



Abacus Childrens Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY331809
Inspection date	14 July 2006
Inspector	Linda Patricia Coccia
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Registered person	Abacus Childrens Nurseries LTD
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 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?

Abacus Children's Nursery is owned by Abacus Children's Nurseries Ltd and opened in 2006 and operates from three rooms in a purpose built single story building in the grounds of a local school. It is situated in the town of Chatham, Kent. A maximum of 80 children between the ages of three months to eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 109 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll. Of these 56 children receive funding for nursery education. There are currently no children aged five years or over on roll. Children come from a fairly wide catchment area. The nursery supports some children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 17 staff, of whom 16, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications to NVQ level II & III.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are provided with a good range of experiences, which help to promote their knowledge and understanding of health issues. For example, they are encouraged to be independent with routine self help skills, including toilet visits. They are prompted to wash their hands by suitable, child friendly posters which are positioned appropriately near sinks. Effective procedures help to prevent cross infection. This includes the use of antibacterial spray to wipe surfaces, disposable aprons and gloves during nappy changes and the removal of outdoor shoes when entering the baby room. Children benefit from procedures, which ensure they are taken care of if they have an accident or become ill. For instance, accidents are well recorded and children do not attend if they have an infectious illness. Children's health is protected.

Children have the benefits of a healthy diet. Drinks are readily available and those children who are able, can pour their own drinks. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices regarding the food they eat. They choose from a selection of fruit at snack time and benefit from appealing, nutritious meals which can be ordered from the adjoining school. Feeds are recorded for babies and very young children and parents receive feedback every day. Children who suffer from allergies are catered for by a well informed, well trained, staff team. Children's individual needs are met.

Children use a good range of energetic, physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop self confidence in their physical skills as they use a wide range of indoor toys and equipment, from climbing frames and ride on toys, to dancing to music or doing actions to stories and songs. Children are helping to develop the garden area by planting flowers and shrubs and in the process, are learning about different fragrances and how plants grow. Children greatly enjoy their physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment which is bright and airy, which staff make friendly and welcoming, and where risks are identified and minimised. Children are able to move around safely, freely and independently.

The toys and equipment that the children use are appropriate to their ages, safe, checked regularly for hygiene and cleaned regularly. The children are able to help themselves safely to all the toys as they are stored in child friendly shelving and cupboards or in large plastic boxes placed on the floor. However the contents of some of the boxes could be better presented to make them more attractive to the children, for example the dressing up clothes could be hung up.

Children are well cared for because effective procedures promote their welfare and safety at all times. These include an emergency evacuation procedure, which is regularly practised with the children, and suitable safety equipment is used throughout. All procedures are regularly evaluated and amended if necessary.

Children are protected by the nursery's selection of policies regarding child protection. A password system is used to ensure that children are only collected by appropriate adults. The lost and uncollected child policy is clear and concise. Emergency contact persons are recorded, and the main child protection policy is in line with their local authority's procedures. Existing injuries to children are recorded and signed off by parents. All of the staff have had training on this subject. Children's well being is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enjoy their time at the nursery and the company of the staff. Children smile, laugh and interact very well with staff, voluntarily offering them hugs and cuddles. Babies and children under two years, enjoy the benefits of frequent cuddles and close contact with staff. They have secure relationships with staff who know them well and who spend much of their time playing and talking with them. They develop early communication skills, because staff use routines, including feed times, to engage in warm verbal contact with them. Throughout the nursery, the walls are decorated with children's work and photographs of children enjoying activities, as well as brightly coloured information posters, all helping to make the atmosphere homely, friendly and welcoming. Children settle easily each morning.

There are lots of appropriate and interesting toys for the children to play with, which cover the appropriate areas of development. Staff make very good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, to assess the needs of the under three's. There are imaginary play areas in each room, and creative areas where children can experiment with lots of different craft mediums such as paint, pasta and junk modelling. There are also quiet areas where the children can relax and read books. Children are able to choose their own activities and utilise them well. For example, the children imagined a hairdressing salon and improvised with utensils from the home corner.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making consistent progress towards the stepping stones and early learning goals. This is because the majority of staff working with them have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning is well documented and displayed for parents and children are provided with activities and experiences, which build on what they already know and can do. Regular

evaluations help staff to focus on the success of activities and planning is informed by children's progress records. However it is not always easy to identify which individual children the daily and weekly plans are targeting.

Children show a very strong sense of belonging as they play and learn together. They are confident and friendly and show care and concern for others. They use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank you', for example, as they socialise at snack time. Children are becoming independent learners as they move around the room, choose their own activities and follow routines such as helping to tidy toys away. They use a variety of tools to make marks and some are able to write their names using correctly formed letters. Others attempt to write for a range of purposes, such as making appointment lists during role play. Children are developing a sense of time and begin to differentiate between past and present experiences. For example they talk about the weather and identify dates and seasons. Children are gaining confidence with numbers and counting. They can select random numbers and place them in correct sequences. They learn to identify and describe 3D shapes and use language such as 'bigger' and 'more' to describe size and quantity.

Children also learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others, through projects and themes, which include activities about others from around the world. They demonstrate curiosity and concern for living things and have helped plant and care for flowers in the garden. Children are also curious about their own bodies. For example, with the help of a book and a member of staff they discover where their food goes once they swallowed it. Children are developing good hand eye co-ordination. Some are very competent with using scissors to cut a range of craft materials. Others enjoy construction activities with large and small bricks, or when using the mouse as they proficiently follow simple instructions on the computer. Use of the outdoor area promotes children's developing physical skills such as competently throwing and kicking balls and balancing on large apparatus. Children move confidently and safely as they take part in music and movement opportunities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals. They develop a positive attitude to others and gain a good understanding about the wider world and community through celebrating festivals, tasting food from a variety of cultures and having access to a good range of play resources which show positive images of culture and ethnicity, but there is little in the way of positive images relating to gender and disability. However, the nursery can provide for children with special needs and disabilities, as suitable procedures are in place, including a fully trained Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who liaises with parents and other health professionals.

Children behave well. They begin to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and the age appropriate methods staff use to manage behaviour. These include explanations, distraction and 'time out'. Staff encourage children to resolve their own differences which helps them learn to take turns and share. Their clear guidance, and gentle reminders about the consequences of their actions helps

children to begin to accept the needs of others. Children welcome each other into the nursery and show concern if others hurt themselves or seem upset. Their Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is fostered.

Parents report that their children receive very good care and support from the staff and they feel able to approach staff for advice about their child. Parents receive a good insight into how their children develop through the daily verbal exchanges about the children's well being and achievements, contact books which provide information on particular areas of interest for their child, and through the child profiles produced in conjunction with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children receive continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is good. Extensive information on the 'Foundation Stage' curriculum and effective communication through newsletters, daily chats and detailed notice boards, help staff and parents work together to help children make progress. Information is also provided so that parents can talk to their child at home about current topics being covered in the play school. Those parents interviewed are well informed and have a clear understanding of what their children should be achieving. They reported that they regularly see their child's development records and can discuss them in detail with their child's key worker. Parents also feel that staff are 'in tune' with the children and the manager is always available to listen to parent's views. Children benefit from their parent's understanding of the foundation stage.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery displays their registration document. The provider ensures that the staff are suitable to work with the children through a robust recruitment and vetting procedure. All staff have been vetted and hold Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. Staff are regularly monitored and supervised.

The nursery's organisational plan is readily available to all parents. It is constantly being reviewed and updated to include any new legislation and regulations. Overall it is meeting the needs of the children and staff. The owners and manager hold appropriate childcare qualifications to NVQ level 3 and some are currently on level 4 degree courses. Some staff hold current paediatric first aid course certificates and there is always at least one first aider present at each session.

Leadership and management is good. The owners and their manager, have a clear vision of the type of care they offer to children to enable them to achieve well. They have plans for the future to improve on procedures and practices to meet their high standards. The organisation of the group ensures that staff and children work in a calm, absorbing atmosphere where learning is encouraged. They encourage staff to work as a team, contribute to the activity planning and take on individual responsibilities. For example, one member of staff is the lead person for child protection, others are key workers who are able to work directly with parents. The management team offer staff training opportunities to enhance their roles. The nursery's appraisal systems ensures that their comprehensive policies and procedures are consistently applied and enable staff to review their professional

development. Children benefit from highly motivated and skilled staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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):

- consider different ways to improve the presentation of toys and activities to make them more attractive and interesting for children.
- increase the range of positive images in toys and books, in particular those depicting disabilities and those depicting gender.

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):

- ensure the foundation stage planning easily identifies those challenges identified for individual children.

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:
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