



Abberley Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205264
Inspection date	27 January 2006
Inspector	Rachel Wyatt
Setting Address	Abberley Village Hall, Abberley, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR6 6AY
Telephone number	07742615355
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Registered person	Abberley Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Abberley Playgroup opened in 1992. The group operates from the village hall in Abberley, Worcestershire and serves the local area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The setting is open from 09.00 until 15.00 on Mondays and from 09.00 to 12.00 on Wednesdays and Fridays during term time only. There is a fully enclosed adventure play area. Children are also being introduced to Forest School activities.

There are currently 19 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. This includes 12 children who receive nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Support is available for children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four part-time staff. Three of them have or are working towards a relevant early years qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the Local Authority. Representatives from the group attend local early years partnership and provider meetings. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance, and has close links with the local parent and toddler group and adjacent primary school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are looked after in a satisfactorily maintained and cleaned premises. Staff ensure surfaces are wiped between activities and before snack times. Children are becoming independent in seeing to their toileting and hand washing. Toileting aids such as stands and toddler toilet seats are provided. These are not particularly clean and are not always placed in situ to help children's easy access to the toilets. Children who need help are accompanied and staff supervise children's hand washing before snacks or lunchtimes. The comfort of those in nappies is maintained through appropriate nappy change routines.

Children are making good progress in dressing themselves for outside play. They put on over-trousers and coats, often attempting fastenings. Changes of clothes are available to ensure children's comfort. During topics children learn about parts of the body and keeping themselves healthy. They discuss care of teeth and hair as part of an 'Ourselves' theme. Through various activities focussing on food they develop an awareness of different ingredients, tastes and customs.

Children take part in regular physical play. They are energetic and many move, balance and climb with control and confidence. Inside they regularly use trikes, wheeled toys, a trampoline, rocker and a climbing frame with a slide. The recently developed outdoor play area gives children a flat surface to play on, plus access to sturdy wooden play equipment. They confidently use the scramble net, climbing frame and slide combination, large play boat and balancing beam and stepping stones. Opportunities for older children to attend Forest School activities in the summer gives them the chance to explore woodland, learn about safety and practise new skills.

Should children require medication or have an accident, appropriate procedures are in place to ensure information is recorded and appropriate treatment given. Parents sign medication dosage or accident records and receive a copy. They are informed of the setting's health and hygiene procedures from the outset, including the group's policy on the exclusion of children who are unwell.

Children have a good morning snack of toast with a drink of squash or milk. Children attending the one full day session bring their lunch and have a piece of fruit for their afternoon snack. Drinks of water are available throughout sessions, although children have to ask for these rather than help themselves. Snack and lunch times are relaxed and sociable. Children sit together in small groups, chatting to each other. They use plastic knives to spread jam or honey on their toast and at lunch time children manage the contents of their lunch boxes well. An adult sits with them and they are given time to finish. Children confidently clear away snack and lunch time rubbish and put their plates and cups on a tray.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Provision for children's safety within the building is satisfactory. Effective procedures are in place to ensure outdoor play equipment and electrical and fire equipment have statutory checks. However, not all low-level electrical sockets are inaccessible to children and sometimes the location of toilet training aids can impede children's access.

Children have a good understanding of the importance of safe behaviour. They discuss safety of tools and other issues during activities. At snack time children are learning to use plastic knives correctly, talking about possible consequences of their misuse. Emergency arrangements ensure that children and staff know what to do if they need to leave the building. Children and staff practise evacuations regularly.

Children are safeguarded as the setting ensures relevant checks are carried out on all personnel involved in the running of the group. Staff have attended child protection training. Access to the premises is monitored and the outside area is securely fenced. Collection arrangements ensure that children go home with the appropriate person.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy being at playgroup. They particularly like physical and imaginative play and often concentrate well on table top activities such as craft or artwork, play dough making or food preparation, and threading or mark making.

Children are sociable and eager to chat to their friends or adults. They often play cooperatively together. Most children are happy to take the lead in 'show and tell' sessions. They all like to help with small tasks such as counting the numbers of children present or clearing away their snack time cups, plates and knives.

Adults sensitively join in children's role play and many other activities. Their helpful explanations and introductions to new resources, such as artefacts and posters to illustrate Chinese New Year, help to engage children's interest. The close proximity of domestic play equipment, dressing up items and a tray of pasta alongside the

table of Chinese resources stimulates children's involved play.

Sometimes, however, the organisation and layout of activities or toys does not encourage children's attention. They tend to visit the book area only when an adult is present. During ball games children find it difficult to master using a bat or to catch a ball, as balls provided are cumbersome and adults do not always assist in teaching new skills. Free play activities are largely unchanged between different sections of the sessions. This can limit children's choices and inhibit challenge. At other times, for example during focus activities, children do benefit from being grouped according to ability. This means that younger or less able children in particular can join in appropriately adapted activities that their peers are also engaged in. This encourages their confidence and pride in their achievements.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are sociable and friendly, often enjoying the company of friends as they play or during snack and meal times. Their independence is growing as they help to tidy away items and they are becoming more adept at getting dressed for outside play, putting on coats, waterproof trousers and outdoor footwear. They concentrate on some activities quite well, such as role play, cookery or other focus activities, encouraged by the adults' sensitive input and appreciation of children's individual interests.

Children enjoy mark making. Regular access to pencils, crayons, paper and clipboards, including the use of role play scenarios such as an 'office' encourage their involvement. Children talk about the letter of the week and they are adept at recognising their own names. They also enjoy participating in snack time and circle time discussions. However, children's spontaneous appreciation of print is inhibited as there are few examples displayed. Children listen and contribute to group-time stories but they rarely visit the book area without an adult being there.

Children enjoy counting in practical situations such as checking how many are present. They refer to the number line which is displayed in the area used for circle time. Some children take part in simple number operations or match and sort items according to number and colour. They enjoy using tape measures put out with construction play and compare their own height measurements with that of the adult joining in.

Children are interested in how tools and equipment work. The inclusion of interesting artefacts or realistic domestic play items, such as a microwave or till, enriches their play and promotes some awareness of technology. They fix different construction pieces and materials together well. They especially enjoy regular cooking activities and making play dough. Children handle tools, such as plastic knives and scissors, with growing confidence and skill. Adults encourage their safe use but are flexible regarding the expected outcome. Consequently during a Chinese lantern making activity all children have a go at cutting out and gluing their lantern shape. The adults sensitively encourage and guide children as they use scissors, so that everyone achieves a 'lantern'. Children and adults are all delighted with their efforts.

Children are energetic and enjoy the opportunities for both indoor and outside

physical play. They are confident and adept when using the adventure play equipment. They are competent at using wheeled toys but at times lack of variety or adult input means that these skills are not extended. Children are unsure how to manage bats and balls, and lack control in throwing and catching due to limited guidance from adults.

Children enjoy role play and dressing up. Staff are good role models as they join in children's play but without taking over. Children's often sustained imaginative play is also encouraged by the layout of relevant toys or equipment, such as placing different construction items alongside the 'work bench' and tool kit. However, they spend less time playing with small world toys.

Children experience an appropriate range of topics and themes planned by the staff. Long term plans include relevant learning objectives which allow for progression, but these are not consistently followed through into short term plans. This means that staff are not always sure of the learning intentions of activities. Children's progress is monitored via informal observations and ongoing assessments of specific skills. However, the outcomes of these are not routinely incorporated into short term plans. Therefore it is not clear what children will learn, or how they will be helped to progress in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals or their own specific learning needs. Consequently, at times, children lack support to enable them to master or consolidate skills, whilst more able children's ideas and skills are not consistently extended. However, at other times children benefit from learning in their key worker groups when staff adapt activities or approaches more successfully to suit individual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual care needs and interests are positively acknowledged by staff. Children develop confidence and self-esteem as staff encourage their contributions and ideas, for example during colouring and craft activities. Children's awareness of other people's lives is fostered through discussions, craft activities and role play. Realistic artefacts help children to appreciate aspects of Chinese New Year. Whilst there are some books featuring relevant real-life experiences and positive images of diversity, the organisation of the book area does not encourage children to refer to these.

Children with special needs have effective support. Staff work with parents and other professionals to help children to be involved in the group's activities and to make progress. Children's individual targets are realistic and have a positive impact, especially on their ability to relate to and to communicate with others. The effective grouping of children during some activities means that staff can give one to one support to those who need more help to concentrate or to master a particular skill.

Children are settled and generally well behaved. They understand about listening and sitting quietly during group times and story time. They usually relate well together, playing cooperatively, taking turns and sharing, for example during

construction and role play. They like to be helpful, assisting with clearing away after snack or lunch times, tidying up some toys and assisting with checking who is present. Staff are calm and patient and follow up agreed strategies for managing individual children's behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents take an active role in the running of the setting. The committee have specific roles which they understand due to good handover arrangements and a clear shared vision about what they want to achieve. Parents also make a valuable contribution to the running of sessions. They settle their children, assist with specific activities such as music and help on the parents' rota. Clear guidance on their role on the parents' rota ensures parents get involved in activities and take a key part in organising popular snack times. Information in the prospectus is helpful and introduces parents to all aspects of the group. However, displays and information are not used to their best advantage to ensure parents are fully familiar with the ethos of the 'Birth to three matters' framework or the Foundation Stage.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Information about the Foundation Stage in the prospectus is user-friendly. Whilst further information about the nursery education provision is available in the setting it is not clearly presented to attract parents' attention. Parents also receive newsletters about forthcoming events, specific activities and term dates. The committee intend to develop this to include more information about topics so that parents can be better informed about their children's activities and experiences.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a consistent staff team. They have positive relationships with the children, who are familiar with their surroundings and settled. Sessions generally run smoothly and routines are relaxed and unhurried. In some respects children do not always get the most out of activities as they are not sufficiently inviting or challenging but in the main their enjoyment is enriched by the adults' input.

Children's care and play benefits from the active involvement of the group's management committee. Within the last twelve months the committee, staff and parents have completed a project to create an enclosed, well equipped outdoor play area. Children really enjoy using this and have grown in confidence and ability in managing more challenging physical play equipment. An enthusiastic new committee is now working closely with staff and parents to further develop the setting with plans to promote staff development and training, to enhance the provision for younger children and to provide additional toys and resources.

Documents support the children's care and an appropriate set of policies reflect the setting's practice. However, though these are reviewed periodically, they have not been updated to reflect changes to the National Standards. This means that parents are not fully aware of their rights or of the group's responsibilities regarding suitability, complaints and sharing information about inspections.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provision are satisfactory. The committee's interest and involvement in sessions supports the staff and enables parents to take an active part in their children's play and learning. The committee are working with staff to monitor and review planning and curriculum content in order to address weaknesses in short term planning. Other initiatives to develop equipment and resources will also benefit children's nursery education provision. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last day care inspection the group agreed to recommendations relating to vetting procedures, staff induction and training, record keeping and policies, including the complaints policy.

Children's safety and well-being are supported through the group's now appropriate vetting and induction procedures. Staff attend relevant short courses and unqualified staff are working towards appropriate early years qualifications.

Staff are familiar with the setting's recording systems and procedures so that any matters relating to children's health or safety are correctly documented. Whilst the complaints procedure includes information about contacting Ofsted, more recent revisions to the National Standards have not been incorporated so parents are not fully aware of their rights should they have a complaint, so this remains an area for improvement.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to three key issues relating to children's mathematical development, short term planning and the quality of information shared with parents regarding the Foundation Stage.

Children's counting and appreciation of number are promoted by the regular use of a number line and various resources which facilitate their matching and sorting skills. Other practical strategies, outlined in the action plan, such as outdoor number games have yet to be introduced. The use of displays to support children's understanding in all areas of learning remains an area for improvement.

The second key issue relating to planning has been met in part. During key worker activities, children are usually grouped appropriately which ensures suitable support, particularly for those who are less confident or able. However, in other respects short term plans continue to lack detail regarding children's differing learning needs and how these will be met. This results in missed opportunities to build on and develop more able children's skills and is not always clear how less able children's learning needs will be incorporated in activities. This remains an area for improvement.

Parents receive helpful information about the Foundation Stage in the prospectus. The group also intend to include more information about topics in the newsletters. Other information about weekly plans and certain activities, such as the letter of the week, are available but are not presented in a way that is obvious to parents, so they are unsure how they can contribute. This remains an area for improvement.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve the organisation of hygiene routines so children can use toileting aids that are clean and safely situated
- improve the layout and organisation of activities and the book area, so these are inviting, appropriately resourced and adapted in order to sustain children's interest, develop their skills and encourage both their independent and shared use
- update relevant policies so they reflect changes to the National Standards regarding suitability, complaints and informing parents about inspections, and ensure staff and parents are aware of these.

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 use of displays and print in the environment in order to enrich children's play and learning
- develop planning to ensure relevant, clear learning outcomes are in place showing how children will progress towards the stepping stones and early learning goals, and to demonstrate how children's differing learning needs are accommodated
- ensure parents are well informed about the nursery education provision so

they know about and are able to contribute to topics and activities.

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