



## Abacus Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131802
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 November 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	John Edwin Warren
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<b>Registered person</b>	New Malden Methodist Church Abacus Pre-School & CM
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 pre-school is run in the Methodist Church Hall, at the back of the Methodist Church on New Malden High Street and has been open since September 1992. The group is run by a committee and caters for 52 children aged two to five years. One group opens five days a week term time only from 09:10 till 12:05. A parallel group runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 09:30 till 12:25. The group is open to the whole community. Children have access to two large playrooms and a garden area and another large area upstairs mainly for large physical play. There are currently 14 staff employed, six are qualified, two are studying towards an NVQ level 3 and two towards an NVQ level 2 and the remainder unqualified.

There are currently 57 children on roll of these 36 are in receipt of nursery funding. The nursery receives support from the local authority early years advisory teacher. The group supports

children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The group also supports children with English as an additional language.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children follow good hygiene routines, washing their hands before snacks and after using the toilets. There are displays on the walls that remind children to wash their hands and children are involved in activities that explain why it is important. Staff set good role models for the children by washing their hands at appropriate times, for example, after changing younger children's nappies. Children are praised for good hygiene practices, for example, using a tissue to cover their nose when they sneeze.

Parents give permission for medication to be administered. The dosages are carefully recorded and countersigned by the parents who are then given a duplicate of the recording. This ensures that the children always receive the correct dosage. There are sufficient number of staff who have an up-to-date first aid qualification therefore they can effectively care for a child in the event of an accident. There is a sound sickness policy ensuring children who are infectious do not attend the setting, thus preventing the spread of contagious ailments.

Children have drinks at a set time during the session and are provided with a healthy snack. Children learn about healthy foods during their play. They cook a variety of healthy foods and have tasting sessions. The role play area has displays of healthy foods and a recipe book the children have made. There is a jug of water in the room for the children, however staff do not remind the children to take a drink, therefore children do not access the area.

Children are provided with a good range of physical challenges on a daily basis both in and outdoors. Children climb confidently on large apparatus and experiment with different ways to traverse to the top. They confidently ride scooters and bikes at speed and are able to change directions very competently.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a well organised spacious environment. Children are able to move around freely and play safely. Children are provided with easy access to good range of activities. Children have access to a wide range and good quantity of equipment. Robust checking procedures ensure all resources provided for the children are safe and suitable for their use. Furniture provided is child sized and there is a sufficient amount to support all children within the group.

Premises are very secure and there are good procedures in place to prevent unwanted visitors entering the building. Identification is checked carefully of visitors and they are asked to sign the visitors books, so that there is always an accurate record of the number of people within the building. Children are reminded through discussion and activities to be responsible for their

own safety. For example, pictures at the bottom of the stairs remind the children to hold the hand rail. Staff explain to the children why this is important and the possible outcome if they do not do this. Children also understand that they need to think about their safety when having fun, for example, they know that snow is cold and fun but can get very slippery so they need to be careful. Regular risk assessments, indoors and outdoors, ensure children's safety and staff use the accident records to identify hazards. Children practice fire drill procedures with the staff team on a regular basis ensuring that they are able to evacuate the building quickly and efficiently in the event of a crisis.

Staff have good knowledge of the child protection procedures and have attend training sessions in this area. This ensures that children's welfare is safeguarded and staff are able to follow correct procedures if they have any concerns about a child.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are confident, enthusiastic and keen to explore their environment. They seek support from adults when required showing that they have built trusting relationships. Children are able to express their individuality through creative play experiences. For example, young children are presented with paints, a bowl, a balloon and a piece of paper. Staff are there to facilitate the activity but do not offer ideas. Children paint the balloons in different ways some putting it into the paint using one colour others preferring a brush and numerous colours. All children produce a unique piece of artwork. Young children enjoy imaginative play. They are provided with props that enhance their experience, for example, malleable play materials give them the opportunity pretend to cook meals. Children benefit from being able to access mark making experiences in several areas of their play. Staff value the children's work and display it prominently within the play rooms. Young children are learning to make connections through practical support for the staff team. For example, children have made a diary of their first time at the pre-school. Children have a chance to revisit this and discuss with adults how they felt. Children are provided with opportunities to be together, for example, in the comfortable book area. However some of the groupings are too large and children become disinterested in the activity. Children are confidently finding their voice and are learning to reason with adults, for example, children talk about their drawings of fish. They are able to justify to the adults why some of their fish have no eyes. Children benefit from a staff team that is very adept in using effective questioning. The staff's skills encourage children to expand and explore each of their activities fully and ask questions of their own. Staff also encourage the children to use predictive language, for example, children are building rockets with construction materials. The members of staff ask them if their rockets will stand up or fall down. Children respond well and enjoy the challenge. Staff make good use of the Birth to three matters framework to enhance the children's learning experiences and to ensure a smooth transition through the Foundation Stage curriculum towards the early learning goals.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are provided with a rich play and learning environment which they are eager to explore. Children become immersed in their play from the moment they enter the room. Children enjoy playing in small groups and welcome their peers

to join them. However there are times where working together in larger groups when they are not given sufficient challenges. They show concerns for others and willingly help others to solve problems. For example, children play in the sand with small diggers, some children cannot work the digger properly and the sand keeps falling out. Other children stop their play to show their friends how to operate it correctly. Children are provided with many opportunities to write for a purpose. They enjoy the themed imaginary areas where they can do this. For example, a well resourced post office area gives the children a chance to write freely on their own. Children are confident in attempting to write new words and use their knowledge of phonics to assist them. Many children are writing recognisable familiar words. Children have easy access to books at all times in a very good book area that is comfortable, secluded and free from interruptions. Children's opportunities to develop their mathematical skills are excellent. There is a defined well resourced area where children can go to explore numbers. Children are also using mathematical language in all areas of their play. For example, when playing shops their use a till and money. Children talk about more and less and are able to calculate simple sums through fun activities. For example, children organise hoops in the garden and call out numbers of blocks that they want in each hoop. Children sometimes miscalculate but are able to confidently say how many more they need for a correct answer. Children enjoy opportunities to investigate, for example, spending time in the rain. Children have very good design making skills. Staff provided the children with ample tools and resources so that they can freely create three dimensional models. Children design with a purpose and are able to explain their creation. Children use the computer on a daily basis. Staff sit with the children and encourage them to develop their mouse and keyboard skills by fully utilising each programme. Staff also encourage to have a full understanding of all technology that they use. For example, children know how to play and eject a cassette from a tape recorder. Staff ask further questions so children understand how to rewind and record. Children enjoy being creative through the use of a variety of mediums, for example, during music and movement sessions children are free to express themselves through dance.

Comprehensive observations are made so that staff can plan for each child to ensure their developmental needs are met. However, observations and record keeping are not clearly linked to each child's latest stage of learning, so that children can be moved on through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals at a good pace.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children learn to respect and develop their knowledge of other cultures through a variety of fun activities. For example, parents and staff share their knowledge with children on festivals and celebrations. Children are introduced to cultural dress and foods that may be different from their own. There is a good range of resources that promote positive images of culture, ethnicity and disability. For example, there is a good range of books in dual languages. Staff excel in being able to underpin all activities with equal opportunities. For example, maths areas have numbers in dual languages and play houses have a good selection of small world play people, some of whom have disabilities. Children show concern for their peers and will assist them if they are in need of help. They are polite to their friends and will ask them to join them

in group games. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are currently no children attending with learning difficulties and/or special needs. However staff attend training sessions to ensure their knowledge remains up-to-date. They have a willingness to work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure that children are able to reach their full potential.

Children's behaviour is generally good and they have a clear understanding of the behavioural expectations within the setting. Staff manage the children's behaviour exceptionally well and encourage them to solve their own disputes. For example, at times children want the same popular piece of equipment they cannot decide who will have it so are encouraged to share fairly. Children resolve the problem by suggesting using the sand timer to ensure that the time they have the toy is equal.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The effective communication between staff and parents ensures that parents are involved in the children's learning. Parents are provided with good information on the setting and on the Foundation Stage. They receive very good feedback verbally and in writing on their child's progress. Parents are made aware that they may arrange a time to meet with their child's keyworker and discuss their child's achievements and browse through their records. Parents report that the entire staff team is very approachable and they feel comfortable to discuss any concerns they may have with them. There is a clear policy in place should the parents wish to make a complaint.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Good procedures for recruitment ensure all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Staff have good knowledge of all policies and procedures. This is due to a clear induction process and the pre-school's involvement in a local quality assurance scheme. The policies and procedures are sound and allow staff members to take the best course of action in any situation. For example, in the case of a child being uncollected. However some procedures are a little brief. Staff work well as a team communicating all relevant information to their colleagues promptly and efficiently. For example, if there is a change of routine and a child is to be collected by another carer.

Children benefit from a fluid routine that ensures they are always kept occupied with a worthwhile activity. Children are told in plenty of time that activities will be tidied away. This gives the children the opportunity to complete their activity and therefore prevent any unnecessary conflict.

Leadership and Management are good. The group is led by a strong management team that are very focussed on developing any weaknesses and building on strengths. Staff are dedicated and enthusiastic. They benefit from the implementation of a operational plan that ensures the pre-school always run efficiently even in the event of staff being absent. Staff are delegated into areas of play, this ensures the children are well supported throughout the session. The

management team work closely with the staff to develop their skills through training and therefore enhance the standard of care being offered to the children.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the pre-school was given three recommendations. The first was to ensure incidents in relation to behaviour management. There is now provision to record any incidents that occur within the pre-school. Secondly they were asked to develop their child protection procedures. This has been completed and staff have attended training to update their knowledge ensuring that children's welfare is safeguarded. Finally they were asked to update the complaints procedure. This has been completed and there is a clear procedure in place if users wish to express a concern or contact the regulator.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

## **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 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 drinks are made readily available.

### **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 that children are grouped appropriately so that they are provided with sufficient challenges

- develop record keeping of children's progress to show clear links between observations and planning

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)