

Abbey Centre Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220151
Inspection date	17 December 2007
Inspector	Rosemary Moore
Setting Address	Overslade Close, East Hunsbury, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN4 0RZ
Telephone number	01604 767568 or 07980 092175
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Registered person	The Trustees of Abbey Centre Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abbey Centre Pre-school was established in 1987. It operates from a community centre in the Hunsbury district on the outskirts of Northampton. The accommodation consists of a large, well-lit central room. There is separate access to the kitchen and toilets. The pre-school is open on Monday to Friday from 09:15 to 11:45 and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 12:15 to 14:45 during term-time. Children have access to a secure outdoor area.

There are currently 50 children from two years nine months to under five years on roll. Of these 26 children are in receipt of funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the group serves the local area. The setting supports children who have English as an additional language along with those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are eight members of staff. Two members of staff hold a Level three qualification three hold a Level two qualification in childcare and one member of staff is currently working towards an appropriate childcare qualification. The pre-school receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the warm, welcoming environment. The premises are clean and staff carry out daily routines to ensure that a good level of hygiene is maintained. The children begin to develop an awareness of personal hygiene through good routines, such as washing their hands in the basins after using the toilet. They also wash their hands immediately before eating, although children use the same designated bowl of water placed in the room for convenience, which is a potential risk to children's health. Children receive effective treatment and reassurance in the event of an accident because members of staff who hold current first aid certificates are always present and have sound up to date knowledge of procedures. Medication is only administered by staff who have specific training and with parental consent.

Children are well nourished because they enjoy a good range of healthy snacks which include plenty of fresh fruit. They have a choice of drinks including fresh drinking water throughout the session. This ensures they are well hydrated and comfortable during their time at pre-school. Children are beginning to understand about healthy living through a good range of activities which encourage them to learn about healthy choices. Staff take appropriate precautions when preparing food to minimise the risk of cross contamination by the use of sterilised chopping boards and suitable storage of fresh foods.

Children develop physical skills and have access to fresh air as they take part in regular indoor and outdoor activities weather permitting. They enjoy climbing and sliding down apparatus in the playroom and running around or riding on wheeled toys in the outdoor area. Children have daily activities planned into the daily routine to ensure they develop their physical skills and awareness of moving and negotiating obstacles in their environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm welcoming, where children's craft work and interesting posters are displayed. They use a safe environment where they are free to move around the playroom and select their own toys and activities. The outdoor area has a safe soft surface which gives good support to the children's safety and well-being. Space is used well within the setting as areas are effectively created for different types of play. Children are able to choose from a range of safe and suitable toys which are rotated to keep children's interest. These are set out daily and adapted for the different age groups.

The premises are secure with staff closely monitoring the arrival and departure of children. They supervise children well on the premises, including taking children to the toilets. Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure all precautions are taken to prevent accidents. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe because staff discuss safety issues at the beginning of the session with reminders when required. This helps children to understand why they need to follow simple rules. They also practise regular fire drills to ensure these are familiar in the event of an emergency.

Children are protected from harm because staff have a sound knowledge of child protection and a clear understanding of procedures to follow if they have any concerns with regard to a

child in their care. They have the guidance and a clear policy to follow and most staff have attended training in safeguarding children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school. They have access to a good range of toys which captures their interest and this begins to develop their concentration skills. Children act out and experiment with role play in the home corner which is made into a hairdressers, where staff interact well with them and pose as customers. Children are creative, they use a range of mediums to develop a feel for texture and the varying possibilities of each of these. For example, they use the foam on the table to create patterns with their fingers.

Children's activities are planned using the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which helps them to develop at their own pace. Staff use observation and assessments to set individual goals which are achievable and adapt these or extend them to suit all of the children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children who are funded for nursery education are cared for in the same room. Daily sessions separate the younger children from the older ones. Children are motivated, they engage in a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities. They play well alone and together in small or larger groups. Children in both sessions are sociable, communicate well and show a positive attitude to learning. Children behave well. Younger children are starting to learn about rules while older children show an awareness of right and wrong and on occasions remind each other of basic rules. Children experience some free-flow play, when they can decide whether to experience activities indoors or outside, although this is dependant on the weather, with physical activities also incorporated into the indoor play. Children respond well to new activities when they are introduced to them are keen to offer their ideas by adapting play. One example of this was children enjoying rolling their vehicles down the indoor slide, observing and experimenting with how far and fast they can travel.

Staff have a sound knowledge of the stepping stones. Children are confident learners and access activities independently. Activities take account of children's interests and individual learning needs, they are linked to the six areas of learning. Staff have high expectations of the children for learning and behaviour and use observations of children at play to understand what children need to learn next. Individual plans and the activities reflect this. Planning successfully maintains a good range of practical daily activities, and regular discussions and meetings ensure all staff know what the children are expected to learn. The current planning system identifies children's individual learning needs to move them onto their next stepping stone across the six areas of learning. Through use of an effective system of observation and assessment staff are able to successfully pitch the levels of challenge according to individual children's capabilities. An effective method to help children to progress includes questioning children to make them think. Staff manage children's behaviour well by offering lots of praise and encouragement while also being good role models. Children with special needs are included very well. Staff interact with the children in a positive and supportive manner. They explain things well and use questions to encourage children to think. Resources provide children with a good, varied range of experiences and staff ensure that learning opportunities within daily routines are maximised.

Children have good opportunities to use their imagination as they participate in role play often based on first hand experiences. For instance, children really enjoyed imaginative play as hairdressers. Children feel confident to speak in a large group and they enjoy singing songs and joining in with stories. Children also enjoy looking at books alone and in small groups. Currently there are few activities to help children link sound to letters. Children have access to a range of writing materials within the role play areas and can, if they choose to, attempt to write their name with the support of staff.

Children learn about number through practical experiences and during routines, such as when children count how many are present in the group today. Staff encourage children to identify number and quantity to reinforce their learning. For example, children have a numeral on a bag they are asked to place the correct number of keys inside the bag, if unsure they may count the number of dots on the reverse side of the bag. The supporting staff member encourages lots of everyday mathematical language through discussion with the children. Several posters, equipment such as tills and calculators within the playroom display number and shape and children have opportunities to compare objects, sort and balance.

Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world while participating in a varied range of activities. For instance, children learn about animals, where and how they live. They discuss the roles of people within their society, and develop further understanding through role play. Children have opportunities to access information technology and use this to reinforce learning in other areas such as problem solving and language. Overall, children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and parents are made welcome into the setting at the beginning of each session. Staff spend time speaking with the parents and children settle quickly to activities in the room. They confidently select items to develop their play ideas and move from one activity to another. Parents are fully aware of the importance of the information displayed on the notice board which includes information on how to make a complaint if they wish. Children behave well in the setting. Staff are good role models as they have a good system in place within the group to encourage children to listen and follow simple instructions. They share information quickly and effectively at group time. Children respond well as they are spoken to very quietly and a favourite song reinforces acceptable behaviour. Staff do not raise their voices but step in to prevent running within the room. This effectively teaches children right from wrong and is quickly understood by the youngest of children.

Children learn about diversity through access to a good range of activities which raise their awareness of the wider world such as the celebration of Christmas and other festival throughout the annual calendar. Parents are made welcome into the setting ,for example, to see their children's nativity play and they are encouraged to share their views and expertise. Children go on outings into the local community which encourages them to learn to respect differences in our society. Resources include a good range of multi-cultural toys, dressing up clothes, dolls, puzzles, posters and books. Children have their individual needs well met because information for each child is carefully gathered from parents before they attend the setting. Children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully supported through staff working closely with the parents, carers and other professionals. Staff have attended sufficient training to increase their knowledge and understanding of any issues and a keyworker system is in place

for all children. This ensures that staff know the children well and are able to work closely with the parents.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children's care, welfare and development are promoted through strong positive working relationships with parents. All parents of funded children receive a Foundation Stage welcome pack which provides them with good quality information about the provision for nursery education within the setting. Staff provide parents with a daily verbal feedback of their child's achievements and progress. They receive written reports on their progress towards the early learning goals and are fully aware that these records are maintained for their children and that they can be accessed at any time. They receive regular information about topics their children will be working on. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are settled and happy in a setting where they benefit from good organisation. Staff offer a good balance of support and encouragement to children to enable them to learn how to become more independent. Children confidently access toys and resources to create their own ideas in a safe and stimulating environment. Sufficient staff hold relevant childcare qualifications and training. A detailed operational plan clearly supports staff in their role of providing good quality childcare. All adults working with children undergo appropriated vetting procedures.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The committee are supportive in their role with systems in place to monitor and evaluate the use of the Foundation Stage guidance. The managers work well together as a committed team to provide good quality nursery education. Staff discuss practice issues and planning with ongoing monitoring of their training and professional development. The setting works closely with other professionals making good use of any advice to improve the outcomes for children. Parents share information and are kept informed of their child's progress through their time in the setting. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to build on existing good practice by continuing to improve training, particularly in the area of child protection. This has been carried out and most staff have now attended training in safeguarding children. This ensures that children's welfare continues to be protected.

At the last early education inspection the pre-school was asked to provide more opportunities for children to develop their own methods of representing numbers. This has been addressed by daily access to numbers in several ways including number solving activities and counting. This supports the children and aids their awareness and confidence when handling and counting numbers.

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 upon 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):

- promote the good health of children by taking positive steps to prevent the spread of infection, with regard to hand washing before snack.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to link sounds and letters.

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