbing frame. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. They receive little information about the Foundation Stage and how the group implements it in practise. Policies and procedures which the group follow are shared with parents when their child starts, but none are available on site for them to refer to. Parents can look at their child's progress records when they help on rota duty, but there are few opportunities for them to discuss these with staff. Parents help on rota duty and can share library books with their children but there are no other suggestions for how they can become involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Limited organisation has resulted in the group breaching regulations and not fully meeting the National Standards. The outside patio area is not safe or suitable for the children to use. Children are not actively encouraged to gain an understanding of different cultures, lifestyles and disabilities. Transition times are not always smooth and some children lose their focus and are not actively engaged or receiving clear direction from staff. Overall, the setting does not meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

The group has had a number of changes to staff and committee members in the last few months. This has been a difficult time for the group as they struggled to maintain a service to parents and children. Staff training has not been a priority at the group and this has an impact on the care and education offered. The new person in charge is appropriately qualified, enthusiastic and keen to move the group forward. She is supported by a staff team and a voluntary committee of parents.

Leadership and management of the group is inadequate. Staff do not have experience of planning for the Foundation Stage. They have not attended any significant or relevant training to support them in this area. They do not have a sound understanding of how to plan effectively to move the children on to the next stage in their learning. Consequently, some older/more able children are not stimulated or challenged. Observations and assessments of children are in place but are not carried out regularly or systematically. Assessments are not used to inform future planning, this means there are weaknesses in all areas of children's learning. There are currently no systems in place to monitor and evaluate the curriculum.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group agreed to: extend the complaints procedure to include the Ofsted contact details; provide parents with details of who to contact with a concern and request permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice, and ensure medication is clearly labelled and stored appropriately.

At the last education inspection the group agreed to: develop strategies to involve all four-year-olds in the range of activities offered to promote their further all-round development by building on their particular interests.

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

The complaints policy includes details of the regulator. Children's health has improved as written parental consent is obtained to seek emergency medical treatment and any medicine is labelled and stored appropriately.

Staff sometimes record details of which particular activities children show an interest in or request. However, this is not regularly completed.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- assess the risks to children in relation to the outside patio area and take action to minimise these
- ensure that Ofsted is informed of any significant changes or events
- actively encourage children to gain an awareness of different cultures, lifestyles and disabilities

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage to include the stepping stones, planning, observations and assessments
- develop planning and use observations and assessments to ensure that children are stimulated across all areas of learning and to build on what children already know
- provide parents with written information about the Foundation Stage and ideas of how they can become involved in their child's learning. Provide regular opportunities for parents to share information on their child's progress

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

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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