



Abbotts Ann Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109664
Inspection date	15 March 2006
Inspector	Anne Munro / Penny Wood
Setting Address	War Memorial Hall, Abbotts Ann, Andover, Hampshire, SP11 7BG
Telephone number	01264 324734
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Registered person	Abbotts Ann Nursery School
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?

Abbotts Ann Nursery School opened in 1983. It is a sessional preschool run by a voluntary management committee and operates from the War Memorial Hall in the centre of the village, approximately three miles outside of Andover. The preschool has use of the main hall, kitchen, toilets and a secure outside play area.

The preschool opens from 09:30 to 12:00 on 5 mornings a week during school term times. It is registered to provide 24 places for children aged between 2 and 5 years.

Children come from a wide surrounding area and attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 27 children on roll, including 18 in receipt of nursery funding. The preschool supports a small number of children with special needs.

There are four members of staff working with the children, two of them with early years qualifications and two working towards a recognised qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing good levels of independence in their personal care. They have easy access to the toilets and learn to wash their hands after messy activities and before snacks. They are protected from the spread of infection by the staff's careful attention to good hygiene practice, particularly in disinfecting surfaces before use. The premises are clean and well maintained. Appropriate policies and procedures are shared with parents and implemented consistently by staff to ensure that sick or injured children are cared for effectively. Staff have up to date first aid qualifications and maintain accurate records to support children's welfare. Beanbags and a quiet area are available for children who need to rest. Children's health is promoted through the provision of nutritious snacks. Children are able to choose from a variety of fruit, breadsticks or crackers, helping themselves from the snack table when they are ready and pouring their drinks independently. They record their choices on a board so that staff are able to monitor their intake. Staff are aware of any allergies or special dietary requirements and ensure that food provided is appropriate.

Children have plenty of safe space for physical activity inside and outdoors, although planning is not sufficiently detailed to ensure that all children make progress in their physical development. Children enjoy a range of physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle, including walks to explore the local area. They develop spatial awareness steering ride on toys around the outside area and playing action games inside. They use a climbing frame, balancing beams and parachute games to develop physical control and co-ordination, and practise skills with small equipment such as beanbags, balls and hoops. Children benefit from a good range of activities that promote their manipulative skills. They become skilful in using pencils, crayons and scissors, and enjoy modelling with dough, threading beads and playing with small world toys such as a farm set and dolls' house.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well-maintained, clean and safe environment. The layout of the playroom has been well planned with separate areas for different types of play,

for example a role play area, art and craft table and construction mat. Although activities are changed, the layout remains the same each day so that children are confident and know where to find things. They are able to choose resources from child height storage units and to help keep their environment tidy. They have access to a very good range of good quality toys and equipment which is regularly checked and updated. Staff carry out regular risk assessments and safety checks in order to protect children. They have taken precautions to minimise risks, such as fitting socket covers, preventing children's unsupervised access to the kitchen and clearing debris from the outside play area daily. Evacuation procedures are displayed and practised termly so that staff are aware of their responsibilities and children develop confidence and understanding. Children learn to take responsibility for their own safety, for example, not climbing on to the stage and wearing safety helmets on bikes. Children's welfare is further protected by clear policies and procedures for child protection. Some staff have undertaken training but not all are confident about procedures to be followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enter preschool confidently and settle quickly into familiar routines. They form positive relationships with staff and play well alongside other children. Children are interested in the range of activities prepared for them and are able to concentrate and persevere for long periods at their chosen activities. Staff do not always notice children who are unoccupied or hesitant, and do not monitor individual children's choices sufficiently to ensure that they experience a variety of activities. Generally children are confident in making choices and are developing good levels of independence.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are developing their knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and plan a good range of activities to promote children's learning. They maintain accurate records of children's achievements and generally have good understanding of the capabilities of the children in their keyworker groups. The information is not well used in planning to ensure that the varying needs of individual children are met. There is often insufficient challenge for the more able children, particularly in the areas of maths and physical development. Children become very confident speakers as staff engage them in conversation throughout activities, although some opportunities are missed to use questioning to develop children's learning. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Their ability to concentrate and be involved in story telling is hampered by cramped conditions in the book corner which sometimes lead to restlessness and distraction. Children enjoy a variety of activities that encourage them to develop their pencil skills. They learn to form some recognisable letters and are helped to write their names on their work. They learn to recognise their written names, finding name cards for registration and at snack time and finding their names on coat pegs and work drawers. They are introduced to other written words as staff label their displayed work. Most children are confident in counting, but opportunities

are limited for using calculation in daily routines or for recognising numerals. Children enjoy interesting activities exploring shape and pattern, for example walking in the local area to look at shapes in the environment, such as road signs, windows and wheels, and use a good variety of equipment for sorting and matching. They design and build with construction toys and use a computer to support their learning. They learn about their environment on local outings and from visitors to the group. Children are introduced to other cultures. For example during Chinese New Year children tasted Chinese food, made dragon pictures and lucky bags. They discover the changes that occur when they mix ingredients and cook biscuits. They explore colour and texture with a range of craft materials and techniques and are able to express their own ideas within their art work. They use imagination in their play, making up stories as they play with the farm set or dolls' house, and enjoying dressing up for role play. Overall children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show increasing levels of confidence and independence. They interact well with adults and with other children, learning to take turns and to share. Staff liaise with parents and other professionals to ensure that children with special needs are included and their needs addressed. They use praise and encouragement to promote children's self-esteem and reward their good behaviour, but are not consistent in their management of unwanted behaviour so children are not always sure of the boundaries. Children celebrate festivals within their own cultural traditions and learn about those of other cultures. They play with a good range of resources that reflect positive images of culture and disability. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good information about the group and about the foundation stage curriculum in a comprehensive prospectus. They are kept informed about activities and events through newsletters and notice boards, and are invited to contribute resources and practical help. Parents join in social and fundraising events and play an active role in the management and development of the preschool. They are able to discuss their children's progress with their keyworkers at any time and are confident in raising any issues. They receive regular written reports and are invited to formal parents evenings to discuss progress, contribute their observations and agree the next steps for development. Communication is encouraged and parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning, so that children benefit from consistency and continuity.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children make good progress in a well-organised environment with a very good range of resources. Thorough recruitment and employment procedures have been introduced

which ensure that children are cared for by a competent and committed staff team, with appropriate qualifications and experience. Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin the smooth running of the group, effectively safeguarding children's welfare. Leadership and management of the preschool are good. A strong management committee is actively involved in the daily running of the group and continues to monitor and evaluate its development, planning for continued improvement. Formal staff induction and appraisal systems are in operation and staff are supported in updating their skills and knowledge with ongoing training. Strong leadership from the manager, with regular staff meetings, ensures that staff are effectively deployed and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. The manager works alongside the staff and is aware that there are some inconsistencies in practice to be addressed, particularly in the implementation of behaviour management and child protection policies.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the quality of care provided for children was judged as inadequate. The preschool was required to produce an action plan for meeting staff qualification requirements, to request parents' permission for seeking emergency medical treatment, to develop staff's understanding of anti-discriminatory practice, to ensure that records are readily available, to plan a suitable range of activities for children under three years old and to take action to minimise risks in the outside play area.

All issues have been effectively addressed so that the overall quality of care has improved. The management committee has reviewed staffing policies, appointed a new manager and supported staff in accessing training so that qualification requirements are now met. Parents now sign permission for the preschool to provide first aid and to seek medical advice if necessary, so children's welfare is protected. The staff's approach to anti-discriminatory practice has been discussed and amended so that children's individuality is respected. Training has been received on the Birth to Three Matters Framework, and the needs of the youngest children are considered in the planning of activities, although use of the planning system still needs some improvement. A member of staff checks the outside play area each morning before children arrive and removes any litter. The area is checked again as staff set up equipment, so that risks to children are minimised.

Nursery education

At the last inspection, the quality of nursery education was judged as inadequate. The preschool was asked to improve the planning system, using assessments of children's progress to ensure that they were provided with sufficient challenge and offered appropriate support. They were also required to improve communication with parents, keeping them up to date with children's progress and enabling them to be actively involved in their children's learning. Improvements were required to the organisation of the preschool, making resources more easily accessible for children so that they could develop independence and play an active role in all areas of learning. The preschool was asked to monitor and support staff and to evaluate their practice, to increase their knowledge of the early learning goals so that they could

use every day activities and routines to promote children's learning.

The preschool has received advice and support from the local authority and from the Preschool Learning Alliance. The committee and staff have put a great amount of effort into reviewing policies and procedures, developing their knowledge and amending practice, so that real improvement has been made in the quality of nursery education provided. A new system of planning has been introduced and staff have received training on using the Hampshire County Council record of achievement to monitor children's progress. The system has been in use for only a short period and staff are becoming more confident with its use. Some improvement is still needed to ensure that the needs of individual children are addressed and this has been carried forward as a recommendation. Parents receive written reports on their children's progress and formal parents' evenings have been introduced so that parents can discuss and contribute to the record of achievement. Parents are able to talk with their children's keyworker at any time and to exchange information via a home/preschool notebook. Next steps for development are agreed and parents are given suggestions for supporting their children's learning at home. The layout of the playroom has been altered and accessible storage units introduced so that children are able to select resources and be more independent in choosing their activities. The organisation of whole group activities still needs attention to ensure that all children are able to participate fully. The newly appointed manager has good knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage curriculum and ensures that all areas of learning are covered. Staff have received some training on the early learning goals and are developing their understanding as they become familiar with the new systems for curriculum planning and recording progress. A formal staff appraisal system has been introduced so that the training needs of staff are identified and addressed.

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.

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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):

- increase staff understanding of the preschool's policies and procedures in order to ensure consistency of approach, particularly in the areas of behaviour management and child protection.
- further develop the keyworker system to ensure that staff monitor individual children's activities during sessions to enable them to participate fully and maximise their learning.

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 the use of the planning system so that all staff are clear about the intended learning outcomes of activities, and children of different levels of ability are appropriately challenged.

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