

Abacus Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106892
Inspection date	20 March 2008
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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 Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by the registered person. It opened in 1996 and operates from a two storey converted building in Brislington, Bristol close to the Brislington Park and Ride site and a main route to and from Bristol and Bath. A maximum of 84 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 except for Bank Holidays and the Christmas and New Year period. A holiday club operates for school age children under eight years old. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 72 children on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports some children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff who have direct contact with the children. Of these, seven including the manager have Level 3 qualifications. Two members of staff, one of whom is a qualified teacher, have Level 6 qualifications and a further three have Level 2 qualifications. The nursery is also a National Vocational Training unit and two members of staff are working

towards Level 2 qualification. The nursery also accepts trainees from educational organisations who are on recognised childcare courses. Staff have additional support from the registered person, a regional support manager, a finance assistant, the nursery cook and a cleaner. They also have a small bank of staff for emergency cover.

The nursery is working towards The Bristol Standard for Childcare quality assurance scheme. They receive support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where they learn to follow good hygiene practices. Staff have regular cleaning routines, such as cleaning the tables and high chair in between use. Clear instructions of how to clean different areas of the nursery and what material to use are displayed for staff information. A cleaner cleans all areas thoroughly three times a week. From a very early age Children learn the importance of looking after their personal hygiene. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before meal time. They are very familiar with the routine and they generally carry out the hand washing procedure independently. Older children take responsibility for wiping their noses and disposing of used tissues in the bin. The toilet areas are pleasant, clean and easy for children to use as they are adjacent to the base rooms. However, one toilet in the preschool area has lime scale deposits which may lead to the growth of germs if it is not removed.

Children's medical needs are met according to the criterion set out in the National Standards. A medication policy is in place and parents sign to give prior consent for any prescribed medicines which children need. Parents are informed immediately if children show signs of being unwell. For example, if babies are not eating or have a raised temperature. Parents are asked to collect sick children and they know that children with infectious illnesses are not accepted for care. This minimises the spread of infection to others in the nursery. Parents are also notified if other children are away with specific infectious illnesses. Minor accidents which children have during play are treated immediately as all staff have first aid training which is updated regularly. First aid boxes are accessible in the office and the baby rooms.

Children have freshly cooked balanced meals which are prepared on the premises by the cook. Staff discuss children's dietary needs with parents and a list containing food allergies and preferences is displayed in the kitchen, noting which days those affected children attend the nursery. Meals are planned according to the nutritional contents and various dietary needs. Children are very involved in snack time procedures and they take an interest in what is available to eat. Toddlers and preschool children visit the snack table when they are hungry. They are supervised as they have pieces of fresh fruit, such as pears and bananas.

Older children also explore the different tastes of exotic fruit as part of an activity following a story. They comment on fruits, which include mango, passion and kiwi fruit and say whether they like them or not. They also compare it to other more familiar fruit, for example, mango compared to peach. Staff encourage children to use their sense of smell, when they say they do not like some types of fruit.

Children are developing excellent table manner and lunch times are enjoyable and orderly social occasions where children sit in allocated places with a member of staff at each table. Children

are asked what they want to eat and they each spoon their choice of vegetables onto their plates. They show courtesy to others and do not start to eat until every one on their table has their meal. Children's appetites are satisfied as second helpings are available. Water is provided with meals and snacks and older children help themselves to water from individual containers. Babies are fed according to their individual feeding and sleeping routines and staff keep meals until they are ready to eat.

Children enjoy a range of exercise and outdoor activities that contributes to their health and develops their physical skills. The outdoor space is very well prepared for energetic play. Children have access to one of three play areas, depending on age, all of which offer stimulating age appropriate equipment which children can explore safely. For example, the babies play area is accessed directly from their base room and in fine weather the doors are opened so that children are able to move to the outdoor area which has a safe cushioned outdoor covering where babies can crawl and newly mobile children practise walking without the fear they will hurt themselves if they fall. Toddler age children use mobile toys, such as ride on cars and buggies, in their play area and negotiate the space well manoeuvring around obstacles.

Older children are invigorated by outside play. They play together on the swings and in the covered sand house. They also enjoy construction using wooden blocks and have good quality imaginative play as creative resources, such as the 'Exploration Case', are accessible to support this. Also, additional resources including workmen helmets and jackets, drills and hammers are kept in large outdoor storage units. Some children set themselves individual challenges, such as learning to balance and travelling on small skate boards. They use the skate boards creatively by lying on their abdomen and guiding the movement of the board down a ramp with their arms and legs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a spacious well organised environment where they move around freely and independently. All base rooms have large windows and are well lit by natural light. Laminated flooring which is continued throughout the building along with natural wood fitments in several areas, creates bright areas with a lively modern feeling. Children have access to carefully selected toys which are safe as they are of good quality and age appropriate which ensures that babies do not have access to small hazardous items. Toys are checked for breakages and are cleaned regularly to prevent them becoming a source of infection to children.

The security procedures are very good. This ensures that children arrive and leave the premises safely. The building is secure and has an intercom call system. Entrances and the car park are monitored by close circuit television which ensures that all visitors are checked before they enter the building. Base rooms have combination locks known only to staff and they let parents in and out when necessary. Children's general safety is given high priority and a risk assessment has been carried out of all areas in the building. Where risk is identified control measures are in place. Children practise a fire drill periodically so are familiar with the procedure for leaving the building quickly in an emergency. Sleeping babies are checked regularly and a baby monitor is also turned on so staff can hear if children are awake or distressed.

Children's wellbeing is safe guarded and promoted as staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes abuse. A policy is in place in line with the guidance provided by the area safeguarding children board. It includes the action to be taken in the event that a member of staff is accused of abuse. The policy and guidance are accessible to parents in the nursery entrance area. Staff

ensure that significant incidents and existing injuries which happen away from the nursery are recorded and discussed with parents. Where necessary discussions are held with health visitors. However, parents explanations of existing injuries are not recorded and verified and this may lead to a dispute about the accuracy of the information.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies have close and loving contact with staff and show signs of contentment and attachment to staff. The base room is spacious and they are free to move around and explore and handle the sensory toys. Staff play alongside children and model how some toys work so children can imitate the action, for example pushing levers or spinning. Children are developing their hand to eye coordination skills as they play with toys which fit into inset shapes bases. Staff encourage them and cheer when they achieve the correct slot. Babies' language development is encouraged by staff talking to them and encouraging them to make vocal sounds in response. Basic procedures, such as nappy changes, are happy contact time for children and the caring adult. Staff treat the babies respectfully by asking if they can change their nappies and sing and play with children throughout the procedure.

Toddler age children are developing well. Their base room is located on the first floor which has large windows. Children are fascinated by the movement of the vehicles and people in the large industrial estate below, and express awe and pleasure when looking at large Lorries loading and unloading their products. Children enjoy imaginary play and show their understanding of every day life. For example, a child places dough in a container and moves away from that activity area. She takes the container into the social corner and places it in the oven leaving it for a period. Children's language is extended through talk and staff reflect back single words said by children in sentence form so they begin to understand grammar.

Nursery Education

Teaching and learning are good.

Children are highly motivated and have excellent dispositions to learning. They select toys independently and concentrate at self chosen activities in small groups or individually. Staff make prior observations of children's preferences and interests and consider these when setting out toys for free play. Children are confident, outgoing and separate from their parents with ease after arriving in the nursery. They know the routine for finding their name label which they then place above an available coat peg and hang their coats.

Children's vocabulary is developing well and they use language to express themselves speaking confidently to their peers and to adults. They talk openly during large group activities and know when to comment and when to listen. Story times are fun for children. Led by an adult they repeat familiar stories, such as 'Little Rabbit Fu Fu' in rhyme form. They enjoy hearing each others voices and raise and lower their voices appropriately. Children can link letter sounds and words. For example, when prompted a child knows that M is for mango and O is for orange. However, the sounding out of letter sounds is not done consistently during everyday interaction. Also, although children have access to various prints and word labels which have meaning for them, for example toy and name labels, the alphabet line is not easily accessible for learning as it is displayed above child height.

Children are familiar with the purpose of numbers in everyday use. Staff place number card on the tables at lunch time with a colourful display of the quantity of items the number represents. For example, table three had the number and a picture with three pieces of fruit. Children are developing thinking skills and can add single numbers together without visual aids. Staff do 'Brain Gym' activities where children add two numbers together and they give the correct answers quickly. Children also show good understanding of regular and irregular shapes when constructing or doing jigsaw puzzles.

Children investigate nature and the natural world. As well as growing plants in the nursery's raised flower beds and pot, the nursery has pet African snails. Staff put the animals on the table so children can observe their shells, movement and eating habits. Children also observe the transformation of frog spawn into tadpoles as they are kept in a tank. Children are confident when using information technology. They can operate age appropriate programmes on the computer and show good mouse control skills. Staff use cameras frequently to take pictures that record play and progress. Children imitate using cameras during imaginative play.

Children are progressing well because staff have comprehensive understanding of the various teaching methods and have successfully begun to make the transition to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. There is a strong focus on meeting children's individual learning needs and also creating a stimulating environment for learning. Children's learning is also supported through practical experiences and encouragement to be independent and make choices. Creativity and elements of adventurous play is supported. For example, when a child chooses to lie on the skate board and travel down the ramp, she is observed but not discouraged from doing this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel good about themselves and show respect for others as each child is valued by staff who talk fondly about different children's characteristics. Children's individual needs are met in discussion with parents. Babies individual needs are especially well managed because, when required, they have individual sleep and feeding times. Staff gently put children to sleep by rocking them in their arms in a comfortable chair, in their buggies or by putting them in their cot then soothing them until they are sleep. Children are learning to accept differences and similarities between themselves and others. They know that there are different languages and some children use the Spanish greeting during imaginary play. Children also have access to books and dolls with positive images of culture.

Children are happy and very polite. Their behaviour is managed well as they are purposefully occupied with interesting activities. Staff ensure children know what happens next and there are smooth transitions between activities. For example, as well as verbal instruction, a sand clock is used so that children see how much time they have left before they begin to clear up. A visual timetable with symbols is also available. Children learn to resolve minor conflict about sharing, by using the sand timer clock and they negotiate, allowing others to use toys for a set period of time. Staff treat children with respect, showing children examples of polite behaviour by saying please and thank you. Praise is given often to affirm acceptable behaviour.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They observe at close hand some of the changes in living things, such as the changes in the frog spawn as they become tadpoles. Children also learn about the reproduction of new life as the large African snails lay eggs. Children have a strong sense of what is appropriate behaviour. As they listen to a story,

they comment on the characters and say whether they were right or wrong. Children's awareness of their own cultural heritage is promoted through activities which include Pancake Day and an Easter Egg hunt.

Staff work closely with parents and provide them with information about the setting and how children spend their day. Babies have bright individual day charts, which parents check to see what they have eaten, nappy changes and sleep time. Planning forms are displayed so parents can see what is planned for individual children and also for group play, and the worker responsible. Parents also have information through other methods including the nursery's information booklet, children's progress records, room transfer records and parents' evenings. Information about staff along with several books of photographs of children involved in various activities are also displayed in the reception area and a complaints procedure is accessible if required.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage through discussion and it is clearly explained in the nursery's information booklet. Children's progress in different areas of learning is recorded and evaluated. Staff share their knowledge of children's achievements with parents and talk about the things children like to do at home. This provides an all round view of each child which staff are able to take into account when planning individual development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by an experienced and well qualified staff group. Several staff have the Level 3 qualification required for supervisors and managers. In addition two staff have Level 6 qualification. The baby room supervisor has completed a suitable baby practitioner's course and is able to support staff as they care for the young children. All staff are safe to be in close proximity to children as they have completed criminal records checks.

Children are cared for in a calm and nurturing environment where their needs are met very well and they are supported and supervised by sufficient numbers of caring adults. The adult to child ratio is maintained at all times and staff support different areas by moving around base rooms when necessary. Contingency plans are in place for emergency or unplanned absences as the nursery has a small bank of casual staff or uses agency cover. National Vocational Qualification trainees are treated respectfully as part of the team and they work well alongside their more experienced colleagues and take responsibility for tasks, such as recording observations of children during play. Students from outside agencies are also managed well and are given guidance and supervision. The record of attendance is maintained as required and show the actual times of children's arrival and departure.

Record and written documents which support and outline care practices are well developed and are filed in working folders which are accessible to staff and parents on request. They include a risk assessment, a behaviour policy, and safe guarding children's policy.

Leadership and management are good.

The nursery has an established leadership structure that includes the manager and senior practitioners in each of the three base room areas. The manager is ably supported by a regional manager who visits the nursery several times a week. The register person also maintains contact with the staff and the running of the nursery. A key strength of the setting is the retention of

mature and experienced staff in all areas of the nursery. This is partly achieved through flexible childcare arrangements which ensures the needs of staff's own children are met through childcare provision and flexible work hours.

Staff development and progress is monitored through an annual appraisal system. They have opportunities to attend training courses to update and improve nursery practices. Plans are in place to use funding from a national scheme to train some staff to achieve the Early Years Professional Status. The registered person is committed to maintaining and improving on the high standard of care in the nursery and staff have currently evaluating practices and procedures through Bristol Standard quality assurance scheme. The registered person ensures that plans for development of the nursery does not alter the enriching, homely atmosphere which children and parents currently experience in the nursery. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection staff agreed to recommendations to: conduct risk assessments for outings and take action to minimise risks; make a complaints procedure, with the address and telephone number of the regulator accessible to parents; and review the operational plan.

The procedures for keeping children safe has now improved as written risks assessments are carried out for all trips. Staff ensure that children are not subjected to unacceptable risk by making sure that planned destinations are safe places for children to visit, transport is safe and suitable and sufficient numbers of adults are present to supervise children closely. Procedures for working with parents has also improved as a complaints procedure with the address and telephone number of the regulator is accessible in the nursery's information booklet given to all parents. The complaints procedure is also accessible in the entrance area of the nursery. The organisation of written documents has improved and a comprehensive operational plan is in place containing all the necessary and required written policies and procedures. All documents are easy to access for reference when necessary as they are kept in work folders or filed in draws.

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):

- further improve procedures for maintaining a hygienic environment for care and ensure lime scale deposits are removed and prevented from forming in the end toilet in the elephants room
- further develop the procedures for safeguarding children and ensure that parents' explanation of injuries or significant incidents that happen away from the setting, are recorded

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):

- improve the provision of nursery education and increase the opportunities for children to link letter sounds to words also, ensure that educational aids such as the alphabet line are displayed at a level where children can see and make use of them.

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