

# Abberley Hall Pre-Prep

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY305083
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<b>Inspector</b>	Valerie Fane
<b>Setting Address</b>	Abberley Hall, Abberley, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR6 6DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01299 896 101
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Abberley Hall School (602279)
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Nursery Education

## 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abberley Hall Pre-Prep was established in 1977 as part of Abberley Hall School, an independent school located near the village of Abberley in north Worcestershire. The nursery and reception classes are based in the self-contained pre-preparatory (pre-prep) school building with an adjacent enclosed outside play area as well as extensive grounds for outdoor play.

The school is open Monday to Friday from 08:15 to 15:30 for 33 weeks of the year. Out of school care is provided until 17:45 at night. A holiday club operates from 08:00 to 16:30 in school holidays. There are currently 47 children on roll in the Foundation Stage. Of these 29 children receive funding for nursery education.

Six staff and some volunteers work with the children. The six staff all have appropriate qualifications to Level 3 or above. The school receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

### Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

#### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a firm knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and understand the breadth of learning that children acquire from different activities. Staff identify children's starting points when they join the school through observations of their play and learning. Children take part in an interesting range of planned activities that cover all aspects of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Staff working with each age group plan appropriate activities and adapt their planning to meet the learning needs of the particular group of children. More able children make good progress because staff adapt activities to meet their needs and ensure that they enjoy appropriate challenges. For example, such children are encouraged to do more advanced phonic and written work.

Children behave well and become engrossed in their play and learning because staff in all classes provide well-resourced activities and free play opportunities. They manage their time well and make good use of questioning and spontaneous learning opportunities to extend individual children's learning. Children generally progress well because staff make regular observations, both written and informal, of their progress and use these to inform their 'learning journey' records of their time in the Foundation Stage. They evaluate activities and record how children respond to them. However, children's progress is not maximised because staff do not fully use the observations and evaluations to identify children's next steps in learning in different areas of the curriculum.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language make good progress because staff are alert to identify concerns and where appropriate they involve specialist staff from elsewhere in the school to agree the best possible support for such children. If children do not speak fluent English staff ask parents to provide useful words in the children's own language for staff to use to improve communication and help children learn English.

Older children thoroughly enjoy activities that increase their mathematical understanding of quantity. They choose a container and a label and read the words to find out how much they have to put in the container. They choose different materials such as lentils or pasta shells and use a spoon to try to put the right amount into the container. Staff extend children's learning through skilful questioning that makes children think about problems such as how they can turn a 'half full' container into 'nearly full'. They support less able children equally well and help them to understand the concept of half full. Children continue their learning through sand and water play. They begin to solve problems for themselves because staff ask open-ended question such as 'how are you going to fill that container?'. When they have filled a large container with water staff encourage them to find another container that would hold that amount of water. The children pour the water into a different large container and find that it is nearly full. Staff extend their learning because they encourage children to think about the weight of containers with different amounts of water or sand and to decide which ones are heavy and which are light.

Younger children develop their understanding of the sequence of a story through drama. They listen to a story and choose which character they would like to play. They put on appropriate dressing up clothes and staff re-tell the story while the children act. They pretend to be the handsome prince and the wicked witch who locks him up in the castle. The little girl comes to rescue him and finds a monster hidden in an egg who scares away the wicked witch so that the prince is free. Afterwards children are keen to continue to act out the story for themselves during free play.

Children make good use of the school grounds to extend their learning. Younger children go outside with a sheet of paper and a piece of sticky tape to collect objects. They find a variety of things such as grass, flowers and dirt and stick them on the paper. They practise mark-making skills with pens and crayons and draw something they have seen outside. They tell the staff what they have drawn and develop their awareness of the purpose of written words because staff label their drawings.

The four-year-olds enjoy looking at a box of sea creatures. They extend their vocabulary as they learn to identify animals such as lobsters and crabs and different body parts such as pincers. They use their senses in different ways because they listen to the sound of the sea in the large shells and they feel a dead starfish. They develop their understanding of nature as they talk about the reasons for the crab having a hard shell. Children are confident communicators and talk enthusiastically to staff about the creatures. They listen to instructions and choose some play dough and try to make a model of one of the creatures to put on display in their classroom. They develop independence in their dressing because staff encourage them to put on their own aprons. They describe the dough as they mould it and decide whether or not they have the right number of legs on their octopus.

Children of all ages develop physical skills through free play at break times and through structured physical education sessions. At play time they improve their balance and control as they ride a wide range of scooters and bikes. They practise ball skills such as kicking with good support from staff.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's individuality and self-esteem is celebrated because staff know children well. They are aware of their different personalities and place strong emphasis on building their self-confidence. Children from different cultures bring in items from home to share with their class and parents or relatives sometimes come into school to share their culture.

Children behave extremely well because staff are good role models and treat children with respect. For example, they ask them if they may have some of their play dough so that they can help another child with their model. Occasional instances of children's challenging behaviour are well-managed using effective strategies. For example, staff explain to children why they must not push other children off the rocker and help them to understand that they must wait for their turn. If children accidentally damage other children's construction models staff encourage them to help repair them. Older children learn to think about how they would feel about certain behaviour. For example, if they are not listening well the teacher asks them whether they want her to listen to them when they are talking.

Children have good opportunities to learn about other cultures because they enjoy themes such as 'foods from around the world'. They take part in an interesting range of activities as part of the theme. They taste noodles and try to eat them with chopsticks and they eat stir-fry, pizzas and croissants and record whether or not they like the food. They talk about the different countries, cut out pictures of the country from travel brochures, colour the flag and listen to stories about each country.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Children are secure in the school because their parents are well-informed about the provision. Parents receive a summary of the six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage as part of the initial prospectus and they are aware of current planning because this is displayed on the notice board for each class. Children in 'Nursery 2' are able to continue their learning at home because staff provide parents with a suggested activity for the current topic that children can do at home and bring into school to display in their classroom. Older children take home books to share with parents each night and have reading records and diaries for staff and parents to exchange information. Parents receive regular newsletters telling them about children's activities, written information about schemes such as 'Jolly Phonics' and they see displays of photographs around the school.

Children's progress and development is shared effectively with parents through both formal and informal methods. Parents receive a written report at Christmas, a written update at Easter and have a parents' evening in the summer term. Throughout the year they have regular conversations with the staff and they know that they can talk to them at any time to discuss anything of significance regarding their children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the funded children is good. Children thrive because the head of the pre-prep has a clear overview of the quality of nursery education provided in the Foundation Stage. She delegates the day-to-day running of the department to the well-organised head of nursery but maintains involvement through regular meetings with key staff and visits to the Foundation Stage unit so that she gets to know all staff and children. Children benefit greatly from the high ratio of very well-qualified staff working with them and the commitment of all staff to attend regular training to update their already good practice. Therefore children are able to embrace modern learning initiatives such as maths toolkits and 'Letters and Sounds'. Staff further improve their practice because they have opportunities to observe each other at work as part of the appraisal system so as to learn from one another's good practice. Staff work together closely as a team and have excellent relationships with each other.

Children benefit from ongoing improvements to the provision of nursery education. The senior staff both have a clear view of the strengths of the school and are committed to making ongoing improvements. They aim to ensure that children are happy, secure and inspired to learn and believe that children's security is enhanced because the same staff work with them throughout the week. They have responded positively to recommendations made at previous inspections. For example, the older children now enjoy a wide range of age-appropriate bikes and scooters that enables them to develop good pedalling, scooting and steering skills. Other recent initiatives include the introduction of 'Learning Journey' records and plans to extend the area used by 'Nursery 2' children.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **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):

- use observations of children's progress to identify their next steps in learning in different areas of the curriculum.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)