



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 220115

DfES Number: 515062

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/02/2005  
Inspector Name Christina Downey

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Abington Vale PlaySchool  
Setting Address 10 Bridgewater Drive  
Bridgewater Drive  
Northampton  
Northants  
NN3 3AF

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Abington Vale Playgroup 1028922

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Abington Vale Playgroup  
Address 10 Bridgewater Drive  
Northampton  
Northamptonshire  
NN3 3AF

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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

Abington Vale Playschool opened in 1969. It operates from the community building attached to the primary school in Bridgewater Drive, Northampton.

There is access to an outdoor play area. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The playschool opens five days a week in school term time and sessions are from 09:30 to 12:00.

There are currently 25 children on roll; of these 19 are in receipt of funding. There are currently no children attending with special needs or who are learning to speak English as an additional language. A total of five staff work with the children. One staff member is qualified to NVQ level 3; two others are working towards appropriate qualifications.

The group receives support from Northamptonshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The quality of teaching is generally good overall, but does contain areas of weakness. Each session is carefully organised and a calm, purposeful atmosphere is maintained. Relationships throughout the group are good and children have a positive attitude to learning. Staff are rapidly developing their understanding of the Foundation Stage but it is not yet secure in all areas and this reduces the amount of challenge - particularly in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. The planned programme addresses each area of learning weekly but it is not always sufficiently clear what children are intended to learn from particular activities and staff support can be inconsistent. Staff successfully promote children's ability to behave well, but do not always enable them to make choices or work independently. The assessment system is under development. Useful observations are made and children's progress recorded, but targets for future learning are not yet made clear.

The partnership with parents and carers is actively being developed and is currently generally good. The group is seeking new ways of sharing information about the curriculum and involving parents in their children's learning. So far parents are not sufficiently well informed about children's progress or plans for future learning.

Leadership and management is generally good. The staff work well together as a team. A collaborative leadership style facilitates the introduction of new ideas and successfully contributes to the steady progress the group is making in raising standards.

### What is being done well?

- Leadership and management is successful in fostering an open attitude to new ideas and a climate of continuous improvement has been established.
- A calm and purposeful atmosphere is maintained. Staff interact with the children well, supporting and encouraging them. Children grow in confidence and develop good social skills; their behaviour is good.
- Recent changes have resulted in the introduction of some interesting ideas about how to extend the involvement of parents in the pre-school.
- The group has an attractive range of interesting and good quality resources.

### What needs to be improved?

- staff deployment, to ensure consistent support is provided for activities in order to further extend children's learning
- identification of learning objectives for some daily activities, that are clearly linked to the stepping stones and challenge children to extend their thinking

- staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage, in particular in the areas of mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world
- opportunities for children to make choices and decisions, work independently, explore changes and use a widening range of tools and resources to express their own ideas
- observation and assessment, so that it is clear what children have achieved and what they are aiming for next in their learning.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Following the last inspection the group was required to address children's concentration levels and reduce the amount of time they spent sitting down in large groups. Improvements were required in the programmes for Mathematics and Creativity. It was also necessary for the group to enable children to use activities independently when no adult is present.

Overall progress has been limited. Although children's behaviour and concentration levels in large group situations are generally good, this type of work still forms too large a part of the planned programme. Creative activities are planned regularly but children are not always able to express their own ideas and there is still too little challenge in mathematics. There is now a satisfactory range of activities children can access independently, such as sand, role-play and play dough but others such as cooking and model making can be closely adult directed.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children settle happily into the group and develop friendly relationships with each other and the staff. They behave well and successfully adapt to the changes in routine during each session. They generally approach new experiences with interest and successfully choose between activities during free play. However, they sometimes have too little scope to operate independently or select their own resources. They are developing a satisfactory awareness of the cultural diversity of modern society.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children talk confidently about everyday events with each other and the staff. They listen with interest to stories presented after snack, enjoy sharing books with familiar adults in smaller groups and choose books to take home. They learn a range of songs and rhymes, and older children have a growing awareness of the initial letter sound of their name. Children draw, paint and develop hand-eye co-ordination but have less scope to become aware of the various purposes of writing.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children recognise some solid shapes and talk about their properties whilst making models out of boxes and tubes. They learn to use language such as 'full and empty' or 'big and little' whilst working with sand or playdough, or talking about opposites. Children sometimes count to five and above but their curiosity about numbers is not stimulated and they have a limited awareness of calculation. Overall, there is too little challenge to support the learning of older or more able children.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children explore materials such as sand, snow and shells but overall there are too few first-hand investigations to arouse their curiosity. They use construction sets and make models from boxes but have too little opportunity to use a widening range of tools or materials. Occasional visitors to the group or walks to the park help promote their awareness of the local area but children have too little scope to talk about past events. They have limited experience of simple equipment or ICT.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Generally Good

Children develop useful skills with small equipment such as balls, and improve their manipulation whilst sewing, drawing and using small world toys. They have a sound awareness of space and are able to judge how much they will need to work in. They learn about the importance of hygiene. Children run, chase and negotiate pathways but have less scope to explore movement or challenge themselves on larger equipment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Generally Good

Children take part in a satisfactory range of painting activities and learn useful techniques such as printing, but are not always able to use a widening range of resources to express their own ideas. They explore texture whilst working with sand, snow and playdough. They learn to sing some simple songs and rhymes but have less experience of exploring sound. Children learn to use their imaginations during role-play and when playing with small world resources.

**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**

- continue to develop the planning to ensure children are offered a more challenging range of practical experiences and it is clear how staff are to be deployed
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, with particular reference to Mathematics and Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- continue to develop the observation and assessment system so that it is clear what children have achieved so far and what they are aiming for next in their learning

*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.*