



Abacus Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511192
Inspection date	11 October 2006
Inspector	Doreen Forsyth
Setting Address	Westside, Oxford Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1XB
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Registered person	Kingsclere Nurseries Ltd
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

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 satisfactory. 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 Day Nursery opened in 1998, it is owned by Kingsclere Nurseries who run a chain of seven settings in the area. The nursery operates from a large detached house near the centre of Newbury, Berkshire, and is set out over two floors. Children attend from a wide local area.

The nursery is registered to care for up to 64 children under the age of five. There are currently 44 children on roll. This includes 12 children who are in receipt of government funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with disabilities or learning difficulties or for whom English is an additional language.

The Nursery opens weekdays between 08:00 and 18:00 throughout the year, with the exception of Bank Holidays and a week at Christmas time.

There are 11 members of staff working with the children, seven of these hold a recognised early years qualification at level 3. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from infection and well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate health and hygiene routines; for example, staff use good nappy changing procedures. Most staff have current first aid qualifications. All the required documentation that helps to ensure children's health and well being such as accident and medication records are well kept. However, some younger children are at a risk of cross infection because in the baby unit the carpets are not clean and the surroundings not very well maintained. Children begin to learn good hygiene routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands when appropriate, for example, before eating or after using the toilet. Older children learn through discussion why good hygiene rules are important.

Children are well nourished and are provided with healthy meals and snacks. All the children's meals are home cooked on the premises, children's individual dietary requirements and preferences are well catered for. Children have plenty of fruit and vegetables especially at snack times. Drinking water is always within children's reach and regularly offered to babies and toddlers. Babies' individual feeding patterns are well observed.

Children can sleep and rest according to their needs. There are cots in a separate room for the babies to sleep in; if they have to share cots staff ensure they have their own bedding. Toddlers use sleeping mats with their own sheets and blankets. Older children are encouraged to rest and have a quiet time after lunch.

Children are able to take part in regular physical activity both indoors and out. Outside playtimes are part of the daily routine for all the children. The nursery has a large garden with an all-weather safety surface play area. There are some suitable resources for children to use to practice their climbing and balancing skills, and they use wheeled toys to learn control and co-ordination. Babies are occasionally taken for local walks, for example, to feed the ducks nearby.

Pre-school children take part in music and movement activities and ring games, they enjoy the weekly 'Kindaroo' dance and movement sessions with a visiting teacher.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, friendly and suitable environment which is kept safe and secure. Children's security is a priority in the nursery. The entrances are locked, the garden well fenced, good procedures are in place to ensure children are collected by the appropriate adults. All the correct fire safety equipment is in place and regularly checked. Staff practise fire

evacuations procedures with the children. Children receive suitable support and are usually well supervised, but when toddlers are sleeping at rest time they are not always supervised, however, they are regularly checked. The premises are regularly risk assessed and any potential hazards and risks to children, both indoors and outside, are identified and minimised. Children begin to learn about keeping themselves safe, they are reminded not to run in the setting in case they hurt themselves or others.

Children have access to an adequate range of suitable resources. In most of the playrooms the toys are stored where children can easily access them, and can choose what they play with. The resources are all age appropriate and are used effectively to help children learn and develop. In the pre-school room the resources are well labelled and stored so that children select their activities and can easily put toys away when they have finished their play. Pre-schoolers have a lot of choice in what they do and what they play with.

Children are safeguarded because the practitioners understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures in place if necessary, including correct procedures if allegations are made against a member of staff. Information about the setting's safeguarding children's policies are in the parent's policy pack, but this is not easily available to parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled; they quickly chose activities and toys and begin to play when they arrive, they enjoy being at nursery. Staff use good procedures to help new children settle into the nursery they work closely with parents slowly being introduced to the setting. . Staff relate very well to the children, they offer lots of warmth and affection. They value the children and are interested in what they do and say.

The setting makes effective use of the Birth to three's matters framework to plan and provide a range of stimulating and appropriate activities for under-threes. They record the children's progress and activities using the Birth to three's matters framework and the first part of the local observation scheme that is used for the three to five year old children on the Foundation Stage of learning. Children enjoy the planned activities for example, the babies loved splashing and experiencing water play in the warmth and safety of their playroom.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and how to present activities that effectively promote children's learning and the different aspects of the early learning goals. Staff know the children they care for very well and are able to ensure children are engaged in activities that well help them to progress in their learning and move forward on an individual basis. The resources and play environment are attractively arranged into different areas, these are planned to ensure all areas of the early learning goals are equally promoted. Most of the adult initiated activities are planned around topics, children often help chose the topics, or they are suggested by the children's own interests.

The planning used is very effective, it is simple and easy to understand. Planning shows what staff expect children to learn from their activities and is closely linked to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff use the observations they make on the children's progress to inform the planning; at each weekly planning meeting they plan activities for the following week, using their observations of the children's progress. Staff are skilled at questioning the children, offering explanations and helping them to think.

Children are interested in what is happening in the setting, they are eager to learn and to try the activities. They are confident, they happily speak to the whole group at circle times. They are making choices in their learning, for example at circle time they decide on some of the resources that they wish to use that session. Children are learning very well to be independent. They go to the toilet and wash their hands on their own, they decide when to have their morning snack and pour their own drink of milk. Children learn to behave well and to consider the needs of others, they have made good friendships amongst themselves. Children co-operate well, they work together to help tidy up.

Children enjoy stories and can sit and listen very well, they understand that some sounds and words rhyme and can give examples of rhyming words in the story. They recognise sounds and letters and enjoy writing and mark making. They use name cards to help them to learn to read and write their own names. They are learning that they can find information in books, such as the names of different dinosaurs. Children learn about numbers, shapes and size and begin to solve problems in their play. They can confidently count the number of conkers they find in the sand tray. They compare the size of toy spiders in the role play area and use good resources for measuring and sorting. Children explore mathematical patterns with pegs and boards and use construction toys and puzzles to solve positional problems. Children persevere in their play and concentrate well.

Children learn about their own lives, the lives of others and about their environment in topic work. At present they are thinking about Autumn, Harvest Festival and Diwali. They are planning a Harvest festival when they will sing to parents and collect food items and then visit a local elderly people's home. Children use a computer and other everyday technology, such as listening to stories on a tape player, to support their learning. Children enjoy weekly French lessons from a visiting teacher. Children have good opportunities to explore different materials such as sand, water and collage materials. they enjoy using beans and lentils to make an Autumn collage. They have access to easel painting where they can explore colour and texture. Children develop their imaginations when playing in the role play area or with small world resources.

Children's physical development is encouraged when they play outside, or take part in activities such as music and movement. They have opportunities to climb and balance on the outside climbing resources, but these are quite limited and do not offer much challenge to more able children. Using a parachute indoors helps children to develop spatial awareness. When using tools and equipment such as scissors, pencils or the computer mouse, children develop their small muscle control.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued and welcomed into the nursery. A Special needs co-ordinator has been appointed to ensure that all children's individual needs are considered and met where possible, this includes any children that speak English as an additional language. Most staff know the children they care for very well; for example, staff in the baby and toddlers rooms are able to explain children's preferences when sleeping or eating or which activities they particularly like. Children benefit from using a good range of resources that help them to learn about diversity. These include puzzles, small world figures, books and puppets. Children begin to learn about other's and their own festivals, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Harvest, and Christmas.

Children are encouraged to behave well, staff are good role models and expect children to behave appropriately. They promote good manners, such as encouraging children to say please and thank-you, and waiting for others to finish at meal times. Suitable behaviour is praised and rewarded, children are very proud of their sticker charts, stickers are awarded when children are helpful or kind. In the pre-school room a 'we like to' chart describes the pre-school behaviour policy. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the nursery's close partnership with parents. Parents receive some written information about the setting and are invited to read the policy and procedures file which is kept in the office, this prevents them having easy access to these policies and procedures. There are informative notice boards at both entrances to the nursery, with information about the Birth to three's matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents receive termly newsletters and are invited to parent's and carer's open days. Parents of babies and toddlers receive daily information sheets to inform them about their children's meals, toileting, sleep and play activities. Staff ensure they exchange information with all parents verbally each day. Complaints procedures are displayed on the notice boards, an appropriate complaints record is in place and available to parents on request.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Information about the curriculum and the Foundation Stage of learning are displayed on the wall in the playroom, there is limited information about the curriculum in the written leaflets given to parents. The manager usually meets with parents when children begin their learning in the Foundation Stage to explain about the assessments and curriculum. The assessment records are available to parents at any time. Parents are invited to share their skills with the setting and help when the children go on trips or outings, they sometimes contribute items that are linked to the topics. Parents do not have many other opportunities to contribute to children's assessment records or be involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. Most staff are well qualified, they are encouraged to continue to attend appropriate training. All the adults in the setting are appropriately vetted and are suitable to have unsupervised access to children, the nursery has appropriate vetting, induction and employment procedures in place.

All the records, policies and procedures that help to ensure children's health well-being, safety and enjoyment are in place and suitably kept, including appropriate records of children's staff and visitors attendance. The nursery ensures that children have suitable care, attention and support by endeavouring to maintain correct adult/child ratios. The setting uses key workers mainly to complete children's observation records.

Leadership and management are good. At present the nursery has an acting manager, she receives good support from an area manager and the nursery deputy manager. The area manager ensures all staff have annual appraisals, when their development and training needs are discussed. The setting encourages training and values staff development especially within the company. Staff attend regular staff and planning meetings. The manager ensures she spends time in the different rooms of the setting observing practice, monitoring the provision and evaluating children's progress. The setting uses the self evaluation form well to review and monitor the provision they offer, they endeavour to listen to and act on parent's feedback and comments.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was set recommendations concerning the organisation of resources for toddlers, the organisation of lunchtimes in the baby-toddler room, and communications with parents in regard to repeated incidents and accidents. Staff have improved the toddlers' access to the toys, many are stored where the children can easily reach them. This has improved their growing independence. Lunchtimes in the baby-toddler room are appropriately organised, although children sometimes have to sit and wait for longer than necessary for their meals to be served. The setting is aware that parents must be informed of any ongoing incidents to ensure that children's safety and wellbeing is well promoted.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting had a point for consideration regarding varying the range of activities and the support of children's learning. Since that inspection the provision of activities in the pre-school room have been re-organisation. Children take part in a very varied range of suitable activities that effectively support their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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

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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 children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment
- ensure sleeping children are well supervised at all times.

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):

- provide parents with more opportunities to share what they know about their children's learning with the setting and to be involved in their children's learning in a positive way.

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