

# Abacus Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY243716
<b>Inspection date</b>	29 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Jane Pamela Berry
<b>Setting Address</b>	190 Greenmount Lane, Markland Hill, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 5JE
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<b>Registered person</b>	Nila Faulds
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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 Pre-school has been registered since January 2003. It is situated in a two-storey garage conversion in the Heaton area of Bolton. The provision is privately owned and managed

There is a large playroom on the first floor and an area on the ground floor which is used by a small group of children under three. A garden is available for outdoor play. There are 38 children from two to five years on roll, this includes 23 funded children. The group opens Monday to Friday from 08.30 until 17.45 for 51 weeks a year. It is closed for all Bank Holidays and for one week between Christmas and New Year.

Four staff, some of whom are part-time work with the children. Most of the staff have a recognised childcare qualification and the remaining staff are working towards one. There is a level 3 qualified manager on site. The setting receives support from a teacher from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff mostly implement good hygiene practices to minimise the risk of cross-infection, for example, they have effective cleaning routines in place. Children learn about personal care routines as they wash their hands or use anti-bacterial gel prior to eating and after toileting routines. Toiletries are available, such as a roll of tissue, however, children do not access these independently. Staff have a clear understanding of the sick child policy and appropriate measures are in place to minimise the spread of infection.

Children develop an awareness of healthy eating as snacks that are healthy and nutritious are provided, assisting children's growth and development, however, they do not have plates on which to eat their main meals. This offers limited awareness of hygiene as the children eat their sandwiches off the table. The children participate in activities in relation to healthy eating, for example, pictures of healthy and unhealthy foods are displayed to raise their awareness. The children also benefit from role-play opportunities, such as visiting the dentist. This helps to widen their experiences of caring for their teeth.

The children benefit from good opportunities to enjoy and develop their physical and coordination skills. They play outdoors each day and participate in gym sessions each week. This contributes to their good health and fosters good habits. They practise their ball skills, walk, run, jump, climb, slide, ride bicycles and scooters outdoors. Children combine a range of movements, for example, tumbling head over heels on a mat and climbing through the tunnel. They move at different speeds and change direction when negotiating pathways and space. They show increasing control when using tools, such as manipulating play dough.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a welcoming and stimulating environment. The rooms are attractive as children's artwork, posters and information for parents are prominently displayed. Space is mostly organised into areas and the children are able to move around freely between them. There is a good selection of equipment available, allowing children to play, rest and to eat in comfort, however, sometimes the heating is insufficient on the ground floor.

Children benefit from a wide range of resources being available to help children progress in all areas of their development. Toys are stored at child height, enabling them to access them freely to extend their play. Risk assessments are in place, however, minor omissions were noted, for example air freshener accessible at child height. The evacuation procedure is practised with the children on a regular basis to help them develop an awareness of what to do in the event of an emergency and fire exits are mostly clear of any obstructions, however, sometimes toys and a pushchair being placed near to an exit is potentially hazardous.

The children are well supervised enabling them to play safely and independently. Staff encourage children's awareness of how to keep themselves safe, through discussion and play activities, such as through activities on crossing the road safely and talking about 'people who help us'. Staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures, ensuring children's welfare. The policy has recently been updated to reflect changes including the process of dealing with allegations made against staff.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff interact with the children to extend their language, introduce new words and concepts and to encourage imaginative thinking. As a result, the children listen and respond well, however, staff have a limited awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and how very young children learn and develop, although, this is improving. The planning for the younger less able children is sometimes inappropriate to their stage of development. This results in children getting frustrated, for example, overwriting their name and abstract concepts being introduced too early.

The children often seek reassurances and ask questions of staff. They mostly benefit from sensitive and planned introductions that help them to form attachments with key staff, although on the day a couple of new children were upset. Children make connections and develop representation skills as they use natural and sensory materials. They enjoy a wealth of messy activities, such as making animals from play dough. They enjoy being imaginative as they play with a range of role play, puppets and small world resources. They are absorbed in their play with the bricks as they build tower blocks.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning in nursery education is good.

Teaching and learning for children over three years is good. The manager has attended training in relation to the Foundation Stage and information is cascaded to all staff. Staff prepare well for adult-led activities and use props to good effect. They ask open ended questions to extend children's language and development, for example, when children ask 'how can I find a space', the staff reflect the question back to the child. This encourages the children's thinking and reasoning skills. Staff ensure that all children have the opportunity to contribute at circle time and to listen and take turns. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a wide range of stimulating activities and play opportunities for the children. These are predominantly based on themes or topic work, although some flexibility is afforded. Staff observe the children during planned activities and they use this information to chart their developmental progress, however, spontaneous learning opportunities and children's personal interests do not currently inform the planning and are not utilised to full effect to identify the children's next steps. Staff complete children's developmental records on a regular basis and these show that the children are making sound progress along the stepping stones.

Children are engaged and occupied with a couple of exceptions. The children develop their fine manipulative skills and have fun as they roll and make biscuits using a spoon to divide the mixture into bun cases. They show care and concern for others. A child helps another child to fasten the dressing up clothes. The children develop their self-help skills as they use the bathroom semi-supported and put on their own coats before going out to play. The children are confident speakers and listeners as they talk to their peers and explain what is happening, for example, during stories of the 'Gruffalo' and 'The Princess'. They enjoy rhymes and familiar songs. They have opportunities to use a variety of tools to mark make and to ascribe meaning to words. Children are beginning to recognise their own name, although the board used for self registration is currently being updated. They are beginning to form recognisable letters and enjoy emergent writing, for example, the children's comments are scribed alongside some of their own work. The children sing and dance to music and explore sounds and rhythm. They

benefit from opportunities to re enact their experiences and to develop their understanding of the world in a wide variety of role play situations.

Children learn about mathematical concepts, such as number, shape, space and measure, through a variety of play activities. They are able to name the shapes of every day objects. They explore size when they talk about opposites. They explore concepts using sand and water and have plenty of opportunities to explore and investigate materials, such as scrunching in pasta, splashing paint and exploring with water, gloop and glue. The children have access to information technology and use equipment and to complete simple programs appropriately supported by staff. Children express their thoughts and ideas using a range of creative media and materials. This results in some very creative representations of themselves and others.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a good range of resources and play activities that reflect diverse lifestyles. As a result, they develop positive attitudes. The children celebrate festivals, helping them to value other cultures and traditions. The staff demonstrate a positive attitude towards children with a disability, they work closely with parents and other professionals to meet the needs identified. Staff mostly encourage parents to settle children in gradually, although there are some exceptions. The setting provides posters to show positive visual images of disability, race and cultural differences.

The children feel valued and they are developing a sense of their own identity as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff are good role models for the children as they respond to their needs and model how to behave. They have a good understanding of the behaviour management policy and are consistent in their approach. This has a positive effect on the children, enabling them to show care and concern for others, for example, sharing resources and waiting patiently to take their turn. Consequently, children develop an awareness of fair play and what is expected of them. The children develop a good sense of belonging. Staff encourage the children to make choices and experiment during their play.

Staff work with parents to settle the children in gradually. Effective systems are in place to keep parents informed about the activities and any forthcoming events. For example, staff meet with parents to discuss their children's progress and regular newsletters are distributed. Parents are happy with the services and activities provided.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is good. A comprehensive source of information regarding nursery education is made available to parents. Systems to gather information about children's starting points are in place. Parents feel they are involved in their child's learning and they feel well informed about their children's progress.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff plan and provide a range of interesting activities to help children develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. The children also benefit from activities outside of the setting to widen children's experiences in the community. Staff observe the children as they participate in activities and record their progress. The younger children have access to all the activities and benefit from small group activities with their key worker downstairs, although this is identified for further improvement.

The registered person keeps herself up to date with current legislation. The vetting procedures help to protect children, however, there is no system in place for the ongoing suitability of staff to be monitored over time. The induction procedure ensures staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff have regard for children's well-being as they attend training to further develop their practice. Nominated staff have valid first aid certificates ensuring they have up to date knowledge of what to do in the event of an accident.

Ratios are adequately maintained to promote children's overall care, learning and play. All the required documentation, policies and procedures are in place and these work well to positively promote children's health, safety and welfare.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager is responsible for the delivery of nursery education and she supports staff well. Regular staff meetings take place, ensuring effective and open lines of communication. The staff work well together as a team to meet the children's needs, although delegation is not utilised to maximum effect, for example, the monitoring of the delivery of the nursery education is identified for further improvement. This is predominantly linking observations of children with the next steps in the planning for children's learning and development. The management team have an awareness of the strengths and areas for continuous improvement and they liaise with the advisory teacher from the local authority. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection the provider was asked to comply with the fire officers recommendations, ensure all staff are aware of the behaviour management policy, review the policy in respect of safeguarding. The provider was also asked to review the planning to take account of the needs of children aged two years and to provide an appropriate system to record their development.

The provision has made satisfactory progress regarding the recommendations. All staff are fully aware of the policies and displays are used well to remind staff of the positive strategies used to manage children's behaviour. This results in children being responsive and successful. The safeguarding policy has been updated in line with the guidance to keep children safe from harm and staff know what to do in the event of a concern arising. The planning for children under three has improved, although further work is identified in this area.

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

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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):

- develop staff's understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- further develop systems to ensure the ongoing suitability of staff is verified
- ensure the heating on the ground floor is adequate and that fire exits are free from obstruction.

### **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):

- develop the staff's ability to use planning more effectively to meet children's individual needs
- ensure the curriculum is monitored and evaluated and observations are used to inform the planning to meet children's individual needs.

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