

Abc Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 220064

Inspection date 27 September 2007

Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting Address Lutheran Church Hall, Stuart Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 1RL

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Registered person Heather Berry

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day 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?

ABC Day Nursery opened in 1962 and has been under the current ownership since 1982. It operates from two rooms within the Lutheran Church building in the centre of Corby in Northamptonshire. The children have access to the main hall for physical play and there is a safely enclosed outside area. The nursery serves the local area.

A maximum of 15 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 17:15 for 52 weeks of the year. There are currently 13 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions on an hourly basis.

The owner and three staff work with the children. All have recognised early years qualifications to level three. An additional person is also employed on a part-time basis to cook mid-day meals for the children. The nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from a qualified teacher and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff follow generally effective health and hygiene policies and procedures and they take many positive steps to protect children from infection. The premises are maintained in a properly clean state and tables are regularly sprayed with anti-bacterial spray to prevent cross-contamination. Staff wear gloves and aprons when dealing with children's personal hygiene but the changing mat is well-worn and split, presenting the potential to harbour germs. Children are properly cared for if they become ill at nursery before being sent home. Sick children are not accepted into the nursery in order to minimise the spread of infection. Children generally receive appropriate treatment in medical emergency because most staff hold suitable first aid qualifications and staff conscientiously record all accidents. However, the first aid boxes are not suitably stocked and some of the contents are out of date. This may compromise children's welfare in an emergency situation. Children learn about hygiene through the daily routine. For example, they wash their hands spontaneously after visiting the toilet. Young children have individual mats and blankets and are able to rest in the comfortable book area.

Children have adequate opportunities to take part in regular physical play. The outdoor area is not easily accessible and is subject to occasional vandalism. In contrast, the indoor hall is very easily accessible and children benefit from morning and afternoon activities in there. Staff make every effort to use this facility and ensure that children have regular opportunities to use ride-on toys, climbing and balancing equipment and small apparatus such as balls, hoops and quoits. Children have sufficient opportunities to recognise the changes in their bodies after demanding exercise. In the playrooms, children independently use a wide range of equipment, including scissors, staplers, pens, pencils and sticky tape dispensers, to develop competent hand-eye co-ordination.

Children are suitably nourished as they have regular and nutritious food and drinks in adequate amounts. Jugs of water and cups are available for children in the play rooms at any time, so they do not become thirsty. A cook is employed part-time, to cook wholesome meals from fresh ingredients in a traditional style. Staff offer second and third portions of food to those children with eager appetites. Staff sensitively support children to try new tastes. Mealtimes are social occasions when staff sit and eat with the children giving good opportunities for children to develop suitable eating habits and table manners. Children are encouraged to be independent by feeding themselves and staff support where necessary.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff give high priority to the security of the premises and are vigilant in their control of the entrance doors. For example, the door from the end playroom to the main church hall is kept bolted, even though the church rooms are not used by any other groups during the day. Generous staffing levels ensure conscientious supervision of the children and the owner supplements staff cover when required. Staff record fire evacuation procedures and carry out drills with suitable frequency to ensure the safety of the children. Staff monitor visitors to the setting by keeping a visitors book. Relevant risk assessments are completed on a daily basis. Children learn to keep themselves safe in the setting because staff give good explanations as

to why, for example, it is not a good idea to roll around on the floor near other children. Staff explain that the children might kick someone or their feet may hit someone in the face.

Children are warmly welcomed and well cared for in a pleasant, suitably safe and secure indoor environment. Children play purposefully against a background of taped music played at a gentle volume. The bright, warm room is used to display lots of children's work and this effectively enhances the environment. Equipment and resources are safely stored and arranged so that children and staff can access them easily. This ensures that children's individual needs are met and that children can make choices and extend their play. Staff thoughtfully set out the equipment to facilitate children's choice and developing independence and ensure that a wide range of activities relating to the six areas of learning are available. The nursery does have access to an outdoor area, which is always carefully checked before use, owing to the increasing level of hazards from vandalism. In practice, staff prefer not to use this during the winter months, adequately compensating by increasing their use of the indoor hall for physical activities.

Children's welfare is properly safeguarded because they are protected by vigilant and caring, informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Most staff have received suitable training in this field and relevant reference information is readily accessible.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their play and learning because staff are confident, enthusiastic and highly skilled in their childcare practice. Staff provide a broad range of worthwhile activities which engage children throughout the nursery in the learning process. Children actively participate in the purposeful activities and clearly enjoy the harmonious atmosphere. Children have clear routines to their sessions and follow set procedures for certain activities which help them feel secure. Children become confident, independent learners as they freely access a good range of activities which stimulate all developmental areas. For example, children enjoy free play with plentiful sensory resources, crafts, drawing, handprints, music and singing rhymes with actions. Planning and assessment documentation refers to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and shows how the setting takes general heed of the guidance when working with children under the age of three years.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most staff have a competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a varied programme of play-based activities which provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. Children are happy and settle quickly in the gentle and nurturing environment. They generally display high levels of involvement and gain a sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem through planned and spontaneously chosen activities. Staff work together as a very effective and committed team deploying themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect.

Planning is mostly clear and builds on the Foundation Stage guidance. Staff identify clear intentions for children's learning, but these do not always correlate appropriately with the stepping stones. Assessment records comprise post-it notes transferred directly to sheets labelled under the six areas of learning. Samples of work are kept but these are not always dated or annotated with the reason for keeping. The system does not use the terminology of

the stepping stones and cannot be readily used to track children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Therefore, planning and assessment is not yet fully effective in securing children's progression in learning and informing the next steps in the learning programme. Nevertheless, staff identify new vocabulary and provide for children who learn at different rates. Plans usefully note anti-discriminatory and anti-bias practice to ensure that the setting meets the needs of children as individuals. The potential impact of weaknesses in the planning and assessment systems on the children is currently minimised by the efficient, practical teaching skills exhibited by the staff team.

The setting uses creative and physical activities as the basis for the learning programme, successfully weaving learning from other areas around these topics. For example, plans for physical games include new vocabulary such as 'chase' and 'avoid' during a game of 'Sharks and fish'. Staff ensure that mathematical language is included within action songs and that they exploit every opportunity to count and calculate. Children make an octopus, using manipulative skills to cutting along vertical lines to create the legs. They decorate their creations with paint and glitter and discuss the number of legs, and whether more or less are needed. Circle games in the hall provide lots of opportunities for children to develop their listening skills, learn how to keep a rhythm, and to develop muscles for large and small muscle movements. For example, the children have fun playing a 'Traffic Lights' game which involves lots of energetic movement. The staff join in with the game, talking with the children about their experiences of being in a car on the road. Children's personal, social and emotional development is sensitively promoted through all activities. Children enjoy the action song about the 'Sandy Boy' and talk about what makes people sad and happy. The children demonstrate a marked spirit and awareness of inclusion. They actively encourage the inspector to join in with their games and give confident instructions as to how to play the game, 'I sent a letter to my love'. They insist that the inspector lies down in the 'Scarecrow song'.

Appropriate emphasis is given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. A plan relating to learning about 'Sea Life', notes new words to be introduced to children such as fish, gills, fins, breathe, swim, sea, live, texture and scales. Children learn to listen attentively to stories because they are captured by the excellent story telling skills of the staff. Children choose the story about 'Bright Stanley & the Very Silly Shark' Staff ask questions to make the children think and focus. For example, the children have to guess which animal comes next in the familiar story. Staff offer clues, such as 'Which is the creature with lots of legs?' When the children correctly predict that the octopus is next, staff consolidate earlier learning by asking whether they can remember how many legs an octopus has. Staff reinforce that it is 'nice to see friends' and children initiate discussion about how Stanley might be feeling as he has lost his friends and how scared he might be feeling all alone in the cave. Song time demonstrates that the children know a wide range of rhymes and songs. Children show developing confidence to speak or sing in front of a small group. For example, they are given choices about singing in front of the group or asked if they would like the group to sing. Some children choose to lead the group in singing 'The wheels on the bus', telling the rest of their friends which verse comes next.

Children explore and investigate their environment. Some of the older children participated in the 'Forest School' project in the summer. Photographs show them learning about the creatures which live in the forest. Plans show that the children later created their own forest using recycled materials, making logs, trees, and camp fire, using their memories and imagination to recreate a previous experience. Children enjoy a wide range of indoor activities to promote physical development. Children sit at a table to practise their cutting skills. Staff encourage children to freely experiment with scissors, staplers and sticky tape dispensers with no pre-determined

end-product in mind. Children are sensitively shown how to hold the scissors, and discuss the various merits and uses of left and right-handed scissors. Children are permitted to swap and change to discover what suits them best. Through manipulating small tools and equipment they develop the muscles essential for later handwriting tasks.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from the local community are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. Children develop their understanding and appreciation of others through simple activities that promote a greater awareness of the wider world. Plans show that children participate in activities connected with Chinese New Year and Diwali, and learn about other cultures, customs and traditions. Children who have varying needs receive excellent support. 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. Children's learning difficulties and disabilities are recognised and met sensitively. Children who may have learning difficulties receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision.

Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Children are well behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff. When one of the children snatches another child's piece of paper, the staff member intervenes and points out that once a piece of paper has a name written on it, then it belongs to someone. She explains that the children may take a piece of paper without a name on. With harmony restored, the discussion continues about the colours of the staplers and a gentle reinforcement about sharing and passing equipment to one another. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work really hard to develop a positive partnership with parents to support children's progress in learning. Extensive information is available for parents on a daily basis. Staff try to encourage a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. There is a wealth of information available on the walls of the entrance hall, where parents and carers deliver and collect their children. Parents are warmly welcomed into the provision and are well supported by staff during the settling-in process through induction sessions. Staff encourage parents to share information about their children and they are able to see their child's records and regularly contribute to them if they wish. When working well, this arrangement of two-way sharing benefits the child and enhances their learning. This underpins their progress in the pre-school and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Adults caring for children are well-qualified and experienced and suitable contingency arrangements are in place to cover for staff absence. For example, during the inspection, the owner was away on holiday and the staff were able to confidently run the group in her absence. The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The staff team is well-supported by the owner who oversees the management of the nursery to safeguard and promote children's care and welfare. The owner usually works alongside her staff team and

therefore has a 'hands on approach' to every aspect of the nursery operation. The staff team are dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. They reflect on their practice and have a clear commitment to continuous improvement, monitoring the setting through self-evaluation in line with 'Every Child Matters'. Staff follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children. Staff demonstrate a genuine affinity with children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Documentation is mostly clear and generally accessible. Staff clearly and confidently speak about their procedures to follow in the event of a range of scenarios. Planning and assessment systems continue to evolve, and increasingly secure and progress children's learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the nursery was asked to ensure that all information is shared with parents with regard to children's sleeping and dietary arrangements and that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

In response to these recommendations, the nursery has purchased additional resources reflecting the wider world and disability. The setting now provides folding mats and cushions for children requiring a sleep during the day and information is effectively shared with regard to allergies and menus. The actions taken have enhanced the quality and standards of care for children.

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):

- ensure that the first aid box contents are checked frequently and replaced as necessary and improve further, the steps taken to prevent the spread of infection.

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 planning and assessment, ensuring that aims, objectives and assessments correlate with the stepping stones. Ensure that all observational notes and samples of work are consistently dated and annotated and that children's progress through the foundation stage can be readily tracked.

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