

Ashbeach Playgroup & Toddlers

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221823
Inspection date	10 January 2008
Inspector	Emma Bright
Setting Address	Ashbeach School, Ashbeach Drove, Ramsey St. Marys, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE26 2TG
Telephone number	07760 115107
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Registered person	Ashbeach Playgroup And Toddlers
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?

Ashbeach Playgroup and Toddlers is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the setting. It opened in 1996 and operates from a mobile building in the grounds Ashbeach Primary School in the village of Ramsey St Marys. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open five days a week from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:40 to 15:10 during school term times. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 34 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The setting employs three staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate a good awareness of being healthy and explain that 'apples and grapes are good for you, but chocolate isn't'. They readily help themselves to fresh drinking water throughout the session whenever they need it so that they remain well hydrated and can think effectively. Children's nutritional needs are very well met; they readily tuck in to a variety of fresh fruits which is attractively presented to encourage them to try new tastes. Children are very well cared for if they become unwell or in the event of an accident because clear and detailed information is gathered from parents and records are in place to make sure that appropriate care is given. Accurate details of children's medical needs are recorded and all practitioners are aware so that they can act swiftly in an emergency. In addition, all practitioners hold current first aid certificates and records of accidents are kept and shared with parents and carers.

Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences. They run around, exerting themselves outdoors and get plenty of exercise to promote their growth and development. For example, children practise new skills such as coordinating their movements to operate the wheeled stilts. This helps them to develop good muscle control, feel relaxed and develop a sense of overall well-being. Children develop their small muscular skills and use a good range of tools and utensils to acquire new manipulative skills. For example, they use scissors to cut and snip with very good control and small knives to cut up fruit. Children demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene, which they learn through regular routines and sensitive reminders from practitioners when necessary. For example, children competently wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack time and explain that 'you have to make your hands nice and clean'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe as the practitioners take effective precautions to reduce their risk of injury and to keep them safe from harm. For example, good security procedures restrict access to the setting and prevent children from leaving the premises unaccompanied. Children move freely between indoors and outdoors, accessing equipment and activities independently to follow their own interests; practitioners are particularly vigilant in their supervision of children to ensure their safety. Emphasis is given to making sure that the environment is welcoming and is well prepared with a range of activities, which stimulates children's interest and enhances their development. Photographs and children's work decorates the walls and this contributes to their sense of belonging. Resources have been carefully selected to support children's play. They are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they remain safe and in good condition.

Children's safety in case of fire is given high priority and they are developing awareness of keeping safe. For example, children regularly practise the emergency escape plan which means they all know what to do in an emergency and are familiar with the routine. The wide range of written policies and procedures are clearly implemented such as risk assessments and daily checks and this further promotes children's safety. Children are well protected and kept safe from harm as all staff have a clear understanding of their role in child protection. They all attend regular training in child protection to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date and a designated

person ensures that any concerns are dealt with effectively, so that children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in their playgroup; they arrive eagerly, separating happily from their parents and carers, and settling readily into their activities. Children benefit from a rich learning environment where they make decisions about what they want to do; they busy themselves, selecting additional resources to support their play from the good range available to them and this enables them to extend their independent learning. Children play happily together and are developing positive relationships with one another, which contribute to their sense of belonging. Children confidently offer their comments and ideas, which practitioners treat with respect and this develops their self-esteem. Children benefit from the warm interaction with practitioners and they have formed good relationships with them, which helps the children to settle well and feel secure in their care.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from practitioners' good understanding of the Foundation Stage and they know how the activities they provide contribute to children's progress. Planning is in place, which provides a broad range of interesting activities and experiences that cover all areas of learning. Although a well prepared and rich learning environment is available some daily routines do not always enable children to fully benefit from it to extend their independent learning. Practitioners monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals so that they can build on what children already know and they plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. As a result children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children express their imagination in role play as they re-enact familiar scenarios. For example, they make a 'birthday cake', sing 'Happy birthday' to one another and offer 'pieces of cake' to the adults present. Children express and develop their own ideas in interesting creative activities; they select from a range of materials and become absorbed in making their own pictures. Children speak clearly in groups, confidently sharing their knowledge with others and talking about what they know. For example, they explain the difference between rats and mice because 'rats are bigger than mice'. Children's early writing skills are developing well as they use marks readily to represent their ideas. They understand that print carries meaning and they attempt to write for different purposes. For example, they make marks on their pictures to indicate that the work is theirs. All children enjoy listening to well read stories or looking at books alone; they select from a good range of books, which they handle with care and respect.

Children use mathematical language to describe capacity and they competently label simple shapes which they look for in everyday objects outdoors. They take photographs as a record of their findings. Children develop their technology skills as they competently use the computer and a range of appropriate programmes; they have good opportunities to use a digital camera and programmable toys. Children demonstrate a good understanding of numbers, counting and calculation and they use mathematical language to compare; they note that 'we've got the same. Two green cups!' Children observe patterns and change. For example, they are fascinated by scissors that have serrated edge and comment 'when I use these scissors it makes a wavy line'. Children's behaviour is good and they take turns, negotiating for resources. They talk about sharing in their play demonstrating their understanding, for example when playing with

farm animals they explain 'these two cows are eating hay. They are sharing'. Children are very independent and the range of stimulating activities enables them to share responsibility for their learning. They demonstrate pride in their work and excitedly share it with others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. Parents receive information about the setting's activities so that they know about their child's day and their child's records are available on a regular basis. Parents know that they can view their child's records at any time and meet regularly with practitioners, which mean they are informed of how their child is progressing and developing. In addition, practitioners provide parents with 'activities at home' sheets. These inform parents of their current topics and suggests activities that they could enjoy at home with their children to support their learning. However, parents have less information on the Foundation Stage which means they are not always aware of how activities help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals.

Children's behaviour is good. They interact confidently with adults and their peers, learning to consider the needs of others and to work together co-operatively. Practitioners set clear boundaries, which helps children learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children relish being 'little helper' and explain that at snack time this means they 'give out the plates'. This helps children to feel included in the life of the setting and fosters a sense of belonging. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. All children have many opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through a range of well planned activities. The good range of resources that positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community supports their play.

Children benefit from good settling in procedures that are based around their individual needs and helps to support children in the transition between home and the setting. Parents receive information about the setting so they know about activities and events, and have daily opportunities to discuss their child with practitioners. This helps children to settle and ensures their individual needs continue to be met. All documentation is in place to share information with parents and carers so that they know about the setting's policies and procedures. Appropriate systems are in place to welcome children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a welcoming and attractive environment where they can move around safely and independently. They are happy and content because practitioners develop caring relationships with them. Practitioners work well together as a team, and demonstrate enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates and interests all children. Policies, records and most procedures are clear and comprehensive, underpinning the good practice in promoting positive outcomes for children. However, some documentation is incomplete.

Effective recruitment procedures ensure that practitioners have experience and the necessary qualifications to carry out their role; all practitioners are rigorously vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The induction procedure and detailed operational plan, with up-to-date information ensures that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. Children benefit from practitioners' good knowledge and

understanding of how children learn; their ongoing commitment to further training to update their knowledge and practice and regular meetings enable them to work effectively as a team.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. The Lead Practitioner effectively monitors the quality of the nursery education, which ensures that children benefit from the good quality provision. All practitioners demonstrate a real commitment to continuously developing the setting's practice; the Lead Practitioner works very well with her team and together they have a clear vision of the high quality childcare and education that they wish to provide. Practitioners ensure that all parents have regular opportunities to discuss how their child is progressing through parents' meetings and good written information. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to: improve documentation; ensure confidential information is stored appropriately; ensure that 50% of practitioners hold appropriate qualifications and improve the range of multi-cultural books. All documentation has been updated and made available to parents and all confidential information is stored. Sufficient practitioners hold early years qualifications which mean children benefit from a well qualified and knowledgeable staff team. A good range of resources, including books to promote diversity are in place which means children have more opportunities to learn about differences and similarities.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to develop the system for planning and assessment and improve the programmes for mathematics and creative development. Planning is in place and provides a good range of activities over a period of time so that children access stimulating learning opportunities. Children's assessment records have been developed and continue to evolve which enables practitioners to plan for the next steps in each child's learning and these are shared with parents. The programme for mathematics has been improved so that children extend their learning in meaningful contexts and in everyday activities. They also explore their imagination in a range of activities that develops their creativity and self-expression.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards.

Following a complaint on 20 June 2007 which raised concerns about behaviour management, Ofsted requested a report from the provider regarding National Standard 11: Behaviour. As a result of the information in the report, one action was raised requiring the provider to take action. The registered person continues to be qualified for registration.

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):

- review and update documentation to ensure that the procedures for complaints and lost or uncollected children are complete.

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 activities and everyday routines so that all children benefit from the rich learning experiences (this also applies to care)
- continue to develop the information for parents on the Foundation Stage so that they know how activities help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals.

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