

ABC Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103780
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Mandy Mooney
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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 satisfactory. 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 Pre-school opened in 1995 and operates from two converted flats, situated in a residential area of Borstal, Rochester. A maximum of 23 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 12:00 Monday to Friday and 13:00 to 15:30 Monday and Thursday for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area with a few children coming from further a field. The pre-school support children with learning difficulties and/or a disability and children for whom English is a second language.

The pre-school employs 10 staff, of whom, nine hold an appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is appropriately safeguarded by staff who have put in place suitable hygiene routines, for example, cleaning tables for snack time and by following appropriate nappy changing routines. Children play in a suitably clean and organised environment, however, the storage of cleaning equipment, such as, mops, brooms and the vacuum cleaner is ineffective, as these are stored accessibly in the adult toilet and pose a potential health and safety hazard. Children are aware of the need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before snacks. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to exclude children with infectious illnesses and to care for children who become unwell during the session. Staff follow appropriate procedures for managing accidents and for the administration of medication.

Children are provided with healthy drinks and snacks at refreshment time, such as, fruit, water and milk. Children learn about the benefits of keeping themselves healthy, as staff reinforce important messages and through visitors, such as, the dental nurse. Drinking water is available throughout the session, however, this is not within children's reach and means that children have to ask the adult for a drink.

Children have daily opportunities to take part in physical play activities in the outside area. Children go out in all weathers, they wrap up warm and put their wellies on. This ensures they get fresh air every day and the opportunity to develop the large motor skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in an appropriate bright and welcoming environment, with displays of information for parents and pictorial displays to interest children. Space is appropriately organised which enables children to move around freely making choices about their play. Children access a suitable range of safe and appropriate resources. These are organised successfully, within the three activity rooms, mostly stored in low level storage boxes which are clearly labelled to encourage decision making and independence skills. Children have independent access to appropriate bathroom facilities, however, the location of the nappy changing provision is less successful, as this consists of a changing mat on the floor in the hall way, blocking one toilet and the main front door. This means that staff have to lean on the floor to change nappies and does not ensure privacy for the children.

Staff are aware of the health and safety requirements, such as regular fire drills and conducting a visual risk assessment of areas before they are used, including the communal garden. Staff encourage children to take responsibility in regards to keeping themselves and others safe, by involving them in tidying up at the end of the session and through planned themes, such as, reading 'Little Red Riding Hood' and relating this to being aware of stranger danger.

Staff have a sufficient understanding of, and are confident about dealing with child protection issues. The group have a child protection policy in place, however, this is not fully reflective of the Local Safeguarding Children board guidelines and this means there could be a delay in raising a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. New children and those who are settling are well supported by staff and as a result, settle quickly. Children have good relationships with staff who sit with them and encourage their play and provide opportunities for the development of their personal care skills. Children are happy and enjoy playing with their friends. All children participate well during snack times where they sit together and enjoy pleasant conversations. Children are familiar with the daily routine and move freely around the room, making choices about their play. Activities and opportunities are based on the observations completed by staff and the interests of the children and the Birth to three matters framework is used as a guide for developing learning intentions. This means children take part in a variety of well planned and interesting opportunities to meet their all round developmental needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage guidance, demonstrating awareness of the six areas of learning. They know their key children well and use this knowledge to promote children's learning within planned and child initiated play. Staff have responsibility for observation of key children and have involvement in planning of the curriculum to support children's learning using the Foundation Stage guidance. Observations and assessment are undertaken to inform of children's levels of achievement and short term planning indicates the learning intentions for focussed activities. However, there are some anomalies for the use of assessment and some inconsistent links between children's next steps and the planned learning intentions. This is potentially detrimental to the full effectiveness of directive learning for children. Staff make good use of time and resources to support children's learning. Furthermore, many of the observations are descriptive as oppose to evaluative and this means the learning from the observations can be unclear.

All staff work directly with the children and provide an environment that is organised to help children to be independent and make choices. There are a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities provided by the setting, and as a consequence, children make good progress overall. Children benefit from practitioner questioning, for example, during circle time and in their informal play, which encourages them to talk about their interests and home-life events and to express their feelings. Children's behaviour is managed well and they respond appropriately to adult requests.

Children use their imagination well in small world play, for example, when playing with the garage and cars and also extend this into the sand pit with larger cars to make tracks. They express themselves through a variety of mediums, for example, whilst drawing at the easel, painting and also when using the musical instruments, where they are learning about following adults instructions to play quietly and or loudly. Children know familiar songs and rhymes and choose their favourite songs at song time, for example, 'Bob the builder' and 'The wheels on the bus' and they are learning to play musical instruments along to the tune. They have some opportunities to take part in imaginative play, for example, in the home corner or dressing up, however, this area is not particularly well organised or resourced and therefore restricts the enjoyment of this.

Children show confidence in the group as they move freely between the activities and choose activities independently. Older children show good concentration, as they stay at activities until completed. Children are caring towards one another, offering to help each other, for example,

when putting wellies on for outdoor play. They are developing good social skills including turn taking and sharing, this is seen during table top games, such as, 'the snail game'. They are developing good self help skills, for example, most children use the toilet independently, they clear the table after snack time and hang their coats on pegs.

Staff spend their time directly with the children and are skilled at encouraging children to develop their language for thinking. Children readily share their tales of home life with each other and this is extended by staff who prompt them. Children's writing and mark making skills are developing well. They have daily opportunities to access a range of resources to support this area, which they thoroughly enjoy. Many older children can write their own names and others follow the dots to create the shape of the letters. Children have access to a variety of books, including large books to share as a group, board books and story books. Children's enjoyment of books is further supported by story and rhyme sacks and at home as children take books home to share with their families. Staff use every day opportunities to extend and enhance children's understanding of mathematical concepts, such as, counting how many children are at the snack table and working out how many cups are needed. Four year olds show developing problem solving skills, such as working out how much liquid is needed to fill the small cup and why the larger cup contains more liquid. Many children can count to 10 and beyond and have staff are skilled at reinforcing this and helping children to link numbers to numerals.

Children learn about natural things and patterns of change, for example, by planting and watching the growth of a runner bean and whilst caring for the group's fish and snail. They use available information technology, including daily use of a computer which most children use skilfully and independently and role play items, such as a shop till and telephone, to support their play and learning. Children can construct and shape using various materials, for example, when using construction toys, collage pictures, selecting and joining household items and in using malleable materials, such as play dough and clay. They have a sense of place within their local community through visits by local agencies, such as, a health visitor who leads the clinic in the adjoining community provision and developing awareness of the wider community through activities and resources that represent diversity.

Children show good spatial awareness, as they negotiate their way around the nursery. They skilfully negotiate the slope in the garden and run, catch and throw balls and climb the small slide confidently. Children's fine motor skills are developing appropriately as they have daily opportunities to practise these skills, such as, cutting, drawing, using tools for malleable play, whilst creating patterns in the peg board and hammering the nails into the wood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff actively promote anti-discriminatory practice; they provide a range of activities which help children to understand and explore their own ideas and beliefs and those of other people and encourage children to investigate the local and wider community. This includes trips out locally and visitors, such as the local lollipop person and police community support officer. Children have access to a satisfactory range of resources to reflect a positive image of different people in the community, for example, books and puzzles and play figures to reflect both able bodied and disabled people. Children have high self esteem because staff acknowledge their home life through planned themes, such as, 'All about me' and by developing a memories book for each child.

The pre-school welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or a disability and the system in place for supporting children is effective in both identifying needs and also providing appropriate support to children and promoting inclusion. There is a named special needs coordinator (SENCO) who is in the process of completing training for the role and is confident in accessing external support and advice as necessary.

Children's behaviour is generally good. Staff portray a positive role model for the children. They respond to children's questions and are attentive to their needs. Children know the daily routine well and this includes the rules and boundaries in place. The 'golden rules' for the group are reinforced at circle when staff show the children pictorial images of what is acceptable behaviour and why this is important. A written behaviour management policy is in place and practice reflects this, however, there is no named person designated for behaviour management and this means that should a staff member require additional advice or support for dealing with a particular situation, it may not be readily available. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff have friendly relationships with parents and make time to give parents feedback about their child's day, either at the beginning or end of the session. Parents spend time settling their children and are kept up-to-date with the happening within the group through regular newsletters and information boards. Parents receive some information relating to the pre-school when their child is admitted, this includes policies and procedures, however, this does not include information relating to the Birth to three matters framework or the Foundation Stage curriculum. This means that although information relating to the activities and themes is displayed on the window near the group's main entrance door, specific learning intentions for the children are not routinely shared. Furthermore, although staff develop the next steps for learning for the children, parents do not contribute to the process and this means they are not actively involved in their child's learning. Although information relating to how to contact Ofsted is displayed, the procedure to follow in the event of a complaint relating to the National Standards and the complaint record do not contain the required information as stipulated in the amendments to the National Standards 2005.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a well qualified and dedicated group of staff. Appropriate procedures for recruitment and to ensure suitability of adults are in place and this means children's welfare is promoted. The staff team work well together to plan a curriculum to meet the needs of the children attending. Space and resources are appropriately organised, which encourages independence and decision making skills. Staff have sufficient opportunities to attend training to keep themselves up-to-date with current practices. An effective key worker system is in place and required ratios are maintained. This is reflected in the attendance records, which records the actual times of arrival and departure for the children and staff. All required records and documentation for the safe management of the provision are in place, however, the child protection policy and the complaints procedure are not fully reflective of current regulations or guidance.

Leadership and management is good. One of the key features of the group is the strong team work and commitment to providing a provision to meet the needs and interests of all the children. Management meet with staff regularly to evaluate the provision and by doing this ensure practices are reviewed and improved. Staff work closely with an advisory teacher from

early years and an area SENCO to access relevant training and resources to support the group. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation for good practice was raised at the last inspection. The provider agreed to extend the short term planning to clearly state what the children are expected to learn and how the activity can be differentiated to accommodate the needs of all children. Planning clearly indicates the stepping stone the activity links to, and although differentiation is not recorded in the planning, staff report they adjust or adapt the activity according to what children are taking part in, to ensure they get the most out of the opportunity.

Three recommendations for good practice were raised at the last care inspection. The provider agreed to ensure all visiting parents sign a visitors book, to expand the range of toys to promote positive images of disability and to provide children with drinking water throughout the session. A visitors book is in place and is consistently used to record all visitors and furthermore, a wipe clean board is in place which records the number of adults and children in the building. The range of toys to reflect a positive image of disability has been increased and includes a selection of play figures and books, this helps children learn about people in the community. Drinking water is available within the activity room, however, this is not readily accessible to the children who have to ask an adult for a drink as the jug is out of reach.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- review and improve the nappy changing facilities
- ensure the child protection policy is reflective of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines
- update complaints procedure to ensure it is reflective of current regulations and ensure the complaint log contains required information

- actively involve parents in the child's learning by involving them in developing the next steps for learning (also relates to nursery education)

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):

- review the method of observing children to ensure these are evaluative as well as descriptive
- further develop the links between children's next steps and the learning intentions within planning.
- provide parents with information relating to the curriculum, including the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three framework (also relates care)

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