

# Abbey Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126948
<b>Inspection date</b>	03 July 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Lisa Jane Cupples
<b>Setting Address</b>	Christian Centre,, St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Minnis Lane,, Dover, Kent, CT17 ORF
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<b>Registered person</b>	Abbey Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Pre-School opened in 1989. It operates from St Peter and St Paul's Christian Centre in Dover, Kent. The pre-school has access to the main hall and an upstairs room, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. The pre-school serves the local area and surrounding towns. The pre-school opens four days a week during term time only. Morning sessions are from 08:45 to 11:45 on Monday, Thursday and Friday, with the option of a lunch time club until 12:45 on a Thursday and parents provide the children's packed lunches. Afternoon sessions open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:45 to 14:45, and the pre-school is closed on Tuesday.

There are currently 47 children on roll. Of these, 38 children are in receipt of funding for early education. Children attend a variety of sessions each week and have access to an outside play area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six staff working with the children and all of them hold an appropriate early year's qualification. Abbey Pre-school is an accredited pre-school with the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of healthy snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, during their time at the pre-school. Staff have a clear understanding of healthy eating and encourage the children to try new things. Children sometimes make their own snacks, for example, during the inspection they made bread. Children benefit from meal times because they are organised to be a real social event. The children sit together and chat with each other, talking about what they are going to eat, what they have been doing at home and what they plan to do for the rest of the session. Staff sit with the children to eat their lunch and actively encourage the use of good table manners, praising the children when they remember to say please or thank you. Staff find out about the children's allergies, medical, cultural needs and parental preferences through discussion about the information on the initial registration form. All staff are made aware of the children's individual needs ensuring they are catered for.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through discussion and daily routines. They are actively encouraged to wash their hands and use the soap and disposable paper towels independently. The pre-school provides steps to enable the children to reach the sinks, promoting their independence and developing their self-care skills effectively. Children understand why it is important to wash their hands, talking about 'washing away the germs', before lunch time.

Children will receive appropriate treatment if an accident occurs on the premises because there is always members of staff on duty who hold current first aid certificates. There is a fully stocked first aid kit stored on the desk and parents give written consent for the staff to seek emergency medical treatment or advice to ensure any delays will be minimised. Staff have a very clear understanding of the procedures to follow if an accident occurs on the premises. They keep detailed records and the parents sign to acknowledge the entries, however, the records are not recorded in a confidential manner at this time.

Children have many opportunities to develop their physical skills through a broad range of activities inside and outdoors. Children are able to practise balancing and climbing on the indoor climbing frame. They play safely and staff remind them of the safety rules. For example, children know they should climb up the ladder and go down the slide, not the other way round. Children are also allowed to take calculated risks as they learn about their own physical capabilities and test their skills. For example, some older children practise jumping from the climbing frame, the activity is well supervised and safety mats are used to ensure the children have a soft landing. This helps to develop the children's confidence and pushes their boundaries, providing appropriate challenges. Children ride wheeled toys with control and coordination outside, parking their numbered vehicles in the matching parking bays when they have finished riding them. They have good spatial awareness during physical activities, looking around to see where other children are and moving around to find their own space before the songs and rhymes begin. Staff ensure all six areas of learning are covered outside, enabling the children to use the resources and equipment in different ways, providing new experiences.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the good organisation of the space available, as they are able to move around freely from one activity to another. The hall is set up into areas of play and learning, so the children know where everything is. The premises are extremely clean and well maintained. Staff use notice boards to display the children's work, valuing their efforts and contribution to the group. Children have access to an extensive range of equipment, resources and play materials which are suitable for their age and stage of development. They are set up around the room on low tables, enabling children to access them independently, developing their freedom of choice and decision-making skills effectively. Staff arrive early to set up the hall, making it inviting and welcoming. Children are eager to see what activities are planned for the day and move around the hall with ease.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussions and routines. For example, children know they have to sit still when they are eating so they do not choke during lunch time. They are able to explain the fire drills, showing they are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. Children pick up toys and resources if they fall on the floor with little or no encouragement and tell others that they should pick things up 'so people don't get hurt', showing a growing respect for their own environment. Children's safety is promoted because staff are vigilant throughout the sessions and have a designated health and safety person within the team. Full written risk assessments are carried out and an alarm has been fitted to the hall doors, alerting staff when visitors arrive or if children attempt to leave the building.

Children's safety is promoted and they are safeguarded effectively because all staff have an extremely good understanding of child protection procedures. They would recognise the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and report any concerns to the relevant agencies. Parents are made aware of the setting's responsibilities through the policies. The policies include procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff, further ensuring the children are safeguarded during their time at the pre-school. Staff ensure all incidents and/or concerns are recorded in detail, however, if children arrive at the pre-school with existing injuries it is not recorded to further protect the children or the staff.

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

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and settled in the group. They forge strong relationships with the staff team and chat openly, sharing their own personal experiences. Staff have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and spend time observing the youngest children's play. They use the information to see where the children are, and plan a wide range of play experiences alongside their peer group and the main curriculum planning. Children are becoming competent learners as they try new things with the support of the staff team and their friends. For example, staff work with the children when they first attend introducing them to new materials such as play dough, glue and free access to the painting area. Staff introduce new vocabulary and repeat the words as necessary to consolidate the children's learning. They talk continually to the children, engaging them in purposeful worthwhile conversation, and encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas, developing their conversational skills well, helping them to become skilful communicators. All aspects of the Birth to three matters framework are included in the planning to ensure the children receive a broad and well balanced range of experiences, promoting their development across the board.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They make detailed observations of the children's progress and use the information effectively to identify the children's next learning steps. This is used to inform the short term curriculum planning, ensuring the daily activities and planned learning intentions reflect the children's individual needs. As a result, children are making very good progress in all six areas of learning. Children benefit greatly from the high quality interaction from the staff team. They sit with the children and are skilled at asking open-ended questions, encouraging the children to think about what they are doing and trying to achieve. For example, staff ask the children if they think they need more or less paint on the rollers to reach the desired effects during practical activities. Staff have a working knowledge of child development and are able to differentiate the planned activities and ensure the incidental learning opportunities reflect the children's age and stage of development. Staff are aware of the children's needs and strive to let them finish what they have started, giving them time to fulfil their ideas and thoughts. For example, at tidy up time two children were still finishing their pictures. Staff ask the children if they were nearly finished and allowed the children to finish their paintings before helping the other children to tidy away. As a result, the children left the activity with a real sense of achievement, and not unhappy because they were unable to complete the task in hand.

Children enjoy taking responsibility for the setting and their own environment. They wipe the tables ready for lunch and help to tidy away the toys. They pick things up if they fall on the floor and are beginning to show consideration for others, asking if they want to help or join in with them. Children listen carefully to stories with staff and later use the books to pretend to read to each other, recalling the stories from the pictures, showing an understanding that text has meaning. Staff introduce new vocabulary at every opportunity. For example, encouraging the children to describe how the natural materials feel. Children try out new words and staff encourage them, repeating them clearly to help the children practise pronouncing them. Children are extremely confident and talk openly with ease in large group situations such as registration time. However, staff do not always promote the children's listening skills and they often talk over the staff and each other, missing whole sections of the conversation or activities. Children are able to practise their emergent writing skills for a variety of different purposes during free-play and practical activities. Children make marks in the sand, form letters with the play dough and write shopping lists, messages, menus and receipts during their play.

Children count with confidence at every opportunity. They count each other, the number of chairs, cups and cars. They complete sequencing puzzles, one to 10 with ease and some children use their fingers to begin simple calculation. For example, working out how many more cups they will need at lunch time. Children recognise shapes and count the number of sides. Staff encourage the children to think about shapes in different concepts, introducing three-dimensional shapes through discussion and observation. For example, when children are talking about circles being round, staff ask if they can think of any types of food that are round. The children think for a while and then say 'apples'. This makes the experiences real for the children. Children have many opportunities to explore the world around them and use a wide range of natural and man-made resources, often discussing the similarities and differences. They use everyday technology and have access to a computer, although it is stored upstairs so the children are not able to access it on a daily basis, limiting their opportunities to consistently practise their skills.

Children have ample opportunities to express themselves during art and craft activities. For example, they have access to free painting materials and craft materials. Staff ensure the children are able to experiment and explore the resources, helping them to learn about the properties of the different media. Children use their imaginations extremely well when playing with miniature world resources. They talk about going on boats and the journeys they could take. For example, children discuss windy weather and feeling sick if you are on a boat when it goes up and down. Other children make up names and characters for the small figures they are playing with. Children are able to name the musical instruments and talk about the different types of sounds they make. They march in time to the music, shaking the rainmakers and tambourines and banging the drums. Children enjoy large circle games, such as, the 'farmers in his den'. Staff participate fully and enthusiastically, encouraging all the children to take part, ensuring the children have fun while they begin to learn about tempo and beat.

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

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. The whole staff team have a very clear understanding of equal opportunities and implement the policies effectively, ensuring the children are treated as individuals and their needs are being met. The pre-school has a designated equal opportunities person, who has attended training to further develop the staff team's awareness. Children learn about the wider world through a broad range of topics and themes, covering other cultures and festivals. They try foods from around the world, enjoy dressing up in international costumes, listening to music and using an extensive range of multi-cultural resources on a daily basis. Staff take the time to get to know the children and their families extremely well. The children feel valued and part of the group as the staff talk to them about their siblings and other family members. Staff talk to the parents and record the information on the children's registration forms, ensuring their needs are recorded and all staff are made aware.

Good systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language. The group has a designated special needs coordinator who has a very clear understanding of her role and the Code of Practice. She has developed strong links with other agencies and works closely with the parents to ensure all the children's individual needs are being met in the best possible way. Children behave exceptionally well because staff implement the clear rules and boundaries consistently. As a result, the children know exactly what is expected of them and they often remind each other of the rules. For example, children remind each other not to run in the hall and to be careful with the scissors. Staff are positive role models for the children and they praise the children for their efforts, for example, when they are helpful and when they follow simple instructions. Staff always take the time to thank the children and gently encourage them to use their manners at appropriate times. The pre-school has a named person responsible for behaviour management and the systems in place are effective, ensuring consistency with home for the children.

Children throughout the pre-school benefit greatly from the strong relationships between the parents and the staff. Lines of communication are open and free flowing, allowing information to be shared supporting the children during their time in the group. Parents are well informed about their children and are able to talk to their children's key worker at any time. Staff make good use of the notice boards and send out regular newsletters, helping to keep the parents informed about the setting and any forthcoming events. Parents know who their child's key worker is and are able to talk to them at any time. Staff organise welcoming events, such as,

open week and parents know they can visit at any time in line with the pre-school's open door policy.

The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for early education is good. Parents receive clear information about the pre-school and their aims and objectives. The short term curriculum planning is available on the desk for parents to see and key workers prepare individual play plans to share information about the children's next learning steps with the parents. They have access to their children's records at any time and are able to discuss their children's progress with the key workers. However, there are currently no opportunities for parents to make ongoing written contributions to the records about their children's progress or their learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's safety is promoted because the pre-school has robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place. All of the staff employed at the pre-school have been appropriately vetted, ensuring they are suitable to work with the children. Staff continue to update their training to further develop their knowledge and understanding in all areas of the pre-school for the benefit of the children. They attend in-house training, local workshops and short courses to ensure their practice remains current and in line with current regulations and requirements. Staff have a very clear understanding of the inspection process and complete an in depth self evaluation, which is ongoing to monitor the effectiveness of the group. Most of the required documentation is in place and maintained to a high standard.

Children are well supervised and supported throughout the sessions because of the exceptionally good staff deployment and the well-maintained ratios. Staff are vigilant and move around the hall to where they can see they are needed. For example, children were discussing what to make with the Duplo, a member of staff went over to facilitate the conversation before the children became frustrated with each other, further promoting their good behaviour and showing a good understanding of their individual needs. Sessions are well organised and run smoothly ensuring the children are busy and fully occupied throughout the day. Children are never left waiting around for something to do.

The leadership and management of the setting are good. The committee employs an extremely knowledgeable supervisor to oversee the day to day running of the group. She is very experienced and provides exceptionally high quality support for the staff team. Annual staff appraisals are used to monitor the staff team's contribution to the setting and training needs, strengths and weaknesses are identified. Staff also carry out peer observations to review their own practise and find this process extremely valuable.

The whole staff team take part in planning the nursery education curriculum for the children. As a result, they take real pride and responsibility for the activities that are provided, ensuring they effectively evaluate the use of resources, children's participation and planned learning intentions. Activities are revisited and resources are adapted until all children have gained the most from the activities, helping them to make very good progress across the board. The well-established and extremely experienced staff team work exceptionally well together to provide a nurturing, stimulating and vibrant environment for the benefit of the children. They are strongly committed to continually improving the quality of care and education for all children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure that all policies and procedures are in line with current guidance, to update the child protection policy and ensure there is a trained member of staff who is responsible for child protection issues. They were also asked to ensure there is a named member of staff who is responsible for behaviour management issues.

The pre-school have made good progress since the last inspection. The policies and procedures are continually reviewed to ensure they are current and up-to-date. Staff have completed training regarding child protection and members of staff have taken on the designated roles and responsibility of child protection, behaviour management, equal opportunities, special needs and health and safety, ensuring the children's needs are catered for and reflected in practice.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school was asked to improve the programme for creative development by providing more opportunities for children to recognise and explore how sounds can be changed using different instruments. To develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the learning objective of the planned and provided activities and to develop all sessions to include a small group time. They were also asked to continue to develop planning to include a broad range of practical activities linked to the stepping-stones, including the learning intentions and differentiation based on the children's identified next learning steps.

Staff now incorporate music activities into the sessions regularly and often use the room upstairs for more focussed activities with the children. They have access to musical instruments and take part in activities to record their music and listen to the different sounds the instruments make. Staff have attended training and have a very clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and stepping stones. As a result, they are fully aware of the planned learning intentions during the sessions and the curriculum planning includes all relevant information to ensure children are helped to reach their full potential during their time at the pre-school. Children take part in small and large group activities throughout the sessions, although, the children do not always listen when working in large groups.

## **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):

- ensure confidentiality is maintained when accidents are recorded
- develop and implement a system to record children's pre-existing injuries.

### **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):

- develop the children's listening skills during large group activities and provide more opportunities for children to use the computer to further develop their skills
- provide opportunities for parents to make ongoing written contributions to their children's progress records.

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)