

ABC Early Learning & Childcare Centre UK Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY288917
Inspection date	09 November 2007
Inspector	Michelle Smith
Setting Address	9 Bilbrook Road, Codsall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV8 1EU
Telephone number	01902 840402
E-mail	
Registered person	ABC Early Learning & Childcare Centre UK Ltd
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 Early Learning & Childcare Centre UK Ltd opened in 2004. It operates from two converted premises in the village of Bilbrook in South Staffordshire. A maximum of 63 children may attend the setting at any one time. Of these, 18 children are cared for in a separate annex. The setting is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. There are separate secure enclosed outdoor play areas within each of the premises.

There are currently 92 children aged from 13 weeks to five years on roll. Of these, 13 receive funding for early education. Staff walk to the local school to take and collect children. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children come from the local and wider catchment area.

The setting employs 17 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards a qualification. In addition, there are two directors who are present daily to support the running of the setting, two trainees and additional domestic staff. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because they are nurtured and cared for in rooms that are exceptionally clean, so helping to promote their welfare to an impressive standard. Staff implement rigorous health and hygiene procedures consistently and with great care. They use colour coded cloths to complete daily chores and give very high priority to ensuring the sick child policy is implemented with success. This helps to significantly reduce the spread of illness and infection. Children play freely and safely because there is a meticulous system in place to monitor accidents in order to prevent further injuries. A very high percentage of staff are trained in paediatric first aid. The care given to children's medical needs is further enhanced by prominently displayed first aid boxes and the very safe storage of medicines. In addition, staff seek detailed information about children's medical needs before they attend the setting. Staff work exceptionally well with parents to identify any potential medical issues, so helping all children to be continuously included throughout all activities and play opportunities.

Children are developing a deep understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through fresh, lively and innovative projects. More able children use a traffic light system to self-assess which foods are good to eat 'more or less of'. Consequently, they know it is better to eat less chocolate and more carrots. They grow tomatoes which they readily use as a topping for their homemade pizzas. All children show growing levels of independence within personal care routines. Young toddlers express their enthusiasm to wash their hands by rolling up their sleeves and skipping happily to the taps. More able children understand that they need to brush their teeth 'to make them clean' otherwise 'their teeth will go black'. Babies' and toddler's comfort is assured through well-organised nappy changing routines.

Children eat good portions of nutritious, wholesome food. All meals are prepared by one of the owners of the setting, with a strong emphasis being placed on providing five portions of fruit and/or vegetables for every child on each day of the week. The strong commitment to healthy eating is demonstrated further by the commendable system whereby a staff member has been trained for a number of months to ensure that should the owner not be available, children still receive food that has been prepared, cooked and served to the same impressive standards. Meal times are relaxed as young toddlers eat from stage-appropriate, fun 'frog' dishes. Children soon become adept at using child-size cutlery as they sit with their friends to enjoy meals such as pasta with chicken and broccoli. More able children show how much they like their food by commenting that their dinner is 'yummy' and asking if they could 'have more please?' Babies' individual feeding routines are fully respected by staff who try to follow their home care experiences as much as possible. Babies are very settled as they are held close whilst drinking their milk, are largely fed by their allocated member of staff and enjoy developing their independence as they begin to feed themselves. A rigorously documented three stage checking system ensures children with specific dietary requirements eat appropriate food.

Children of all ages thoroughly enjoy playing in the fresh air. They have daily, unrushed opportunities to explore, test and develop their physical skills. Staff understand the development of babies very well. They plan and provide a diverse range of interesting and fun activities, so helping babies to explore and develop self-confidence in their physical skills. Consequently, babies pull themselves up using safe furniture, crawl, shuffle and reach for attractively presented equipment and displays. Toddlers show excitement as they play in the recently completed outdoor play area. They use chalks to draw circles on the floor, crawl in and out of tunnels and

play in the outdoor ball pool. More able children develop superb balancing and climbing skills as they jump from one stepping stone to another, balance along beams and climb using fixed apparatus at the local park. All children show a positive attitude to physical exercise as they rise to the challenges of the versatile range of equipment and activities staff provide.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in an extremely secure and predominantly safe environment. They are developing a considerable understanding of how to keep themselves safe because staff plan and provide a multitude of interesting play opportunities. Consequently, children learn about potentially dangerous situations and how to protect themselves and others from any likely risk of harm. They listen to the visiting police officers who explain to them about the importance of 999 calls, including when and how to call the police for help. They build on their own understanding, using telephones in role play situations to call for help. They also use and discuss the importance of safety equipment in their local environment, for example, they walk to local amenities, using a pelican crossing to cross the road with care. Staff demonstrate through discussion a clear understanding of the meticulous system to ensure children are safe when on outings. Throughout the setting 'blue bags' are prominently displayed which staff carry when they leave the building with children. The bags contain practical resources such as a nappy and tissues, so helping to ensure the well-being of every child.

Children thoroughly enjoy using the bright, stimulating toys and resources. Staff show a good understanding of the many ways in which children learn, providing an attractive environment that inspires children to explore, experiment and investigate a wide range of materials. Children's excitement and discoveries are cherished by staff who plan resources with great care to ensure young children are able to access many resources at any one time, including a brilliant 'black and white corner' in the baby room that is full of natural and manmade materials. Staff organise resources extremely well, for example, any additional equipment which is not being used at the current time is safely stored, according to type, in clearly labelled storage containers. This increases the level of individual attention children receive because staff do not have to search around the setting looking for resources but can immediately locate and use any equipment at any given time.

Children's safety is further enhanced by comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures, the overwhelming majority of which are implemented effectively. Detailed risk assessments are carried out on all areas of the premises and prompt action is taken to minimise any hazards. All staff are fully aware of the emergency escape procedures. They are trained to use specific fire safety equipment and clearly documented fire marshal points are identified throughout the setting. Children are very well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of their role to safeguard children. They are supported by an up to date child protection policy which includes essential contact numbers. This ensures any concerns can be handled in a swift and sensitive manner, prioritising children's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure and happy in the welcoming and caring environment. Staff set indoor and outside learning objectives based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and offer a good balance of planned, spontaneous and child-initiated activities. In addition, each child's

developmental progression is tracked closely using photo diaries. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and play experiences for children under three years are good.

Close and caring relationships with staff increase children's sense of trust, developing their confidence to explore and experiment freely within the lively environment. Staff sit with children and model the use of puppets, singing familiar nursery rhymes to them whilst wearing a spider puppet on their hand. Children are inspired by the cheerful approach. They slip their hand quietly into a ladybird, attempting to wriggle their fingers. They are encouraged to think further as staff make effective use of questions such as 'who knows the name of this puppet?'. Children take part in active conversations with staff, for example, they talk about needing butter for their pretend toast. However, the organisation of staff and resources reduces children's ability to talk meaningfully to staff about a wide range of subject areas during meal times, limiting their overall language and social progression. Babies begin to understand the importance of early communication. Staff lift them onto their knees smiling, talking cheerfully to them whilst using happy, expressive facial gestures. This makes learning fun.

Children of all ages enjoy investigating a diverse range of materials such as chalk and paint, which helps them represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. The consistent use of natural materials helps them to begin to recognise and use their senses. They paint using big pieces of paper, experimenting with materials on a large scale. Children play happily together, giggling as they experiment with balls in water. On occasions, they enjoy time to relax and play quietly, resting their head on the floor as they drive their cars along the carpet, parking their vehicle alongside a nearby cupboard. The stimulating range of interesting and enjoyable activities helps children to develop a positive attitude towards learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff understand the Foundation Stage curriculum and work very well together to implement their knowledge through both child-initiated and adult-led activities. They devise short term plans which enable all staff to see at a glance what area of learning they are going to cover on set days and what activities will take place. In addition, children take part in activities of their choosing such as drawing on white boards and take part in an organised circle time where they participate in group learning opportunities. The assessment procedure is sufficient. Staff record observations they make on children's development and transfer this information to each child's profile and/or diary. However, the information gained from assessment records is not used effectively to plan for children's next steps in learning. This means that on occasions children's learning is not maximised.

Staff use a good range of teaching methods to maintain children's interest. They ensure that throughout the day children have time to relate to groups, to play alone and to engage in play opportunities with staff and/or their friends. Children behave well as they are consistently stimulated. They are keen and eager to implement the group rules, explaining confidently why everyone needs to take off their shoes off before going into the carpeted area. Staff support children's learning well by enabling them to self-initiate many opportunities for learning.

Children are very motivated to learn. They access resources freely, which enables them to build on their active curiosity and develops their independence. When playing dolls, they go to the storage unit containing accessories and take out a nappy for their doll. They use the space within the annex to their advantage, preparing a bed for their doll in the corner of the room, explaining that 'she needs a rest'. They play very imaginatively, confidently making up their own story lines such as giving their doll medicine commenting that 'she is sick cause she has

had too much milk'. This helps children to begin to make sense of the world around them as they engage in imaginative role play. Children show good levels of self-esteem as they solve problems such as working out how to place a tape into a music player and negotiate with others the use of equipment. Many children show high levels of perseverance with difficult tasks such as fastening buttons on shirts, taking off their shoes and putting on their slippers.

Children are very confident speakers. They talk actively about significant events that have happened to them and are keen to share stories about their families, taking turns in conversations. More able children begin to have active discussions about issues that are important to them such as if the word England starts with the sound 'e' or 'i'. Children experiment with mark making within a broad range of activities, for example, they make patterns and write letters in flour and foam. Some more able to children are able to write their own name. All children show an active interest in books, accessing books for pleasure throughout the session.

Children begin to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They have fun with counting as they work out how many children are present and then count backwards. Some activities help children to recognise numerals of significance to them, for example, outdoor stepping stones are labelled with the numerals one through to six. However, their learning is not always consolidated by being able to see numbers in their everyday play, routines and activities. A range of meaningful activities enable children to gain a concept of weight, size and measure, for example, children work out which of the food collected for a festival is the heaviest. They use interesting props to learn about addition and subtraction, moving dolls between hoops, using language such as 'more' and 'less' to compare numbers.

Children are developing very good knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. They explore, question and learn about the natural world. Through growing bulbs and vegetables they begin to recognise what living things need to grow. Staff recognise children's innate drive and capacity to learn by asking children how wooden chairs are made and talking excitedly about whose bean is growing the most. Children are confident to use the computer and other programmable toys. They use the correct words such as mouse and keyboard when sharing their knowledge and enjoy wearing head phones to listen to a story. Staff use a comprehensive range of methods to help children to begin to understand cultures and beliefs, for example, children attempt to write in different languages and draw Rangoli patterns with chalk outdoors. Children explore a diverse range of musical sounds through listening to the radio and playing with a broad range of instruments which originate from many cultures. In addition, they often burst into song, singing their favourite songs and rhymes with enthusiasm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and families are welcomed into the setting and their individual culture, religion, race and family background are fully respected. Excellent systems are in place to identify children's needs prior to them attending the setting, for example, parents spend an hour with staff in the office completing paperwork and discussing a wealth of practical issues. In addition, a key person is swiftly allocated to each child. This limits the risk of upset and confusion to children because staff develop a deep understanding of their likes, dislikes and preferences. All staff work extremely well to make each child feel valued, for example, they recognise their favourite colours and select resources with a predominance of that very colour to help children to feel special. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language receive good care and attention. Staff liaise closely with parents and if

appropriate, with external agencies in order to provide the best possible care for each child. Consequently, all children are involved in all activities.

Children have fun learning about similarities and differences within their local community and cultural festivals. They listen to an impressive range of music, for example, when learning about Diwali they dance rhythmically to Bangra music, using their hands to express their creativity. They also learn about celebrations where they listen to stories and take part in associated activities such as making coloured flags. In addition, staff and children also raise money for charities and to buy equipment for the setting through hosting summer fetes and taking part in sponsored walks. This helps children to begin to value the diversity of the wider world. There is an ethos of care and respect which staff have for one another and in the way they speak to the children which encourages children to behave similarly to each other. Children, in particular babies, are cuddled and comforted throughout the day which helps them to feel secure. All children enjoy playing with or alongside staff. They have great fun pretending to brush staff's hair and readily serve them food from the pretend kitchen. More able children regularly say 'excuse me' when they wish to talk and 'thank you' when they are given a drink. They begin to negotiate and take turns, confidently approaching staff for support when they are aware others are not cooperating. This demonstrates that they are developing a clear sense of right and wrong through consistently implemented rules and boundaries. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents. Parents are able to begin to understand how the setting is organised through reading the informative notice board. Photographs of staff members, together with their qualification and training details are displayed in the entrance foyer of the main nursery building. All parents are invited to take part and/or come along to fundraising and key events such as the Christmas party when Father Christmas makes a guest appearance. Staff have a strong commitment to involving parents throughout all routines, activities and events. They regularly display articles from the local and national press which help to keep parents informed of recent events, so helping parents and staff to work harmoniously to safeguard children at all times. Useful information such as details about feeding routines or the child's general disposition is shared between parents and staff on a daily basis, so helping children to relax and enjoy their day.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Staff have a broad range of methods in place to share information about the Foundation Stage with parents. They display bright, colourful posters around the room which helps parents to link daily activities such as outdoor play to areas of learning, for example, knowledge and understanding of the world. Weekly plans, together with a daily information board, enables parents to understand what activities and events their child has been doing during the day. All parents are invited to discuss their child's development at any time with their key person. There are also designated coffee mornings and open evenings where parents can talk to staff about how the Foundation Stage is delivered to children in the setting. Children leaving to attend school take part in a 'graduation day' where they wear a cap and gown and are presented with a dictionary from the setting. This helps children to form a positive attitude towards starting their new school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who are experienced and committed to their well-being. Staff work well as a team, providing a stimulating and interesting environment conducive to the care,

teaching and learning of all children. In addition, robust recruitment methods ensure staff are appropriately checked, vetted and qualified. Children receive a high level of individual attention because the setting is extremely well organised for the overwhelming majority of the time. They are cared for by consistent staff members who know them well. Staff take great care to make children's transition from one room to another, in line with their age and developmental progress, as smooth as possible, for example, children begin to eat from plates instead of dishes as they prepare to move into a more senior room.

Most documentation is meticulously maintained, up to date and regularly reviewed to reflect the progressive improvement of the operational practice. However, children's attendance records do not clearly show the actual arrival and departure times which has the potential to cause confusion in the event of an emergency evacuation. Parents are shown the policies and procedures as part of the settling in policy. They are requested to complete detailed paperwork which ensures the staff have comprehensive information such as the names of persons authorised to collect a child at their fingertips. A rigorous checking system is then implemented to make sure every child's file is complete, so helping to continually promote their well-being.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Staff have an exceptionally clear vision for their setting and a strong commitment to providing an environment where children are exceptionally well cared for. Children who receive funding for early education are cared for in an annex to the main building. Staff in the annex create a lively, child-centred play environment where children make good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage. Written plans support the consistent way in which the curriculum is delivered. However, the assessment tools are not always used to their full potential which restricts some children's learning. The management team continually strive for further improvement through self-evaluation. They have identified areas that they plan to develop, for example, the outdoor area of the annex, actively gathering ideas in order to create an area which provides children with the very best learning opportunities.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure there is a written policy and procedure for lost children and to ensure children in all rooms have regular opportunities for outside play. There is now a comprehensive policy in place which outlines detailed procedures staff should follow if a child is lost, so helping to prioritise children's safety. Staff implement a clear outdoor play rota which takes into account the individual attendance patterns of children. Consequently, weather dependent, every child either plays outdoors in the superb play area or goes on a walk in the local area each day.

There has been no previous inspection of the quality and standards of the nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- improve further the organisation of staff and resources during meal times to further develop children's language and social skills
- ensure the daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises accurately records their hours of attendance.

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):

- further develop the use of numerals within free play, spontaneous and planned activities
- make further use of the information gained from assessments to inform planning and to help children to move on to the next stage in their 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