

Abbey Road Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205312
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Inspector	Rachel Wyatt
Setting Address	Abbey Park First School, Abbey Road, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 1DF
Telephone number	01386 552722
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Registered person	Abbey Road 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abbey Road Playgroup opened in 1984 and is supported by a management committee. The group operates from a classroom in the main building of Abbey Park First and Nursery School, Pershore. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group is open on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.00 – 12.00 during school term times only. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 13 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The group is registered to provide early education for three and four-year-olds but there are currently no children on roll. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. Support is available for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs three staff. The manager holds an appropriate early years qualification and two other members of staff are working towards a Level 3 qualification. The setting has support from the local authority and is represented at local early years partnership and providers' forum meetings.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's well-being is compromised in the event of an accident or medical emergency. Parents have not been asked to give their consent to the staff seeking advice or treatment for their child in a medical emergency, so if a child needs urgent treatment their parents' wishes are unknown. Staff have appropriate first aid qualifications but first aid items are unsuitable as they are out of date and stored in a container that cannot be closed. Parents are not fully aware of any accidents affecting their children because they are not routinely shown or asked to sign accident records. Staff do, however, discuss any accidents with parents and a note is given to them if their child sustains a bump to the head.

In other respects children's health and hygiene are adequately supported. They are looked after in a clean, bright room. Their independence in seeing to their personal care is fostered well. They confidently wash their hands in the basin in their base room and staff patiently and calmly promote children's growing independence in seeing to their personal hygiene. Toilet training and nappy changing routines are managed appropriately and discreetly. Children become increasingly adept at getting dressed for outside play.

Children's general health, dietary and specific care needs are met because these have been recorded by parents and discussed with staff. Although limited written information is shared with parents about the setting, they are advised of the group's sickness and ill health procedures during settling in times.

Children enjoy fresh air and exercise in the enclosed outside play area next to their play room. They confidently manage wheeled toys and age-appropriate apparatus such as a slide. Staff support them in throwing and catching balls and bean bags, and moving in different ways.

Children are well nourished as they enjoy varied snacks of bread sticks, toast, raisins, fruit and the occasional biscuit. They have squash, water or milk to drink. Food storage and preparation arrangements are adequate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's welfare is compromised because although some staff understand safeguarding children procedures, other key personnel lack knowledge of what to do if they have concerns about a child or an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. Committee members, staff and parents are not able to readily access information which explains and supports the group's role in safeguarding children. The child protection policy does not include arrangements for dealing with any allegations made against setting personnel, relevant local and national guidance is not easily accessible, and some of the information is out of date.

Other aspects of children's safety are satisfactorily promoted. The premises are secure, children are effectively supervised and risk assessments generally applied appropriately to minimise hazards. Suitable collection arrangements ensure children leave with the correct people. However, staff are not always proactive about addressing hazards such as ensuring low-level electric sockets are inaccessible to children or ensuring the outside play area is free from slip hazards such as damp leaves. Children and staff have limited opportunities to practise emergency evacuations as these are held infrequently. Children use equipment and toys which are

age-appropriate and maintained in a satisfactory condition and staff ensure physical play apparatus is used correctly.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children make satisfactory progress as a result of the staff's support and interactions and because they know them well. Staff plan worthwhile topics such as 'Myself and my family', which encourage children's conversations about their home life and experiences. They create pictures of themselves and of other people who are important to them, using different mediums such as dough, paint and collage materials.

Younger children's play and learning is not fully supported because staff are not aware of the requirements of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This and the limited assessment of children's progress means that planning for two-year-olds or less able children does not reflect their individual needs. However, children are settled and happy as staff have a warm rapport with them, creating a relaxed environment. They calmly and patiently reassure children who lack confidence or who are upset. Children are developing positive relationships with their peers, sometimes playing together. They like to help, for example, with tidying up or assisting with a task such as going with an adult to fetch some milk for the staff's drinks at snack time.

Children are often purposeful and concentrate because staff are actively involved in their play, for example, helping young children to persevere and complete puzzles. Children speak confidently as staff talk clearly to them, encouraging their conversations and introducing new words. Children enjoy stories which actively involve them, for example, when a member of staff uses puppets and props, but some other whole group story times do not always capture their attention.

Children are physically active, enjoying outdoor play. They like to explore different materials such as dough, collecting fir cones and leaves, and building with pieces of wood. The focus on autumn gives children a chance to explore their environment, collecting items for a hedgehog collage and to make pictures reflecting the season and special events such as bonfire night.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children enjoy activities because staff plan worthwhile topics which are relevant to them. For example, during a topic on food and drink, children discuss healthy eating, foods they like and take part in some cooking activities.

Resources are organised to support children's awareness so that the role play area is set up as a shop, a kitchen or a café, and craft activities focus on aspects of food, drink and good health.

Children make satisfactory progress because staff plan a range of activities to promote their learning across the Foundation Stage six areas of learning. These plans include a daily focus activity which are, in the main, craft based. Some reference is made to children's different needs but in very general terms. This, and the limited information recorded about children's skills and development, means staff have few details to share with parents about their children's progress. Monitoring of the effectiveness of activities and evaluation of children's responses is also limited so that it is not clear whether learning outcomes have been achieved, or how each child will be supported in order to help them to move onto the next stage in their learning.

In other respects children's learning is helped by the staff's involvement in what they are doing. They encourage children's concentration and perseverance, giving them clues to help them achieve a task. They promote children's conversations and recall by asking questions. Children become confident as their independence and social skills are encouraged. As a result they become adept at managing their personal care and develop positive relationships with their peers, playing together, sharing and turn taking.

Children count in practical contexts and are introduced to simple problem solving, for example, during number rhymes and by playing matching and sorting games. Children learn about features of their environment by finding out about the life cycle of a butterfly or by discussing the care of animals, including pets. They are encouraged to talk about features of their own lives such as their homes and the holidays they go on. Role play areas are adapted to support children's awareness of different topics and to promote their imagination as they act out being travel agents, vets or shop keepers. Children are physically active using a range of apparatus and moving with increasing control. They learn to use tools such as scissors correctly and safely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children are not safeguarded as their parents' agreements have not been consistently obtained regarding some aspects of their care and learning such as staff being able to seek treatment for a child in a medical emergency. Inconsistencies in record keeping also mean it is not clear whether some parents' consents have been obtained regarding their children's attendance on occasional outings or to staff carrying out child observations or to taking photographs. Parents are not fully informed to enable all to work together to support children's well-being as committee members' details, the setting's policies and the operational plan are not made available to them. Parents are not aware of their rights regarding the management and recording of complaints as the setting's procedures do not reflect the National Standards or include Ofsted's current contact details. At the start of the inspection the group's certificate of registration was not on display for parents to see, although this was subsequently found.

In other respects children's welfare is supported because parents are given basic verbal information about the group when their child first joins. They are welcomed in the setting and can discuss their child's care, routines and experiences with staff. Some details of daily activities are usually displayed, and parents receive letters which up date them on special events. Other details, such as medium term plans, are put on a notice board, but its location and the format of other displays make it difficult for parents to know the information is for them to read.

Children's individual needs are supported by staff who understand any specific requirements regarding their health, diet and routines. Through their close involvement in children's activities and occasional observations, staff have some awareness of their abilities, so they can identify those who need reassurance or additional help.

Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is fostered. They have positive self-esteem as staff give them individual attention and encouragement. Children's independence and free expression are fostered well during routines and activities. Children have opportunities to explore feelings and to look at aspects of their own lives in particular. They have positive relationships with each other. Staff encourage their playing together, sharing and turn taking. Children who find concentrating and cooperating with others difficult, benefit from the staff's support and involvement. Should children misbehave, staff calmly intervene and explain the consequences of their actions to them and in a way they understand.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents of children who receive early education funding have some awareness of the range of activities provided for their children and how they have responded. Discussions with staff, displayed plans and notices detailing some daily activities, help parents to see what their children have been doing. However, this information does not clearly explain the intentions of the Foundation Stage to parents and their children's learning is not fully supported because staff have not kept written assessments of their progress for parents to see and to contribute to. There are also limited formal opportunities for staff and parents to discuss and agree strategies in order to further promote children's learning and development.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are reassured because the staff are kind and caring, but their safety and well-being is compromised because of staff's lack of knowledge of the National Standards' requirements and their role in safeguarding children. Unqualified staff are in the process of working towards relevant early years qualifications and the new committee has a clear action plan for supporting and monitoring their progress. This includes the committee chair visiting the setting and giving staff appropriate feedback.

The committee has initiated a review of policies but at present the staff's understanding of procedures is affected because the information available to them does not always reflect regulations or, in some cases, the group's operational arrangements. The absence of clear guidelines compromises children's health, safety and welfare. The child protection policy and complaints policy do not meet current regulations. There is no lost child policy, and health and hygiene procedures do not include up to date information on minimising cross infection in the case of illness. Parents are not able to readily access important information about the setting as the group's certificate of registration has not been consistently displayed and policies and the operational plan are not routinely available to them. Children's care is not effectively supported by other aspects of documentation because there are omissions relating to parental consents and some confidential records are not securely stored. Overall children's needs are not met.

Some aspects of the group's organisation adequately promote children's welfare, and the recently elected committee has a clear vision for the group's development. They have implemented some of their proposed initiatives including fundraising and providing support for staff working towards early years qualifications. They are in the process of reviewing policies, procedures and information given to parents. Children are safeguarded as the group's recruitment and vetting procedures ensure staff are suitable and Criminal Records Bureau checks have been initiated for new committee members, although there have been some delays in completing this. Children are settled because staff make sure sessions are enjoyable and they work closely with them.

The leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. Staff plan an appropriate range of topics to promote children's learning and development. Children learn in an inviting environment with access to suitable toys and resources. The manager has an understanding of the intentions of the Foundation Stage and other staff are accessing relevant training to improve their knowledge. However, monitoring of children's progress and of the effectiveness of activities is inconsistent. Observation of children's activities and skills is haphazard and no written progress records have been completed to share with parents. Until recently the committee has had little input in evaluating the quality of teaching and of children's learning, so that management do

not have a clear view of which aspects of children's early education are sound and where improvements are required.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to recommendations regarding staff vetting, maintaining a record of staff details and keeping accurate information about children's attendance. Children are safeguarded because the setting has appropriate arrangements for vetting staff, maintains adequate information about them on site and keeps accurate records of children's hours of attendance.

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

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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:

- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and improve accident recording by ensuring parents see and sign their child's accident record
- provide an appropriately stocked first aid box
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, including procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer, and make sure all staff understand these procedures and their responsibilities for safeguarding children
- make available to parents a written statement, which reflects current National Standard requirements, that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint and which includes Ofsted's details
- make the operational plan, and other written information about the setting such as policies and procedures, available to parents
- ensure that all records relating to day care activities are securely stored and available for inspection at all times

- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations to ensure the group's operational plan and policies reflect the National Standards, and set in place a procedure to notify Ofsted promptly of relevant matters.

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 consistent assessment procedures so that children's progress is effectively monitored and their individual learning needs are reflected in future plans
- improve short term planning to show how children's differing learning needs are to be met
- improve the information given to parents about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning, and develop ways for them to contribute to their children's progress records and learning
- improve monitoring and evaluation of the nursery education provision.

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