

Abbeytown Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317461
Inspection date	06 December 2007
Inspector	Carys Millican
Setting Address	Main Street, Abbeytown, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 4RU
Telephone number	016973 61511
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Registered person	Abbeytown Pre-School 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 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?

Abbeystown pre-school playgroup is run by a management committee. It was established in 1968 and moved to its current site in January 2001. The setting operates from a portacabin within its own grounds adjacent to Holm Cultram Abbey Church of England Primary School in the village of Abbeystown near Wigton. A maximum of 15 children may attend the setting at any one time. The provision is divided into two groups operated by different staff teams. The playgroup sessions operate from 13.00 to 15.30 on Monday and Wednesday and 09.00 to 11.30 on Friday. The pre-school sessions operate from 09.00 to 11.30 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. On Tuesday the pre-school session operates from 09.00 to 11.30 and 13.00 to 15.30. Both groups operate during term time only. Children have access to an all weather outdoor play area and adjoining nature area.

There are currently 16 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the immediate and extended rural areas.

Abbeytown pre-school playgroup employs four members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well nourished and naturally active. They learn about healthy eating and begin to understand the importance of a balanced diet. Children are provided with a selection of healthy snacks. Younger children say a short prayer before eating and they are provided with yoghurts and a piece of fresh fruit. Pre-school children select their healthy snack option from several picture cards displayed on the table. Children's self-help skills at snack time are not encouraged. Staff hand out the snack and drinks of milk or water are already poured for them. Children benefit from the social occasion created at snack time. They sit with staff and complete the weather chart and calendar. Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times. Children are confident to ask for a drink when they are thirsty. Children's dietary needs are met as the staff follow children's individual needs, routines and parental wishes closely.

Children's health is promoted by staff who have a sound knowledge of the setting's policies and procedures. Staff follow appropriate hygiene practices when preparing snacks and handling food. Tables are wiped using an anti-bacterial spray and areas are kept clean. Children learn about basic hygiene practices. They clearly explain how they wash their hands to get rid of germs. Younger children's toileting is supported well by staff and older children gain independence in these areas by seeing to their own needs. Children access child sized toilets and sinks are at low level, aiding their independence. Children's welfare and the protection of other children are fully considered by staff following the sick child policy.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities which contributes to their good health and all-round development. They access a range of suitable resources that promote their physical development. Children enjoy using the climbing frame in the playground. They confidently climb the rope ladder to the top and swing on the tyres. Children develop a sense of space. They enjoy running round the playground trying to catch leaves. They use several milk crates and explain they can build with them and use them to balance on. Children access fresh air daily, whatever the weather. Activities are rotated to enable children to develop different physical skills. Children take part in physical exercise programmes indoors. They dance, move and stretch to music and movement tapes. They enjoy circle games and play musical instruments. Photographic evidence shows how physical play is encouraged using a variety of equipment and activities. Children balance on beams and play parachute games. Children rest according to their needs. Quieter activities are provided for children as they look at books and listen to stories on the soft cushioned seating in the quiet area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure. They are cared for in a warm, welcoming and well organised environment. Children confidently move around the spacious room and help themselves to the extensive range of resources and activities. Equipment is in excellent condition and children access a number of well resourced free play areas. Children make independent choices and decisions about their play from the free play and adult initiated activities. Children begin to

feel a sense of belonging. Their art and craft work is creatively displayed on walls in the room and they eagerly place finished work in their named 'locker'. The toys and equipment are rotated to maintain stimulation and interest and cover all areas of learning. The play equipment is checked each session for broken or loose parts. Toys are monitored and changed to ensure the younger children's safety and ability. For example, play trays are provided for the younger children whereas larger piece puzzles are provided for pre-school children.

Children are kept safe indoors and outside by the use of appropriate safety equipment. Written risk assessments are completed for all the areas used by the children. Staff complete visual checks before children arrive. Exterior doors are locked and arrivals and departures are monitored. Electrical sockets are covered. Main doors are kept locked throughout the session and the inner door is alarmed. Therefore, children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and there is no unauthorised access to children. Children are protected by the health and safety practices and procedures staff follow to help prevent accidents. Operational procedures for outings are in place, adult-child ratios are maintained and parental permission is obtained. Children begin to learn about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves safe. They talk about wearing seat belts when pretending to drive their car home and where to go if the fire alarm goes off. Fire fighting equipment is in place and the fire evacuation procedure is displayed. This is practised with the children on a regular basis.

Children are safeguarded. They are protected by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of the setting's child protection policy and procedures. The policy is available for parents in the prospectus and displayed on the notice board. Children's safety and well-being are enhanced by the staff's commitment to undertaking additional training. The attendance of children, staff and visitors is meticulously recorded in the register. Children are signed in and out by parents and children are collected by people named on the registration sheets.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and contented. They settle easily into the warm, welcoming atmosphere created by experienced practitioners. Children are enthusiastic and self-assured in their play as they help themselves to the activities and resources provided. These activities and resources support their development and learning and are linked to the planning in place. Children enjoy playing with the sand. They help themselves to the spades to fill their buckets and use a range of natural materials. Children pretend the lollipop sticks are candles for their cake. They count them and pretend to blow them out. Children make sound relationships with adults and other children. They decide for themselves what they play with during the session. They play with the farmyard animals, pretending to transport them in the tractor and trailer to market. Children know the names of all the different tractors just by the colour. Staff support this interest by providing a range of tractors for the children to play with. Children who require help to socialise with others are well supported by experienced staff members who are close at hand to help and advise.

Children enjoy the small group activities and their attention is fully maintained. They make patterns on paper using Christmas shapes such as a stocking, tree or snowman. Children recognise the different colours and count the number of shapes on the paper. Younger children easily complete play tray jigsaws. Older children attempt larger piece jigsaws with staff. Children enjoy the using different construction materials to build with. They build a train track carefully placing the toy engine and carriages on it and push it round and round. Children enjoy singing songs and listening to stories. They listen to instruction and understand the routine as they

help to tidy up before snack time. Children develop confidence and self-esteem through the interaction, care, love and attention they share with all staff. The key worker system is not established. However, the low number of children attending allows younger children to settle easily and form attachment with their carers. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which is seen used in practice during activities although not identified in the planning. The planning for playgroup children is linked to first set of stepping stones found in the 'curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage'. Children are observed by staff during their play. These observations form part of the ongoing observations of their learning and development used to identify children's progress and later used as starting points for the Foundation Stage. Written progress reports are completed twice a year and record children's achievement and development. Staff have a good understanding of child development and this is seen in practice.

Children benefit from a relaxed atmosphere and homely environment. Close and caring relationships with staff increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children are valued and treated with concern and respect by staff, who have a kind and caring manner. Children are well supported by staff who engage children in conversation and help extend their play experiences through simple questioning. Children relate their own experiences in their play, for example, when in the role play area. They relate well to each other and socialise well as they build up relationships with other children. Staff are on hand to support and challenge them, skilfully extending their learning. Children begin to distinguish between right and wrong as they learn to take turns and share when using the toys and equipment.

Children enjoy a wide range of indoor activities. Routines are established to allow flexibility, to accommodate the needs of all children and to allow them sufficient time to explore through their senses. These routines enhance children's learning. The activities are adapted to suit the individual needs of the children. Children eagerly join in the activities provided and their concentration levels are maintained. Children enjoy the printing activity. They use rollers creatively to make patterns on the paper. Opportunities within the daily routine are used to engage children in conversation, in singing songs and in role play. Children use their imagination well. They act out experiences using the fantasy cube. They pretend it is a car and tell everyone to keep safe by doing up their seat belts. Children find all the play food and use bags and containers to carry it to the 'car' and fill the 'boot'. Quiet activities allow young children to sit on the comfy cushioned chairs and listen to stories or read to themselves. Children enjoy a wide range of physical play activities, both indoors and outside. They take off their own shoes and jump on the trampoline surrounded by large cushions and run around outdoors trying to collect the leaves blowing about in the wind.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Children's learning needs are understood by the staff who have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss the planning in the pre-school and playgroup and these plans are kept in folders accessible to all. The key-worker system is not established. However, the adult to child ratios are high, which means children are well supported during their time in the sessions. Activities are adapted in practice for children's differing age and abilities. Information about children is obtained from parents on admission and initial starting points are gathered from observations and assessment used to inform a detailed progress report given to parents in January. Staff observe children daily during activities and during free play. These observations monitor children's achievements and are used by staff to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

Children are provided with play opportunities to explore mathematics, such as counting and number work. They can count confidently and can name a number of different colours. However, children's mathematical skills, such as calculating, comparing and problem solving, are not reinforced by staff in everyday experiences and routines.

Children are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try out new experiences. Children enjoy using the computer programs and move the mouse following the instruction. They enjoy the creative activities, gluing and sticking pictures using a variety of textures. Children independently access mark making materials and use one-handed tools confidently. They access a number of wooden resources that help develop hand-eye coordination. They enjoy threading beads and using malleable materials such as modelling clay and dough. Children complete table top jigsaws and build with bricks. Staff use questions successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. Children chat confidently with each other using a wide range of language and sentence construction. Their thinking skills are suitably promoted when listening to a story and recalling past events.

Children behave well and show an understanding of right and wrong as they interact together in their play. Staff support children well during activities and children's spontaneous free play. Children enjoy small group activities which help them learn how to share and take turns. The staff skilfully encourage the children's understanding of respecting each other's needs. Children interact well with each other and listen to one another during quieter activities. They use their imagination as they pretend to make each other cups of tea. Children recognise colours as they paint and form patterns as they thread the cotton reels. Children's development of large and small motor skills is sufficiently promoted through the physical activities provided. They can find their personal space when asked to sit at the table at snack time and can negotiate their own space when playing with equipment inside and outdoors. Children enjoy physical activities such as exercising to music. They understand that doing exercise is good for them and gleefully explain that it makes them 'sweaty' and 'hot'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time spent at the play group and pre-school sessions and all children are fully included in the life of the setting. They play harmoniously together and are considerate towards each other. Children show concern for each other. Children's understanding of equality is promoted through the many activities that encourage equal play. They learn to share and take turns when playing games and in small group activities. Children help and support each other in activities. They help to thread the cotton reels onto the lace to make a long wiggly worm. Children are familiar with the routine. They eagerly tidy up before snack time and sit patiently on the floor as they wait to wash their hands. They enjoy the social occasion where they develop relationships with other children and staff. Staff are on hand to help, praise and support the children during the sessions. Children's individual care needs are known and met by staff in discussion with their parents. Staff work with specialists to help children with specific needs. Children begin to become aware of the wider society as they explore their own and others' cultures and traditions, such as Hanukkah, and Christmas activities. Children access numerous resources that promote positive images of difference and diversity. Maps of the world are displayed at child height and posters show positive images of parents in domestic roles.

Children behave extremely well. They respond to staff's positive strategies in handling behaviour. Staff listen to children, they praise achievements and provide individual support when required.

Children become aware of their own needs and the needs of others. Incidents of unwanted or challenging behaviour are recorded and discussed with parents. Younger children confidently ask to go to the toilet and older children independently help themselves. Children make suitable choices and decisions about their play. They access a range of activities that promotes the inclusion of all the children attending. Their confidence and self-assurance are encouraged. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the satisfactory partnership with parents and carers. Children settle well into the pre-school, supported by the induction arrangements in place. Children's individual care needs are discussed with parents on registering at the playgroup and pre-school sessions. Children's initial developmental starting points and achievements already reached in the home are obtained from parents. Ongoing assessment in the pre-school informs the progress reports completed by staff and is made available for parents in January. Parents see a difference in their children from when they first started, however, they are not aware of how much progress their child has made towards the early learning goals in the 'Foundation stage' as they have not received any written progress reports yet. Parents and children are made very welcome. They are extremely happy with the care and education their children receive and praise the friendliness and pleasantness of the staff caring for their children. Parents are provided with a prospectus containing a wealth of information about the setting and the care and activities provided, including the policies and procedures. Children's activities are shared verbally with parents on collection and opportunities to discuss their child's progress are welcomed by staff. Information about the weekly activities and planned topic for the coming terms are contained in regular newsletters given to parents. Children's steady progress is welcomed by parents, however, opportunities to extend and reinforce children's learning potential at home are not established. The complaints procedure is displayed. Parents and staff are aware of the procedures for complaints and a log is established.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by adults who have a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. Most staff hold early years qualifications or are working towards a qualification. All staff are experienced practitioners who work extremely well together as a team and are clear on their roles and responsibilities. The robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a good knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff checks are completed and the induction procedure ensures the pre-school playgroup policies and procedures are applied. Staff appraisals are in the early stages of completion. Staff individual training needs are recognised and continual training and development is fully encouraged. Staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Foundation Stage'. Input from the lead teacher in previous years has been beneficial in improving the already well established setting. Staff meetings take place to make sure continuity is maintained and information and planning is developed in the interest of the children. Staff use positive behaviour management strategies which are consistently applied in practice. The premises are well organised and indoor space is suitably laid out to maximise play opportunities. It is effectively organised to allow choice, independence and decision making and to encourage children to explore the environment. Children are provided with natural materials to enable investigation and exploration. Documentation is in place that ensures the efficient and safe management of the provision and contributes to the health, safety and well-being of children.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provided for children is good. An all-inclusive environment is encouraged and all children are included and treated with equal concern. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals from their learning experiences planned for and through the stimulating activities provided. Both leaders have a commitment to the development and improvement of the pre-school playgroup. This is seen in practice, through discussion with staff and within the documentation provided. Planning is maintained and observations are used to highlight areas of progress and development. Staff assemble detailed progress reports twice a year. Both leaders motivate staff well. They work well as a team to promote children's development and the care and routines of the pre-school playgroup. Staff act as good role models by actively taking part. They deploy themselves well and motivate children by reinforcing learning. Daily routines are followed although they are flexible to the children's needs. Children's personal information is collected and recorded. Their individual needs are known and children are extremely well supported. Parents are provided with information about the provision. Staff inform parents about their child's day on collection. The key worker system is not established, however, high adult to child ratios support children's learning with small group and one to one care. Staff know the children well and can identify the stepping stones each child has reached and where they require help in activities to improve their development.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to: improve children's safety outdoors; improve health and safety records; review behaviour management; extend opportunities for outdoor play; and provide opportunities to examine other cultures and beliefs.

Since the last inspection, the provider has secured the gaps in fencing in the play area and woodland nature garden. Detailed risk assessments are regularly reviewed and completed on all areas used by children including outings, thus improving children's safety. The behaviour management procedure is consistently applied to ensure that behaviour does not act as barrier to learning. The range of daily activities allows children to spend time outdoors, enjoying physical play opportunities and planning includes opportunities for children to examine other cultures and beliefs.

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 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):

- enhance older children's independence and self-help skills in every day routines, such as snack time
- review the planning for the under threes, for example by using the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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):

- enhance children's learning and development by using everyday experiences and routines to reinforce mathematical experiences such as calculating and problem solving
- review the system and frequency of recording and exchanging written information on children's progress and achievement to ensure parents are regularly informed and opportunities to help their children at home are established.

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