

Abbeymead Under Fives Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101450
Inspection date	13 May 2008
Inspector	Carole Elizabeth Price
Setting Address	The Church Centre, Larkhay Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL3 3SB
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Abbeymead Under Fives Playgroup
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abbeymead Under Fives Playgroup opened in 1992. It operates from temporary premises in the grounds of The Church Centre, Hucclecote near Gloucester. The playgroup uses two, large playrooms, kitchen and toilet facilities. Outside there is grass and a hard surfaced area. There are currently 62 children on roll, from two to four years old. This includes 58 children in receipt of nursery education funding. Children are offered a minimum of two sessions each week. The group supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times from 09.15 to 11.45. Extra sessions for pre-school children are run from January to July on Mondays to Thursdays from 12.15 until 14.45. The playgroup is run by a parent committee that employs six members of staff to work with the children on a full and part time basis. Of these, four hold recognised early years qualifications and another is working towards the National Vocational Qualification Level 2 in Childcare and Education. Parents rota operates on a voluntary basis. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted through a range of activities and procedures in place. They have a good range and variety of healthy snacks each session, such as a selection of fruit, cheese and savoury biscuits. They pour their own milk and water and have free access to drinks of water during the session. They take part in activities and discussions which help them to learn about different foods and making healthy choices, such as, a food tasting session which introduces them to foods, such as, cinnamon and olives.

There are appropriate hygiene procedures in place for cleaning the tables and washing hands before eating and drinking. Children are encouraged to care for their own personal hygiene needs, such as, taking themselves to the toilet. However, support is offered if they feel the children need this.

Children benefit from daily exercise and fresh air as they play outdoors with the range of activities provided, for example, balls, barrels, climbing frame and parachute.

All staff have attended approved first aid courses. Detailed records of administration of medication and first aid treatment are kept. Written permission for the applying of sun cream to children is requested, however effective systems are not in place to ensure each child has sun cream applied before going outside on hot sunny days.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within a safe environment. Thorough, regular risk assessments are carried out on the premises, equipment and routines, and hazards are minimised appropriately. Additional risk assessments are carried out in advance for outings so that staff can identify and minimise any potential risk.

Children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe and are reminded of this throughout the session. Staff explain to children how they should behave when using the climbing frame and they remind them why they should not run indoors. Children remind each other that they should not throw the sand as it 'could hurt someone's eye'. They take part in activities, such as, road safety where they have visitors talking to them about the safe crossing of roads and they practise this as they go on well organised outings as a group.

Staff are effectively deployed, and aware of the location of others which ensures children are appropriately supervised during free-play activities. Children are not able to leave the premises unsupervised, or visitors to enter unannounced. All visitors attendance is recorded and they are made very aware of the emergency evacuation procedures and exits. Parents on rota and volunteers have clear instructions that they must not be left unsupervised with any of the children and staff are effective in enforcing this. The doors remain secure throughout the session. Space is used effectively to ensure that different areas are available to the children during the session and they can move freely and with ease between activities.

Children are protected by staff who have a clear understanding of safeguarding children issues. They are aware of the indicators of abuse and signs to look for. All staff are aware of the groups procedure and of the local procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive at the setting happy, keen to attend and see what activities are available to them. They play well together and good friendships are evident. Staff are friendly and approachable and have a warm relationship with the children in their care.

Children enjoy taking part in the range of activities available. They enjoy playing in the role play area, being creative at the craft table, reading books, playing with the pirate ship, using the slide and choosing whether to play indoors or outdoors. Staff join in with children's play appropriately and sensitively. Children are also encouraged to participate in staff led activities, for example, making binoculars in the garden.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff know the children well and provide access to a variety of planned activities and experiences over time. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the stepping stones and plan activities to cover all six areas of learning. Learning intentions of activities are clear and staff observe children as they play to form a record of their progress across the areas of learning. This information is used to inform the planning of activities appropriately and most children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals.

Children enjoy the short circle time and listen well to the adult who explains the days of the week, month and season. They are beginning to communicate confidently and all wish to contribute at circle time. However, the group time is structured so that all children take part at the same time. With the large group and varying ages, this group time is not effective in giving the children time to talk and be listened to. Adults talk effectively with children in small group situations, asking questions to make children think, and listening to them as they take part in role play. Children use the readily available mark making equipment well, for example, when playing in the role play area or independently writing their names on their pictures. There is writing around the room in the form of labels, displays and the routine board. However, story times and daily routines are not used effectively to help the children link sounds or learn that print carries meaning.

Children are developing their independence. They help with the handing out of plates, cups and offer snack to others, they pour their own drinks at both snack time and from the jug available throughout the session. They are learning to wash their hands and happily take themselves to the toilet and are encouraged to wipe their own noses appropriately.

Through a range of planned activities, children are learning about mathematical concepts and problem solving over time. They can recognise shapes, colours, and take part in measuring activities. Many children can count well, but do not always recognise what numbers look like or their value. Other children need support when counting and calculating. The regular daily routines and play experiences are not fully effective in allowing children to practise their counting, calculating or see written numerals around them as they play.

Children enjoy opportunities for exploration and investigation. They show curiosity and interest in the different foods for the food tasting activity, exploring their smell, texture and taste. They show great interest when discussing the seeds that they planted for an experiment, and discuss how plants need both sunlight and water to grow properly. They have regular daily use of the computer and use the mouse with skill. Children are developing a sense of time. They

talk about events that happened at the weekend and future events such as starting school and going on holiday.

Children take part in, and enjoy, a range of creative activities. They paint freely at the easel and experience a wide range of media and materials, such as, painting with different rollers, creating from recycled materials and experimenting with different paint techniques. They use the creative area well exploring what is available for them in the different containers and creating something special for themselves. Role-play and small-world games are readily available and help develop children's imagination. For example, using the puppets in the puppet theatre, selling ice-cream to the audience and making up stories for their own purpose.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a range of interesting activities through the year which help them to learn about the culture and beliefs of others. They enjoy and learn about festivals, such as, Chinese New Year and Diwali through a range of meaningful activities, such as, stories, creative activities, cooking and food tasting. They enjoy colourful posters and displays and make use of a range of equipment that promotes their knowledge of diversity, such as, puzzles, books, dressing-up items and role play resources.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported by the staff who have a good understanding of their needs and work closely with the parents and receive support from the area Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Children with English as an additional language are supported within the group. For example, a key person is allocated to help settle the children and the parents. However, activities such as story time are not organised well to be fully effective for these children. Children behave well and are praised by staff for achievements or helping to tidy the toys away. There are clear boundaries and expectations for children. Staff explain clearly how they expect the children to behave when using the climbing frame and why they should not throw the toys into the box when putting them away. Children are learning to share and take turns when using the glue sticks and waiting for their turn on the computer. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents speak positively about the setting and the good relationships enjoyed between staff, children and parents. Information for parents is shared through the notice board, parents' meetings, planning documents, parents' evenings and open afternoons. The group also provide a helpful information pack for parents which includes the policies and procedures for the setting. It explains about the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones and how parents can contribute to their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work well together as a team and demonstrate enthusiasm and keenness for their roles. They are appropriately qualified and experienced for their roles within the setting. Space is used effectively to provide different areas for different activities. However, the daily routine and environment is not sufficiently planned to provide thorough play experiences in all areas of learning. There are clear procedures to ensure that all adults looking after children are suitable to do so. Adults who have not received clearance are supervised at all times. There are clear contingency plans in place for dealing with staff absence.

Clear records show times of children's and staff attendance and demonstrate that appropriate ratios are always maintained. All regulatory records are kept, these are clear and stored confidentially.

The leadership and management within the setting are satisfactory. There is good two-way communication between the committee and staff and good working relationships are developing. Staff are clear about their role and responsibilities. Staff appraisals are carried out to identify staff areas of strength or training and development needs. They are given support from the committee to attend regular training and to take part in staff meetings to enable them to keep up-to-date with practice issues and increase their knowledge. Past weaknesses with safety have been a focus for improvement and this has been successful. However, the weaknesses within the organisation and delivering of the nursery education programme have not been identified. The group are supported by the local authority and have made their own informal links with the local school and other groups through training sessions. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection was judged to be inadequate. As a result of this, two actions for improvement were given and four recommendations. The actions were to: take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents; and to improve the use of time to minimise periods of waiting and to maximise learning.

Rigorous and effective risk assessments have been put in place to ensure that the premises, resources and any outings are safe and suitable for the children to take part in. The session has been organised more effectively to limit the amount of time children spend waiting for snack and washing hands and as a result they have more time for play experiences.

Recommendations given were to: further develop opportunities for the children's spoken language and for them to become familiar with written words in their environment; to use daily activities and routines to develop children's calculating skills and to use mathematical language; to develop opportunities for children to choose self-initiated activities; and to extend planning to monitor and meet specific individual learning needs across the six areas of learning.

Children now see displays with written words in all areas as they play. They are confident talkers, however, a further recommendation has been given to extend their opportunity to listen to others and be listened to.

Over time children have good mathematical experiences and some progress has been made within daily opportunities for using mathematical language. However, a recommendation has been given to further develop their use of counting and calculating through play experiences and daily routines.

Children have the ability to choose from a wide range of activities from the low level shelves, set out by the adults. They also ask staff for additional supplementary resources as they play, ensuring they are meeting their individual play needs.

Planning has been improved, regular observations are carried out and this information is used to highlight those children that need support or extension in a particular area, resulting in improvement in meeting their individual learning needs.

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 the 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):

- ensure effective systems are in place to monitor that all children are protected from the sun when playing outdoors.
- develop effective systems to ensure that each child including those with English as an additional language are included and have their individual needs met.

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 opportunities for children to count, calculate and recognise written numerals through daily routines and everyday play opportunities
- provide a range of opportunities through daily routines and play opportunities for children to link sounds and letters and realise that print carries meaning.
- further develop routines and group times to allow each child to be listened to and to learn to listen to others.

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