



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 101450

DfES Number: 516632

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 14/05/2003
Inspector Name Angela Cole

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Abbeymead Under Fives
Setting Address The Church Centre
Larkhay Road, Hucclecote
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL3 3NS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Abbeymead Under Fives

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Abbeymead Under Fives
Address The Church Centre
Larkhay Road, Hucclecote
Gloucester
GL3 3SB

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Abbeymead Under Fives Playgroup opened in 1992. It operates from temporary premises in the grounds of The Church Centre, Hucclecote near Gloucester. The playgroup uses the two, large playrooms, kitchen and toilet facilities. Outside there is grass and a hard surfaced area. There are currently 57 children from two years nine months to school age on roll. This includes 38 funded three-year-olds and 16 funded four-year-olds. Children are offered a minimum of two sessions each week. Three children have special needs. No children speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times from 9.15 a.m. to 11.45 a.m. Extra sessions for pre-school children are run from January to July on Mondays to Thursdays from 12.15 p.m. until 2.30 p.m. The playgroup is run by a parent committee that employs six part-time members of staff to work with the children. Parents help out on a voluntary basis. Two members of staff have National Vocational Qualifications in Childcare and Education at level 3. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Abbeymead Under Fives Playgroup provides satisfactory quality care for children. Staff form a good team and support children in key groups. All staff are experienced, though minimum qualifications are not met overall. Children have a good choice of activities in the two playrooms. The premises are adequately clean and furnishings are in reasonable condition. A wide range of toys is used imaginatively on a rota basis. Some resources are outstanding, such as the small physical equipment and a listening centre. Documents are well organised, accessible and stored securely. The register is up-to-date but does not show when children and adults are present.

The high ratio of adults ensures children are kept safe. Staff effectively reduce hazards and follow known fire safety procedures. The premises are secure and children are only collected by named persons. Children learn appropriate hygiene routines, for example from a dental nurse. Arrangements for first aid and

administering medicine are good. Staff know children's dietary needs and parents provide healthy packed lunches. Each child is valued and the needs of individuals are well met. Staff effectively support children with special needs and their concerns are shared with parents.

There is a stimulating range of activities planned for each session. Children are interested, and are encouraged to make decisions and use their own ideas. Staff observe children closely and use detailed written comments to plan for the group and each child. Children behave well and staff make good use of praise to encourage less confident children.

Families are warmly welcomed by staff and committee. They receive many helpful notices and letters, and have daily chats with staff about the children. However, there are insufficient opportunities for sharing records with parents to keep them well informed of their child's development. Good information for volunteers and committee members about their roles and responsibilities is shared.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The operational plan is now detailed to show how staff will be deployed within the playgroup, how and what activities will be provided and how the continuing training needs of staff will be met. The premises are now sufficiently clean and adequately ventilated. They are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration to support the care of the children. Staff clear away any debris when they arrive and extra weekly cleaning is scheduled.

What is being done well?

- Adults work well as a team and the key worker system provides a high level of support for children to develop. Staff are willing to update their practice through a broad range of in-service training. (Standard 2)
- The organisation of sessions effectively supports children develop to their full potential. The morning sessions include longer times for children to learn through free play and the pre-school afternoons offer an appropriate balance of child and adult-led play. ((Standard 2)
- The staff plan a wide range of interesting activities for children of different ages that involves imaginative use of resources, such as stimulating combinations of textured materials. (Standard 3, 4)
- Staff take positive steps to promote safety within the setting so that children can settle and learn in a safe and secure environment. (Standard 6)
- Parents are extremely supportive and well involved in their child's learning through voluntary help and committee management of the playgroup. (Standard 12)

An aspect of outstanding practice:

.

What needs to be improved?

- staff qualifications to meet the children's needs effectively. (Standard 2)
- the system of registration to show times of arrival and departure of children and persons looking after them. (Standards 2, 14)
- arrangements for sharing records with parents to keep them well informed of their child's development. (Standard 14)

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person must take the following actions by the date shown**

Std	Action	Date
2	Develop an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met.	16/09/2003
14	Ensure a daily record of the hours of attendance of the children looked after and the names of persons who look after them is kept.	19/05/2003

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
14	provide regular opportunities for parents and staff to share the records on children's development and progress.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Teaching is generally good. Adults know what children learn from activities in general. However, not all staff know enough about stepping stones to challenge children in all aspects of literacy and creativity. Main activities are repeated for those not coming each day and to strengthen learning. Free play and extending activities are planned well. Key workers support older children's care and learning effectively. Some good teaching methods are used, such as play, practical activities and helpful questioning. Plentiful, good quality toys are used regularly and imaginatively. However, creative resources are not used to respond to experiences, and insufficient print is around to foster interest. Children with special needs, particularly in speech and language, are well supported in practice. Staff management of children and their behaviour is excellent.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents receive helpful news and topic details, but do not have enough details on areas of learning. Families settle their children and exchange spoken information about them. They know of work folders but do not realise their child's records are also available. Parents are well involved, especially through the enthusiastic committee and helper rota. They bring display items each day and share expertise, such as artex painting.

Leadership and management of staff are generally good. Strong leadership ensures good communications and working towards shared aims. Staff and helpers form good teams. The key worker system is effective; tasks are delegated and responsibilities shared. Monitoring of nursery education does not fully support children's progress in some aspects of learning. Generally the setting's ability to assess its own strengths and weaknesses is very good. Staff and committee regularly discuss running of sessions and improvements to the group, using views on parent questionnaires. The commitment of staff is shown through a high level of in-service training.

What is being done well?

- Children are given effective support to settle and gain confidence and self-esteem in a caring atmosphere and so develop very good behaviour, concentration and personal independence.
- The teaching of mathematics is given high priority, with learning included in a wide range of free play, planned activities and appropriate routines.
- A most effective programme for physical development supports children to develop good coordination and control using a stimulating range of large and small equipment.
- Older children's involvement and learning are well supported by the personal attention of key staff at mealtimes and during carefully planned key group activities.

- Parents are well encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through active participation in management and day-to day support.

What needs to be improved?

- staff knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones so children can be sufficiently challenged in all areas of learning;
- children's awareness of print in the environment and their interest in writing through seeing adults using writing for a purpose;
- children's own responses to their experiences through art and free use of musical instruments;
- information for parents about the six areas of learning and about their child's achievements and progress in these areas.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Activities to stimulate children to question why things happen, how things work now include planting, cooking, use of listening centre, balancing and weighing and naming body parts. By talking with visitors such as the dental nurse and including children in discussion, for example about physical play equipment and signs with symbols, staff effectively encourage children to ask questions.

The prospectus now includes brief mention of the Foundation Stage and an invitation to look at a grid of the stepping stones on the notice board. Laminated cards are also displayed around the playroom describing learning from activities, including imaginative play. However, this information has not helped parents to learn about the early learning goals. They can describe children's learning in general terms but do not know about the six areas of learning in order to support their child's progress.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

This area is very good. Children are interested and keen to choose from activities in the two playrooms. They are confident, settle quickly and chat to key staff, for example at lunch. Children play well together, share books and give everyone a turn. They care for one another, for example when talking about a new baby. Children are very well behaved, telling others what to do and thanking helpers. They know routines, confidently dressing for PE and competently managing their lunch boxes.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

This area is generally good. Children have many conversations, for example, about swimming. New words are well explained, such as 'shy' and 'eaves'. Children enjoy 'reading' books after lunch to find information, for example on 'ultrasound'. Children regularly use equipment at a writing station but rarely see adults writing or words displayed. Children enjoy listening to stories through headphones and recognise many sounds for items beginning with week's letter, such as watering cans.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Very good progress is made in this area. Children accurately count objects such as toy bears and recognise numbers for the date. They enjoy number songs including 'Five speckled frogs' and confidently say one more or one less between each verse. Children effectively learn about shapes through craft activities, and are skilful at comparing and describing sizes of objects. They have very good awareness of positions through suggestions in physical play, for example to go under or over a bar.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

This area is generally good. Children use a stimulating range of materials such as jelly, straw and pizza ingredients. They examine growing things and seasonal changes by creating a flower garden and watching feeding birds. They regularly design models and use much technology including a listening centre. Children develop an adequate sense of time by recalling happenings and looking at the date. They effectively learn about their environment and other cultures through a wide range of visitors.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's physical development is very good. They move confidently to 'toddlerobic' tapes. In daily physical sessions, children show good control when 'crab' walking and say they are dizzy after fast rolling. They travel with practised skill around and through balancing and climbing equipment. Bouncing is introduced as children throw and catch a ball so well. Children competently handle a wide range of small tools and materials, for example when 'writing' letters and preparing snacks.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

This area is generally good. Children explore many exciting textures such as sand and glitter on 'fish'. They create designs in both two and three dimensions, for example using sponge prints and playdough. Children are fully involved in songs with use of a felt board. They explore sounds as a group, for example with tap sticks, but do not experiment freely with musical instruments. Children use their ideas in considerable imaginative play, for example with real bread in the baker's shop.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- enable all staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones so they can fully challenge children and extend opportunities to show an interest in writing, and in print in the environment;
- encourage children's own responses to what they see and hear through art and free use of musical instruments in creative development;
- provide meaningful information to help parents learn about the early learning goals in the six areas of learning, and offer regular opportunities to share their child's progress in these areas.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.