



Abbey 345 Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY231881
Inspection date	03 May 2005
Inspector	Gillian Jefferson
Setting Address	St Guthlacs School, Postland Road, Crowland, Peterborough, PE6 0EE
Telephone number	07703 434276
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Registered person	Abbey 345 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

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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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abbey 345 Playgroup is a committee run group that registered in 1992. The playgroup operates from a mobile unit set in the grounds of a school. It is situated in the centre of the rural village of Crowland, to the northeast of Peterborough. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday for a range of sessions from 09:15 to 14:30 for 39 weeks of the year. Each weekday morning there is a playgroup session from 09:15 to 11:45,

except Tuesday when the group offer a parent/carers and toddler/baby session from 09:15 to 11:00. Afternoons sessions are offered for children over four years from 12:00 to 14:30 on Monday and Wednesday and from 11:45 to 14:15 on Tuesday. Thursday afternoons are sessions for two-year-olds from 12:30 to 14:30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 55 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 31 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs seven staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a recognised early year's qualification. The playgroup receives support from the area special needs coordinator and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA). The group also work closely with the reception teachers at local primary schools.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene by following well-planned daily routines. They independently wash their hands after toileting and messy play and before eating. Excellent procedures such as the laminated copy of the communicable diseases exclusion information given to each family supports the group's sickness policy and helps to prevent the spread of infection.

Children eat healthily. They enjoy nutritious snacks such as fruit that meet their dietary needs and ensure they remain healthy. In addition, regular planned tasting activities are used to further help the children learn to make healthy choices about food.

Children have frequent and varied chances to be energetic and physically active inside and outside, dependent on good weather. Although staff provide active sessions indoors each day, they are not as vigorous as the outdoor play. This reduces the number of opportunities for children to learn and enjoy the importance of vigorous physical activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised in the well organised setting. Staff support this by reducing the children's access to hot radiators, the kitchen area and removing potentially hazardous items during the daily risk assessment check. Staff

adopt good safety and security precautions, such as the doorbell entry system. The children are kept safe by the vigilance of staff, by removing broken equipment as soon as it is damaged to minimise the risk.

Children have access to a wide range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate resources. Child-height furniture and storage is used which helps them to become independent and choose activities for themselves with ease. Children make good choices and move around the setting safely, learning to carry items such as chairs with care so they and others do not get hurt. This means children begin to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Children are well protected. Staff are kept well informed of child protection issues and best practice. Frequent training and readily available information on the staff notice board helps them understand and carry out their responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

High quality activities are made available during the range of sessions provided by staff.

Two-year-olds are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other and the staff. They play happily with each other and staff using puzzles, games, and books, learning to take turns and respond to others. They make up stories for their imaginative play with puppets and small world toys. Staff awareness and good use of the Birth to Three Matters framework is supporting them in improving the children's achievements. Children are encouraged to become confident communicators, sharing ideas in their play and at circle time. Children's involvement in singing and music also supports the development of their communication skills. Freely exploring magnets, sand and different textures when making collage pictures helps them to make connections between objects. They also use a wide range of creative materials, making pictures with gloop, paint, dough and pencils. This encourages them to represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are progressing extremely well, supported by the staff teams confidence and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning is detailed and being enhanced further through recently drafted amendments to the short term plans drawn up after the last inspection of Nursery Education. All areas of learning are covered comprehensively.

Children's achievement is clearly linked to the stepping stones and regular tracking activities and observational notes ensure staff can appropriately plan the next steps for their learning. Skilful use of the observation and assessment strategies in place also means that all the children can be challenged appropriately. Staff carefully adapt their questioning to reflect each child's stage of development. This helps them meet all the children's needs, including those with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language.

Children greet each other and staff on arrival, demonstrating their sense of belonging. They are actively involved in play and activities throughout the sessions. They have a high level of independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking responsibility for their personal care and toileting. The three and four-year-old children show concern for each other and enjoy the responsibility of helping the younger children find their way and explain daily routines. Children are extremely skilful in their use of number, counting correctly to over twenty and showing a clear awareness of size. They confidently compare numbers and problem solve with them for themselves. They enjoy stories and spontaneously sound out and find the letters for their names. They readily select books to share with each other or with staff.

Children are able to freely explore everyday items and learn through practical play with items such as magnets and metal objects, and large cardboard boxes. This allows them to acquire knowledge of their environment and keeps their learning interesting and relevant. The children's free access to a range of tools, fastenings on doll clothing and the computer also helps them develop very good hand-eye coordination. They are able to move in a variety of ways whilst joining in with action rhymes and songs, and using the climbing frames and outdoor play equipment. Regular trips, outings and visitors to the group expand on this further so children become aware of the local community, time and place.

Children remain at activities for long periods of time. Children take risks in their learning, trying new and less familiar activities without fear of failure. The staff work hard to inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves and continues to practise to develop their skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from all backgrounds and of all abilities are openly and warmly welcomed in the playgroup. Resources positively reflect the children attending and the wider community. This helps the children understand others' needs and gain positive attitudes to them. Children are well behaved. They learn from the modelling and praise and encouragement of staff. Children learn what behaviour is appropriate, receiving clear explanations from staff why they should not do things and not snatch. They take turns and support each other, showing concern for other's needs, especially those of younger children. Staff support and work hard with them to broaden their awareness of a variety of cultures and needs. This means that children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development is fostered.

All children benefit from the close working relationship and partnership between staff and parents/carers. The provision of a carer and toddler group helps to start the home-group links early on. Allowing strong relationships to be forged that help support and promote the children's development throughout their time with the group. Information about all children is readily shared. Staff are available to give daily feedback about the children's day. Detailed records are kept and shared about the children's progress in the Foundation Stage. The children's learning is also supported

by parents/carers involvement in working with their children at home, prompted by information in regular newsletters, notices and reading the readily available planning. Parents evenings, fundraising and social events also enhance the close ties between the parents/carers and group, ensuring staff are successfully supported in meeting needs of all the children. These links mean that the partnership with parents and carers is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Induction training, policies and procedures are generally in place and work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. However, its unorganised nature means that some items are omitted, e.g. consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, or not readily accessible, e.g. the child protection policy, which makes it harder for staff to use or refer to. The committee members are not made fully aware of their roles and responsibilities as a matter of course, which hampers their ability to support the group. Staff training is provided, but is not yet linked to appraisals and professional development to meet identified needs to support the provision in improving.

Staff have a sound awareness of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development. They have successfully identified areas to improve the setting, such as providing all-weather outdoor play to expand the opportunities for children to be energetic and physically active, but have not yet drawn up clear plans to achieve their aims. This affects their ability to monitor the provision, prioritise aims and address issues independently. This may affect the children's development in time, but staff minimise this by providing alternative activities indoors, although less vigorous. Therefore, the leadership and management of the group is good.

Clear procedures and policies support staff in working very successfully in partnership with parents and carers. The range of different sessions provided also enables staff to focus activities towards the children's needs with a high degree of skill. Overall, the needs of the full range of children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection recommended that the child protection policy, prospectus, and information for committee members be developed, and all policies reviewed in line with current legislation and guidance.

All paperwork was updated in line with the recommendations made, but unfortunately not incorporated into the operational plan at the playgroup. As a result the children's care might occasionally not be in line with parents/carers wishes or the group's agreed policies, because staff are not able to refer to them. Information for committee members about their roles and responsibilities is yet to be drawn up and made available. This makes them overly reliant on staff and unable to effectively monitor the quality of the setting and children's care for themselves, as they do not have

independent access to the national standards and guidance.

The last inspection of Nursery Education asked the group to consider further developing their short term curriculum planning to demonstrate more clearly how the learning objective will be presented and delivered to children. In the four months since that inspection the group have drawn up draft proposals to improve the short term planning and are now beginning to implement them. This will help them ensure children are challenged appropriately as a result of staff adapting activities according to their needs and stage of development.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- ensure updated policies are readily available on site; and formalise staff induction, development and appraisal procedures and committee members responsibilities
- ensure written permission from parents/carers to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is in place for all children.

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):

- implement revised short term curriculum plans to demonstrate more clearly how the learning objectives will be presented and delivered to children to promote their learning.

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