



## Abbey Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126947
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Jennifer Scott

<b>Setting Address</b>	Vicarage Road, Minster on Sea, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 2HE
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<b>Registered person</b>	Abbey Playgroup
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care
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## 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 1991. It operates from a large community hall and can use a second smaller room occasionally. There is access to an outdoor area. It is situated in Minster, Isle of Sheppey. The pre-school serves the local community.

The setting opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:15 to 12:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

There are currently 32 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 21 funded 3 and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight staff working with the children, of these four have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The group are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) and are managed by a voluntary committee.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and tidy environment where there are appropriate routines to ensure toys, resources and equipment are clean and hygienic.

Children participate in routines, activities and topics that enable them to learn the importance of good hygiene and healthy living, for example notices encourage hand washing after children use the toilets. Children are also encouraged to wash their hands before eating snacks, as a result their skill in managing their personal hygiene is good.

The children are protected from infection by the good practice of staff. The record keeping and documentation ensures parents are informed of accidents and illness so that children's health is protected. The accident records do not currently promote confidentiality for individuals.

Children benefit from a choice of healthy food and drink at snack times when they enjoy a variety of fruits or cheese and crackers. They can also independently pour themselves a drink of water when they feel thirsty. This encourages children to develop healthy habits. Staff ensure that all food and drink complies with parental instructions and children's preferences, enabling them to have confidence in the choices offered.

Staff obtain consent for emergency treatment if they go on outings. This ensures children's welfare on outings in the event of a serious accident where parents and emergency contacts are not available. However, written permission to do this is not usually held, though staff feel it would be appropriate to do so.

Children move confidently and in a variety of ways. They are competent when using the bikes and cars, and show good co-ordination when jumping and running. However, the organisation of vigorous physical play is unconfined and can be disruptive to children participating in other activities. They enjoy opportunities to use stilts, a climbing frame and move enthusiastically doing action songs. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They are encouraged to select and use small equipment such as glue sticks to stick beads and sequins on decorated boxes. They benefit from using a selection of varied sizes of pens, crayons, felt tips and paintbrushes in everyday activities.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle well. They benefit from using the warm, clean, attractive and welcoming environment with displays of their work such as the 'Autumn' picture. This shows that staff value children's contributions.

Children have easy and safe access to a good range of toys and resources appropriate for their age and stage of development. Resources are used well by staff to meet the needs of the children, for example there is a system to allow two children to choose some resources each session.

Toys and resources are carefully selected and regularly checked to ensure they are safe and suitable for children to use. Children enjoy their play in a safe, secure environment and regular risk assessments, indoors and outdoors, ensure children's safety. For example, the car park is being resurfaced and has been assessed, there is a notice for parents instructing them where to park and walk safely.

Good staff interaction helps develop children's awareness of safety within the setting and when they go out. Clear procedures for outings ensure children's safety and helps children understand how to keep themselves safe when on outings. For example, when they visit the neighbouring museum, staff discuss steps, the handrail and the need to be careful.

Children benefit from good security of the premises which ensures they are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult. Staff are vigilant at all times and have a good understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire as drills are regularly practised. This ensures all children are aware of the procedures to keep them safe.

Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to be followed if they have concerns about child protection issues. This safeguards children's welfare in the setting.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of activities that are stimulating and well balanced for all ages and include quiet and active games. Children enjoy and learn from a varied range of activities and good quality, stimulating toys provide balance and challenge. However, the children under three years old do not yet benefit from a system to methodically observe, assess and plan their progress in all areas.

Children develop mathematical thinking by counting, using puzzles and discussing shapes such as stars. Children develop a healthy interest in books and enjoy stories. They benefit from staff reading and signing to them and asking good questions to develop their language skills. Children's creative and imaginative development is stimulated through activities such as art and craft, painting, singing, dancing,

role-play and dressing up.

Children enjoy and learn from a range of activities that allow them to explore and investigate, such as cooking, touching and feeling 'gloop'. Staff use good questioning techniques to stimulate thought and challenge children. Snack time conversations about food, birthdays and families develop their communication skills and confidence.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children relate very well to staff and some to each other. They confidently approach staff for support and have lively conversations with them, indicating good trusting relationships are built. Children are interested in the activities and spend time concentrating on self-chosen activities such as role play or painting. Children are developing respect for each other and for their environment through planned topic work and local visits such as that to the museum. Children help tidy away activities which encourages them to work together.

Children are delighted when the digger and heavy machinery can be seen from the windows as they are used in the car park. Staff recognise the value of this and join a small group, talking to them about the purpose of the machines and work being done. This practice acknowledges children's interests and enables them to share their excitement as well as promoting their cultural development.

Children speak confidently to their peers and adults. They talk openly during 'circle' and snack times when staff sit on each table and have conversations about their families and celebrations. This develops children's vocabulary and their confidence. Children are encouraged to write, but not all experience success because some methods are not compatible to children's stage of development and they are frustrated by their lack of skills.

Children count confidently and older children recognise numbers that are important to them. They discuss the weather and the date at each session. They choose number activities during free play and enjoy number rhymes and songs. Children use mathematical language during free play activities such as 'under' the sand, and they enjoy the role play using 'money', a till and a price list.

Children investigate using their senses. They discuss similarities and differences using natural objects such as leaves during the topic on Autumn. They learn about their environment through visits from Firemen and the Police. Children demonstrate cutting and joining skills when they select and use appropriate materials, such as paper, beads, sequins and glue to create attractive crafted items.

Children enjoy music and respond enthusiastically during music and singing sessions. They enjoy singing and acting out 'The wheels on the bus'. Children use their imagination and act out well-known scenarios during role-play. For example, the imaginative play area became a café and food shop with play food, a till, toy money, tables, a price list and aprons for waiters and staff support children when they want the play organised into an 'Ice cream shop'. This gives recognition and value to the

suggestions and ideas made by children.

Children benefit from practitioners knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Children are confident and secure as staff work together effectively, utilising daily opportunities to get to know the children well.

Children's assessments are plentiful and valuable during spontaneous play. However, the staff do not have a system to ensure there are regular and frequent observation and assessments to cover their progress in all six areas of the curriculum. Therefore the planning of activities is not fully informed by reliable assessments of children. Children are making good progress because the staff encourage their learning by providing appropriate activities related to the topics which they adapt to suit the needs of individuals. Children benefit from plans which encourage contributions to be brought in to support activities.

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

The provision is good.

All children engage in the activities and staff provide appropriate support. They know about children's religious and cultural needs and this ensures they can acknowledge varied cultures and provide recognition for individual children. Staff ensure they learn some words in children's home language to understand children's basic requests if they do not speak much English. One staff member can communicate using British Sign Language (BSL) and signs throughout story. This effectively encourages children to focus on the story and enhances the use of gestures to develop understanding. Children learn to respect others and staff provide sensitive support to ensure all understand the importance of accepting differences.

Children who have special needs are welcome to attend the setting and staff are developing provision so that they provide appropriate individual support and good liaison between parents and staff. There is access to the building for those with disabilities.

Children are confident and respond positively to staff when they are reminded about basic rules. They have good relationships with staff who encourage them through modelling polite behaviour and treating children with respect. For example, children are addressed by their names and requested to sit so that others can see the book at story time. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents do not contribute to an initial assessment of their child but exchange information verbally with the supervisor on registration, to ensure staff have appropriate knowledge of individual needs and achievements. This enables staff to build on what children already know.

Partnerships with parents are good. Children benefit from parent and staff consultations at coffee mornings when the records of children's progress are shared. Parents are aware that they can access children's records at any time during opening hours and they are provided with information about the curriculum. This supports children's learning as parents are informed about the progress of their children.

Regular newsletters inform parents, and act as reminders to children so that they can contribute items for discussion or to support their topic work. Good relationships with parents ensures children's individual needs are met.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

All the staff working in the setting have been checked and those who are not fully checked are not left unsupervised with children. This ensures that children are safeguarded. Children benefit from the support of several staff who are trained and qualified and who are enthusiastically increasing their skills and knowledge through courses and workshops.

Children are making good progress due to the effective organisation of space and of most resources. For example, there are clearly defined areas of activities, with the exception of some physical play.

Children's welfare is promoted through the use of appropriate records, policies and procedures; for example, there are registers for children, staff and visitors, accident and medication records.

Leadership and management are good.

Staff are enthusiastic about their work in the setting and keen to develop the provision further. This results in benefits to the children as staff attend training courses and use their ideas to improve the facilities and build good practice. Children benefit from the information shared with parents on the curriculum, such as leaflets, and the newsletters which outline learning topics. This encourages parents to contribute to their children's learning and development.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting was required to ensure that a committee was registered, that there was a list of all members, staff and others working or living on the premises, and to ensure there was a statement of procedures for emergency evacuation.

The group have made good progress in addressing the issues concerning the committee which they have established, and good procedures such as recording minutes. The children benefit from parents representing their needs on the committee and the lists of members who can be contacted. Children are safeguarded by the thorough procedures practiced for the evacuation of the building and the records kept of this.

The setting was also recommended to carry out frequent risk assessments to ensure that space is used effectively, and to develop ways of sharing documentation and records with parents and to improve procedures for appointing staff. Good progress has secured a safe environment for children where they use clearly defined space for

activities, with the exception of certain physical play. Children benefit from the availability of policies and procedures which parents can access, and the strategies for sharing records of progress at the coffee mornings. Procedures for appointing staff are being reviewed and developed.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was requested to address several key issues. These concerned the organisation of activities so that children were challenged in all areas of the curriculum and that activities were evaluated. Children now experience choices which are planned and which interest and challenge them as well as the benefits from staff evaluations. One example of this is the re-organisation of storytimes so that children maintain their interest and are aware of expectations. Staff have participated in training as requested, and, as a result, the quality of children's experiences has been improved. The setting has successfully implemented choices for children so that they can independently access the toilets, drinks of water, and choices at snack times.

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

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since the last inspection. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which can be seen 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 the use of a system, such as the Birth to three framework to work with children under three years old
- ensure that children engaging in vigorous physical play do not disrupt children participating in other activities

#### **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):

- review planning so that children experience an appropriate variety of activities to encourage their literacy skills
- develop a system to ensure that children are assessed methodically and that these assessments inform the planning of activities and routines

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