

Abbey Children's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY252113
Inspection date	06 March 2008
Inspector	Noreen Elizabeth Appleby
Setting Address	8 Abbey Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8TX
Telephone number	01228 524 990
E-mail	
Registered person	Joy Patricia Woodruff
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?

Abbey Children's Day Nursery is a privately owned setting. It opened in 2003 and operates from rooms on the lower three floors of a building in Carlisle city centre. A maximum of 34 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. The children have access to three enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 51 children, aged from birth to four years, on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting mainly serves the needs of children from the local community, although some children come from a wider geographical area.

The nursery employs 12 staff to work with the children. Of these, 10 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are currently working towards relevant level 3 qualifications.

The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health issues are thoroughly discussed and agreed with parents and carers. Comprehensive policy statements clearly identify good practices for protecting and promoting children's good health. These are effectively implemented within the nursery. For example, when a child contracts a contagious disease, parents and carers are promptly updated and given good information about signs, symptoms and exclusion periods. This contributes well towards maintaining children's health and well-being. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate, which enables children's minor injuries to be handled competently. Staff also obtain written parental consents regarding the seeking of emergency medical treatment or advice. An accident log is maintained, although several entries do not clearly detail the injury sustained or treatment administered. Medication records confirm suitable administration arrangements and entries are appropriately signed by parents.

Children are becoming increasingly aware of their health and bodily needs, for example, most manage their personal hygiene skills competently. Well planned activities help them to learn the importance of washing their hands after toileting or before they eat. In addition, they benefit from regular visitors, such as the doctor and the chiropodist, who have visited the setting to enhance children's knowledge and understanding of health issues. Older children brush their teeth after lunch and they talk about going the dentist. Outdoor play is effectively timetabled into the daily planning. Children regularly visit the local park; sometimes to walk in the fresh air or, on other occasions, to take part in group activities or team games. They also enjoy using a range of sit-and-ride toys in the nursery courtyard. They are developing physical skills as they negotiate and manoeuvre confidently around each other. Children are able to be active or rest according to their individual needs. They generally take part in restful activities after lunch, such as listening to stories or music.

Children's dietary requirements are fully discussed and agreed with parents or carers, in order that any special requirements are suitably met. The nursery does not have a fresh food preparation area, so much of the foodstuffs are frozen. Nevertheless, menu plans confirm that children receive a varied and nutritious diet, including fresh or dried fruit and vegetables. Babies generally provide their own formula milk and foodstuffs. Staff ensure these are appropriately stored and re-heated. Babies sit in their highchairs to eat. Some enjoy finger foods and are learning to feed themselves. Toddlers and older children have their main meals in the dining room. They enjoy mealtimes as good social occasions when they interact with staff and peers, chatting about things that interest them. They are also learning to feed themselves and to use good table manners. Pre-school children are developing confidence and independence as they enjoy a rolling snack time when they can serve themselves and make individual choices. Occasional 'themed' days allow children to try new tastes and textures, for example, as they taste various Chinese foods as part of the Chinese New Year topic plan.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a well-organised, child friendly environment. Premises are divided into age or stage appropriate rooms where they can play safely with their peers. All children also have good outdoor opportunities built into their daily routines. Play areas provide an interesting and inviting environment, which is conducive to children's learning. Children's work is attractively

displayed. This keeps parents and carers informed of activities children have enjoyed, as well as giving the children pride in their achievements. The nursery is well equipped and staff use good routines to ensure toys and resources are maintained in a clean and safe condition. Areas are well set out with a good range of free-standing equipment, floor toys and table top activities. This inspires children to self-select activities and resources, which enhances their confidence and independence, as well as fostering all areas of their development.

Comprehensive risk assessments are completed and staff are vigilant in minimising day-to-day safety issues as they arise. For example, they mop up spillages, ensure walkways are clear and use appropriate safety equipment effectively. In addition, they closely monitor persons who visit the nursery and maintain a record of visitors. A written outings policy has been drafted and includes the procedure for lost or uncollected children. Outings agreements are maintained with parents and carers. Consistent daily routines help children to learn good strategies for keeping themselves safe, for example, as they walk carefully when moving around the nursery or when they are playing in the outdoor areas. Planned activities also teach them about personal safety. For example, they learn how to cross the road safely when they go for local walks and they enjoyed a visit from a police officer, who talked to them about 'stranger danger'. In addition, a clear fire evacuation procedure has been identified and it is practised regularly by staff and children. This helps everyone to know what to do in an emergency.

Children's welfare is given high priority regarding matters of child protection. A comprehensive policy statement informs staff, students, parents and carers of effective practices within the group. It also includes the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. However, present arrangements do not ensure children's existing injuries are consistently recorded. All staff have recently completed in-house child protection training, which enhances their knowledge and skills. They demonstrate a good understanding of issues and are able to identify action they would take to protect children, in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery. They are grouped effectively, according to their individual ages or stages of development. All play rooms are set out well, so they are inviting, stimulating and conducive to children's early learning. Children explore their play areas enthusiastically and self-select from the good range of accessible toys and resources. A calm, relaxed atmosphere helps children to develop the confidence to form good relationships with staff and peers. Staff know children's individual routines well and they are attentive to their daily needs. This contributes well towards children's comfort and care. Staff working with under-threes link activities to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They demonstrate good knowledge of how young children learn and have set up relevant development files to monitor children's progress closely. All children enjoy a good mix of adult-led and self-initiated play opportunities. Staff allow the children to explore and develop at their own pace, yet they provide appropriate support and encouragement to enhance children's learning and to make sure the activities provide fun and enjoyment. Large group activities, such as story time, singing and musical activities promote lively interaction and help children to develop good personal and social skills.

Children in the baby and young toddlers' room enjoy investigating heuristic treasure baskets that stimulate all of their senses. They also have good opportunities to explore different tastes and textures, such as jelly and cream. Some enjoy playing with construction bricks which they

pass from one hand to another as they examine closely or 'taste' with interest, or as they tap them together, enjoying the tactile experience. Staff show them how to build towers, which the children delight in knocking down, giggling as they do so. Some particularly enjoy the musical instruments, which they tap and shake to make a variety of interesting sounds. Others like to explore paint as they create pictures. Some enjoy looking at picture books with staff. They are developing speech, as staff encourage them to say or repeat words as they point to the illustrations. All children are developing the confidence to explore their environment. Younger ones crawl across the floor to look at themselves in the mirrored wall, whilst toddlers prefer to explore the play tent or activity centres on the landing.

Older toddlers and rising threes are learning to recognise their colours as they explore a good variety of foodstuffs. For example, they taste strawberries, tomatoes, red apples, peppers and jelly, to reinforce the colour red. Well planned activities are helping them to develop a good interest in the natural world, for example, as they plant seeds and watch them grow. They particularly enjoy walks in the local park and have recently spent time looking at the Spring flowers. Staff extend the children's interest through well-planned art and craft activities, such as making blossom trees, collage flowers or painted flower pictures. Children enjoy songs and action rhymes, particularly those involving finger puppets. Many join in enthusiastically with actions and repeated refrains. This helps them to develop speech, counting skills and an appreciation for music. Most children enjoy outdoor play activities. They are beginning to move around confidently and develop large motor skills as they learn to climb, balance and coordinate their movements.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The lead practitioner responsible for implementing the Nursery Education programme has only been in post for approximately six months, although she has worked in the pre-school room for several years. She and her colleagues have attended several Foundation Stage training courses. They work closely together and demonstrate a good awareness of how to implement a broad, balanced curriculum for children. They also demonstrate a strong commitment to attending further training to improve their knowledge and skills.

Parents and carers are not actively involved in initial assessments of what their child can already do and progress meetings are only held annually. Nevertheless, staff use posters, displays, written plans and newsletters to share information about the curriculum and parents and carers are encouraged to help with their child's learning at home. Staff have been working with an advisory teacher to devise long, medium and short-term plans, using a variety of interesting topics and themes. Activities cover all six areas of learning and are linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals. Staff are generally aware of what children can do, but activities are not always sufficiently focused or assessed and they do not identify differentiation for more or less able children. Therefore, present arrangements do not consistently ensure children are effectively challenged and extended or rigorously monitor their progress along the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. However, staff carry out their duties enthusiastically and use a good variety of teaching methods. This motivates children to learn, as well as maintaining children's interest and enjoyment. Staff consistently ask or respond to questions, which enhances and consolidates children's learning.

Children generally behave very well as a result of staff setting high expectations for children's behaviour and providing good encouragement and purposeful praise. As a result, sessions run smoothly and children enjoy their time in the setting. They are developing good personal and social skills. Most manage their personal hygiene independently. They enjoy playing in pairs

or in small groups, for example, during imaginative play activities. Most interact confidently with adults, as well as peers. Children are developing an interest in number, shape and size. Some count proficiently or use numerical language correctly during planned or self-initiated play activities and staff are beginning to introduce mathematical comparisons, or simple number problems, to more able children. Children are developing good language and communication skills as they chat enthusiastically with staff and peers, about their home and community, or other things that interest them. They enjoy stories and most listen attentively. More able children recall narratives or predict what might happen next, whilst younger children listen and enjoy looking at the illustrations. Children are learning to link sounds to letters. For example, children bring in items which link to the 'letter of the week' and staff make good use of children's names during registration to reinforce phonic sounds. Many can recognise their names and confidently use their name cards to self-register.

Children are developing good physical skills. More able children are becoming aware of changes in their body temperature as a result of physical activity. They are also developing good hand-eye coordination as they learn to use simple tools and techniques with increasing skill, for example, as they use rolling pins and cutters when playing with dough. They have good opportunities to develop an interest in music. Many join in enthusiastically as they sing songs and action rhymes or as they regularly use the musical instruments. There is no computer available at the present time, so use of information technology is limited. However, children are learning to operate simple equipment, such as the typewriter or cassette player competently. All children are developing a good interest in the world in which they live. During a recent 'Space' topic they learned about the solar system and enjoyed making and using an interactive wall frieze. They are currently learning about living things, as they sequence the life cycle of a butterfly and take pride in creating their own colourful butterflies at the art table. They have also enjoyed planting seeds and watching them grow. They play imaginatively in the 'Garden centre' reinforcing what they have learned. They are able to use their senses, as they smell and taste various foodstuffs on 'Tasting Tuesdays'. Children talk about their homes and families and are learning about different cultures and diversity. Their learning is further enhanced by regular visitors, such as the Fire Officer, Chiropodist and Police Officer, who share interesting work experiences with the children, whilst enhancing their knowledge and learning.

Overall, throughout the whole nursery, children enjoy a good range of rich rewarding experiences that help them gain new skills across all areas of their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their families are equally valued and respected. They have formed good relationships with staff, who smile and greet them warmly when they arrive. Children's individual care arrangements are well known by key staff and effectively met. Good daily routines contribute well towards children's care. Staff promote inclusion for all children and encourage them to make individual choices, for example, about toys, activities or future plans. Children therefore feel valued and respected. Staff make good use of celebrations when planning activities and children also access a broad range of relevant toys and equipment, such as small world resources, books, posters, musical instruments, ethnic dolls and games. As a result, they are learning about the wider world and to value and respect ethnicity, disability and diversity. In addition, they are developing a very good sense of community as they enjoy local walks and outings to the park, fire station, library or museum. This is further enhanced by regular visitors who come into the nursery to share experiences with the children.

Children are encouraged to help with simple daily routines, such as tidying up or helping to set the table for lunch. As a result, they are developing a good sense of belonging. Staff act as good role models and have high expectations for children's behaviour. They use regular routines and set appropriate boundaries, which are sensitively reinforced in line with the nursery's policies and procedures. Older children are learning to accept responsibility for their own actions. For example, staff talk quietly to them, providing clear explanations and promoting the child to consider the impact that negative behaviour has on others. Children are therefore learning to be polite and well mannered. Most show care and concern for one another, playing harmoniously together and behaving very well. All children receive good encouragement and purposeful praise. As a result, they are developing confidence, self-esteem and pride in their achievements. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Management and staff have built up good working relationships with parents and carers, based on honesty, trust and professionalism. Staff provide new parents and carers with an informative prospectus, which clearly identifies nursery routines, fees and other relevant policies and procedures. They do not receive comprehensive information about their child's curriculum, although newsletters, displays and notice boards are well used to update them regarding children's activities and weekly plans. They are encouraged to help with their child's learning at home and, on occasion, parents have visited the nursery to talk to children about their jobs and to enhance the children's learning. Staff hold annual open days, when they discuss children's developmental and educational progress with parents and carers. They also make good use of informal daily discussion to share relevant information about the child. Information is also consistently shared with parents and carers about babies' and toddlers' care, such as rests, nappy changing and food intakes, to keep them thoroughly updated. Documentary evidence received from parents and carers verifies that they are extremely happy with the high quality of care the nursery provides and that their children thoroughly enjoy attending.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Over the past year there has been some turnover of staff, but new personnel have been well supported through good induction procedures. The Registered Provider also manages the nursery. She works very closely with staff and demonstrates a clear sense of purpose. She is able to clearly identify team strengths and areas for improvement. She has closely monitored issues arising from the last inspection, to ensure recommendations have been completed, thereby continually improving children's nursery provision. She leads regular team meetings and she has recently introduced a staff appraisal system. This ensures staff are effectively supported and provides opportunities for them to identify personal development plans. Staff and management act as good role models. They demonstrate enthusiasm towards their roles. They have a strong commitment to ongoing training, to develop their knowledge and skills and to monitor and improve practices within the nursery.

Good employment and vetting systems ensure children are well cared for by suitably qualified staff. The Registered Provider confirms that all staff are suitably vetted to work with children. She closely monitors day-to-day duty rotas to ensure there are sufficient staff on duty and that they are effectively deployed. The key worker system helps staff to contribute well towards children's continuity of care. Children have good opportunities to play individually or to take part in group activities. Staff support them well, although present routines do not always ensure pre-school children are effectively challenged and extended. Nevertheless, children are gaining

the confidence to initiate and extend their own play and learning. All children are happy and settled within the nursery and most are making good progress.

Comprehensive documentation systems are well used within the nursery. They comply with regulatory requirements and ensure consistent practices throughout the child care rooms, thereby supporting children's care and learning well. Formal policies and procedures have been drafted. However, they are currently being reviewed and updated and some have not yet been personalised to identify the name of the nursery or the named persons responsible for specific issues. Nevertheless, procedures are effectively implemented by staff to successfully underpin the work of the nursery and are well used to keep parents and carers informed about the child care provision. Children's care plans are closely monitored and regularly updated to keep children safe and to contribute effectively towards their continuity of care. Relevant planning systems enhance children's learning and help them make good progress in all areas of their development.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of recommendations raised at the last inspection staff now carry out monthly fire alarm drills and children's care agreements have been updated. This contributes towards improving children's safety and care.

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 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):

- develop accident records by clearly identifying any injuries sustained and treatment administered and by recording children's existing injuries
- continue to develop and personalise policy statements so they clearly identify procedures and key persons within the nursery.

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):

- improve opportunities for parents and carers to receive information about the nursery curriculum and to contribute towards monitoring their child's learning and progress
- continue to develop and evaluate focused activities to ensure children are effectively challenged and extended across all six areas of 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