

# ABC Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	129311
<b>Inspection date</b>	02/06/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Marriott

<b>Setting address</b>	Akeman St Baptist Church, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 6AA
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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

## Description of the setting

ABC Playgroup opened in 1976 and is managed by a committee of church members. The group operates from the Baptist Church Hall in the town centre of Tring, in Hertfordshire and is registered on the Early Years Register. The children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area. A maximum of 28 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings only from 09.30am to 12.00pm during term time only. There are currently 44 children aged from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these 28 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are nine members of staff, of whom, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup has a core group of volunteers who staff the kitchen. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The provision is outstanding. The mature and stable staff team have captured the true essence and spirit of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This playgroup is an exceptionally safe, secure and stimulating place to be for the very young children who attend and their individual needs are fully met within the clear Christian ethos and fully inclusive approach to care and education. Children make rapid progress in their learning and development and have tremendous fun in the process. Passionate, strong leadership and honest, realistic self-evaluation, secures the playgroup's excellent capacity for continuous improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing further, the educational programmes in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

## The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's care, learning and welfare is substantially enhanced by the clear vision of the playgroup management committee and the highly effective way in which the setting is led and managed on a daily basis. Security measures are superb and ensure the safety of children and staff. Visitors are always asked to produce identification and their presence is suitably recorded. Thoroughly detailed risk assessments are carried out visually on a daily basis and written assessments are devised for every area of the setting and for every type of outing. Regular practice of fire drills secures the safety of children and staff. Extremely effective links with

the parents and carers, together with other professionals involved in the care and education of the children, enables the pre-school to tailor activities to the individual needs of children in their care. All required documentation is readily accessible and effectively underpins the exceptionally safe and efficient management of the provision. Current safeguarding requirements are robustly met. The setting is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all children, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The leader is passionately committed to her vocation and receives enthusiastic support from her loyal staff team. The staff team present a corporate image by wearing lilac polo shirts and they hold a meeting before the start of each session to clarify roles and responsibilities and their aims and objectives for the children in their key worker groups each day. Continuing staff development is vitally important in this vibrant setting and the resultant enhancement of staff skills and knowledge contribute substantially towards the rapid progress the children make. Staff demonstrate an exceptionally high level of knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, thereby securing excellent learning and development outcomes for children. The leader discusses and consults with the staff team on a daily basis and together they devise strategies to support particular children and identify areas for improvement. Their resolute determination to drive improvement through development plans contributes significantly to the quality of care and education. For example, they are acutely aware of the differing learning styles of boys and girls and ensure that their differing needs are taken into account when planning the balance of daily activities.

The organisation of the daily routine ensures that staff are always available to give daily feedback to parents and carers about children's activities and progress. Parents and carers value this personal care and attention, which is effectively supplemented by parents consultation evenings and a written report at the end of a child's stay in the provision. Activities are evaluated daily and observational notes are recorded in an extremely manageable format to enable each key worker to track children's progress and identify the next steps in their learning. Exceptionally effective planning systems ensure that the next steps are collated and fed back into the subsequent week's plan. Consequently, the setting has developed exceptionally reflective practice to monitor the quality of provision for children, demonstrating the setting's outstanding capacity for continuous improvement. Nevertheless, the leader has identified that further development of the educational programmes in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework is practicable.

The playgroup makes every effort to work in partnership with parents and carers. Partnership working is reflected in the genuine efforts to strengthen links with other providers. Staff consult with other local nurseries to secure the best outcomes for children and staff from receiving schools spend time in the group getting to know their future pupils. The playgroup extends partnership working to other professionals outside the setting to support children with English as an additional language, specific needs and/or disabilities when appropriate. The evident commitment to inclusion is exemplified in the playgroup's approach towards staff as well as children. For example, a valiant team of volunteers support the staff with domestic tasks during each session. These individuals are provided

with tabards printed with the group logo to identify them as part of the team and the snack time routine involves the children listening for the squeaks of one of the volunteers pretending to be the 'kitchen mouse'.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children learn through exciting play that is facilitated through a carefully crafted educational programme. Activities are delivered at an excellent pace and there is always something exciting to choose so children develop an extremely positive disposition towards learning. The staff know that children learn best when they are relaxed, comfortable, secure and happy and so create a loving, stable environment, where children have time to experiment and develop their play. Staff are exceptionally sensitive in gauging when to interact and stimulate and when to hold back and leave the child to discover and learn for themselves. The playgroup makes outstanding use of the space available and views any difficulties as challenges to be overcome in the best interests of the children. The daily use of the church garden is admirable, together with the use of locally available and accessible resources such as the zoological museum and the town centre for promoting road safety awareness.

Children are provided with experiences and support which helps them to develop a positive sense of themselves and others. For example, staff arrange water play in the garden with lots of exploratory resources, the primary aim being to encourage free play with new friends. Children's emotional well-being is excellently supported through planned activities such as the use of the story of 'Daniel in the lion's den', to stimulate discussion about what makes us feel afraid or feel safe. Children demonstrate sustained concentration and a highly positive disposition to learn because exceptionally knowledgeable, dedicated staff make extremely imaginative use of a wide range of teaching techniques. For example, expert story telling skills are exhibited by some staff who use a whiteboard, voice intonation and mime to illustrate the biblical story of 'Daniel in the lion's den', told without the use of a book. Children are captivated by the passionate expressions on the faces of the staff who bring the story to life and convey real meaning to the children. Children focus equally well on the story of 'Hairy Macleary', told in a more traditional style, as they sit on rugs in shade of a tree at the end of the morning session.

Children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills are significantly enhanced in a broad range of practical contexts. Expert practice ensures that children count cups and bowls at snack time in a meaningful way and even the dismissal time at the end of the session is used to consolidate learning about calculating. For example, four children become 'sleeping lions' and two go home, leaving two behind. Children enjoy plentiful opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. Staff maximise the learning content of spontaneous activities initiated by the children. For example, children want to collect 'treasure' in garden and staff fetch buckets for them to make collections of natural objects such as leaves, sticks, fir cones, daisies and buttercups. They explore 'play food' on a rug in the garden, name the items and talk with staff about healthy eating. They look forward to next week's 'soft toy safari', when soft toys are hidden in the garden and the children

go out 'animal spotting' with binoculars. Children assemble harvest baskets, plant hyacinth bulbs as Christmas gifts and sing songs for elderly persons in the community.

Children experience a wide range of activities covering all areas of learning through the 'standard provision' which includes activities such as crafts, singing, story, music and movement, a role-play centre, small world play, construction, dressing up, sand and water play and play dough. This is supplemented with additional stimulating activities linked to the weekly theme. For example, children extend their musical skills, learning to clap out a rhythm whilst doing the 'Daniel Chant'. They act out the story of 'Daniel' and enjoy a quiz at the end of the week. Children's physical skills are developed on a daily basis. For example, a group physical challenge is set out in the garden and all children are invited to try their hand on the trampette, a tunnel, a circular balance beam and their choice of small apparatus including balls, bats, quoits, stilts and hoops. Staff gently and skilfully engage the children in tasks and throw balls for children to hit back with bats, praising their efforts and demonstrating genuine delight in children's achievements.

Staff maintain lively levels of interaction with children of all ages and effectively meet their daily care needs with dedication. Children are encouraged to adopt healthy habits such as washing hands, blowing noses, and putting tissues in the bin. This is managed by gentle and supportive encouragement increasing the child's independence and highlighting why these things are important. The group make inspired use of the key worker system, including home visits, fostering close relationships with parents and carers and use of observations. This gives the staff in-depth information about each child's ability to identify safety issues and to play and learn in safety and to support children's developing communication skills. Children develop good habits, become independent learners, develop collaborative skills, problem solving abilities, creativity and creative thinking because they are happy, relaxed, supported and challenged by this stimulating, age-appropriate environment.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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