



ABC Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509798
Inspection date	18 October 2005
Inspector	Deborah Ann Benn
Setting Address	St. Peter's Church, Goresbrook Road, DAGENHAM, ESSEX, RM9 6VP
Telephone number	020 8984 8999
E-mail	
Registered person	Annette Twomey
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?

ABC Pre-School is a privately run group and has been registered since 2000. It operates from the church hall located next to St Peters Church and serves the local area of Dagenham. The group uses the main church hall, which has additional toilets and kitchen facilities. A fully enclosed outside play area is adjacent to the main hall and available for outside play.

There are currently a total of 42 children on roll, with a maximum of 26 in attendance

at each session. This includes 3 funded three year olds, there are currently no four year olds attending.

Children attend for up to five sessions a week. The group supports a number of children with special educational needs and disabilities. At present none of the children attending have English as an additional language.

ABC Pre-School is open five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:00.

A minimum of five staff are present at any one time. There are six members of staff in total working with the children with an additional member of staff employed to provide cover when needed. The managers are both qualified in childcare and education to NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) level 3 and are taking additional training in management to NVQ level 4. Two other members of staff are also qualified and two are currently on training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment. Staff have developed good routines to ensure that the areas used by the children are kept clean and appropriately stocked. Tables are wiped between activities and the floor swept daily and additionally as necessary. Staff check the toilets regularly to ensure they are kept clean and appropriately stocked. Children's welfare is promoted, the majority of staff hold current first aid certificates and appropriate systems are in place to ensure that knowledge is kept current and the first aid box appropriately maintained.

Children are beginning to learn about the importance of keeping themselves healthy as staff remind them of the importance of washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Appropriate resources are in place to limit cross infection such as wet wipes being available beside the tissues for staff to wipe their hands if they assist a child to blow their nose.

A recently implemented menu with substantial snacks which provide variety and include a choice of fruit as well as things such as toast, pancakes or noodles, is helping to promote healthy eating, although this is not yet fully utilised as a way for children to learn. Children choose from water or fruit squash at snack time and are able to access fresh water throughout the session. Children are able to take part in vigorous activities on most days. They have frequent use of the playground to take part in large physical activities such as using tricycles and taking part in games with hoops and balls. Children take part in activities such as bead threading and using tools in craft activities, with increasing control and accuracy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children move freely around the safe environment both in the main hall and the playground, well supervised by staff who are aware of their roles. Good use of accessible storage units means that children are able to make choices and extend their play safely by varying the type of construction toys available, and adding to role play equipment being used; although the system is not fully exploited in the graphics area. Children understand about the need to use equipment appropriately, such as reminding each other not to climb up the front of the slide because someone may get hurt. They understand that rules and routines help to keep them safe and sensibly walk back into the room as a "train" or similar when they are taken out to the toilet so that no one is left behind.

Regular checking of equipment and premises means that a safe environment is maintained, appropriate systems are in place to communicate maintenance needs.

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and local procedures which are reflected in the policies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well into the group and swiftly become confident in the routines. They enjoy their activities and interact well with staff and each other, building positive relationships with them. Children show excitement when they recognise a favourite story book and anticipate the story with glee. Children benefit from the daily routine, allowing them time to play independently and with their peers as well as enjoying opportunities to work more directly with staff through activities such as craft and discussion about textures.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's attitude to learning is positive, they take part in activities with confidence and make choices about their play with appropriate support from staff. They generally concentrate well during routine activities such as snack and circle time. Although sometimes the group is too large for story sharing and the younger children disrupt the older children's concentration. Children initiate their learning, for example developing imaginary games as they pretend to take their "babies" shopping, encouraging each other to take on roles and to participate.

Children enjoy using the graphics area and are beginning to hold pencils and crayons with control. However, resources are not well displayed and do not encourage children to participate fully. The use of a note pad and pencil with the telephone in the role play area helps them to begin to see the different uses of writing, although they are not encouraged to write their own names on their work. Children identify their own names through the use of letter cards, colours and shapes but the lack of labelling and use of print within other play activities, limits children's understanding that the written word carries meaning.

Children work together to build models with the construction toys, creating their own buildings and using them with other toys such as cars, to develop their games. They are using comparative and positional language within their play such as stating that they are up high when at the top of the slide and down low at the bottom. They compare weight and measurement as they play with sand, playdough and take part in cooking activities. Children are beginning to learn about the natural world as they gather leaves and other items for collage work, look at mini beasts and plant and care for seeds.

Children enjoy a range of activities and experiences that satisfactorily cover the areas of learning because the staff team have a sound knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum. Plans link closely to the stepping stones to the early learning goals and children's individual assessments are used to affect planning and help them to progress. Focussed activity sheets act as prompts to staff to encourage extension of activities and language, however these are not fully utilised and therefore teaching is not consistent.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident, they value themselves and each other for example they enjoy clapping their friends when they are awarded a sticker as well as receiving one themselves. They show concern for each other, the more able and confident children offering to pour drinks for the others. Children are encouraged to make choices, the use of a choosing board and props for songs means that even children with limited language or who are very shy are able to make choices and contribute to the group. Small group outings help children to find about their local community and they begin to learn about different cultures through craft, stories and food as they celebrate world festivals such as Eid and Chinese New Year. This positive approach helps to foster children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Children are appropriately supported as they learn to manage their own behaviour. They respond well to the daily routines and understand the time frame of the session. The use of praise and stickers is enhanced by staff confirming to each child what they have done well.

Children benefit from the friendly informal relationships between staff and parents, which is further supported by the implementation of a key worker system. Parents support fund raising activities and are kept well informed about events and projects through the use of newsletters and a notice board, although specific information about the Foundation Stage and the curriculum provided is limited. Parents find staff approachable, they feel welcome and comfortable in the setting and particularly appreciate the encouragement and attitude of staff when first settling their child.

The partnership with parents who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are invited into the setting regularly to discuss their child's progress with their key worker, and are aware that they may see their child's file at any time. However they are given very little information about how to further support their child's learning at home.

Children with special educational needs are appropriately supported, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator works closely with key workers and special needs professionals from the local authority, to devise individual educational plans. The use of Rebus symbols and Makaton signing is being developed to support all children's communication.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are well deployed, a clear rota helps to ensure that the running of the session is well organised ensuring that children are secure and happily engaged in activities. The staff work well as a team and children's learning is promoted through satisfactory leadership and management of nursery education. The provider has developed and recently implemented a number of strategies to monitor the teaching and confirm that all areas of the curriculum are being delivered. The whole staff team are encouraged to attend training and workshops. A staff appraisal system has been formalised to better support staff and identify training needs. The provider and joint manager lead the curriculum planning but input is encouraged from the whole staff team who feed in their observations of individual children. As a result, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging because the manager and key workers work with parents to ensure they have a good knowledge of the children's individual needs and family circumstances.

Although all current staff members have been appropriately vetted and employment processes are sound, the provider has not yet responded to recent changes in the law. There is no system in place to carry out Criminal Records Bureau checks on new members of staff.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspections carried out in 2002, a number of areas for improvement were agreed in relation to safety, learning and care. The provider has addressed all of these and substantially improved the care and education for the children attending.

The curriculum has been reviewed and revised and all activities are now closely linked to the areas of learning with a clear awareness of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. An effective key worker system has been introduced and the key workers' observations are used to ensure that planning takes account of children's individual development.

The amount of books and resources reflecting different cultures has been increased and the celebration of festivals has been widened to include awareness of different faiths. Staff have attended training in behaviour management and systems have been introduced to support positive encouragement, such as the use of stickers. The child protection policy has been reviewed and now includes a procedure in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

New storage units have been introduced which children are able to access easily to make their own choices of equipment and activities and use to develop and extend their play. Daily checks are carried out to ensure that equipment is safe and systems in place to ensure these are maintained. Risk assessments are carried out and areas of concern identified, appropriate temporary systems are in place to prevent children accessing the drains in the playground. The medication policy has been developed, parents sign this and systems are in place to make sure that parents countersignature is gained when medication is administered. Good systems are in place to ensure the first aid box is maintained and the person responsible for replenishing kept informed.

Complaints since the last inspection

In April 2004 Ofsted received a complaint regarding staff attitude and suitability. Ofsted required the registered person to investigate and make a written report of her findings. The allegations of concern were not substantiated and it was found that the National Standards were met. No further action was taken and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- update the procedures for recruitment and employment by developing a procedure for obtaining CRB disclosures for staff

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):

- improve children's opportunities to learn that the written word carries meaning by making more use of labelling and print within play activities and better organising the resources in the graphics area
- encourage and enable parents to be more actively involved in their child's

education

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk