

Abacus Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Linda Close

Setting address Abacus Nursery School, Laitwood Road, LONDON, SW12
9QH
Telephone number 0208 6758093
Email info@myabacusnursery.co.uk
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Abacus Nursery School opened in 1994 and re-registered under the same ownership in 2008 due to a change of company name. It is located in three rooms on the ground floor of a church building in south London. Children have two enclosed outdoor areas for play and gardening activities. Access to the building is level and there are toilet facilities for the disabled. The nursery takes children from 12 months to under five years. Children who are in the early years age group who attend school locally during the day can attend for short sessions after school each day. The babies and the younger and older children are based in different rooms but the accommodation is used flexibly and children come together for meals and some activities every day. The group is open for five days a week from 08:00 to 18:00 hours for 48 weeks per year. There are currently 40 children on roll who are all within the early years age range. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A small number of children have learning difficulties and a small number are learning English as an additional language. A cook prepares meals on the premises each day. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide a maximum of 50 places for children in the early years age range. The manager and nine members of staff work with the children and all have appropriate qualifications and experience to at least NVQ level 2 and three members of staff are undertaking further relevant training. Students from local colleges and training organisations are offered placements in the nursery on a regular basis. The nursery is supported by a visiting member of staff who has Early Years Professional Status. Specialist teachers visit the setting on three days each week to lead music, drama and dance activities for children in all age groups.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The manager and staff work together successfully to promote children's learning through play and the children are making good progress given their age and starting points. Staff keep the children safe and secure at all times and the documents and records to support this work are mostly complete. The needs of every child are carefully assessed and staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are met. Self-evaluation is an ongoing activity and the staff team are all invited to contribute, which gives them a sense of purpose and involvement. Staff work closely with the Early Years Professional who is guiding them and supporting the development and continuous improvement of the setting's provision for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- continue to develop the organisation of the toys and resources for the older children to give them more opportunities for self-selection and the growth of their independence

- ensure that medication and accident records include the full names of the children and the member of staff providing care for them
- extend the risk assessments currently made for outings to include more detail about potential hazards at each and every venue visited with the children.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are checked for their suitability to work with children at the time of their employment. Effective deployment of staff ensures that students and new employees are always monitored and supervised by experienced nursery workers, which promotes the safety of the children. The provider is well informed about child protection matters and she shares her knowledge with the staff. They are confident that they know what to look out for and what steps to take if they are concerned about the welfare of the children in their care.

The providers, the manager and the staff team are guided by an Early Years Professional. Together they have re-evaluated the nursery's provision in the light of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS). They have reshaped their approach giving due regard to the guiding themes of the EYFS recognising children's individual needs, the development of positive relationships, the contribution that the learning environment makes to children's learning and development, and the unique way that each child learns. They have begun to note children's interests and the information gained is used to provide interesting opportunities for play and learning that meet children's individual needs. Staff have re-organised the learning environment in the main hall giving children more opportunities to self-select toys and equipment and children can use the outdoor area with greater freedom. Staff have plans to present the resources in a more accessible way in the room for older children.

Parents and carers say that the staff are kind and caring and their children are happy. They approve of the settling in procedure, which allows children to spend short periods with the staff to gain confidence and a feeling of security. Staff keep parents well informed about general welfare matters and they ensure that parental preferences are respected at mealtimes. Parents are welcome to share their child's progress file at any time and they are given a written report about progress once a year in addition to frequent informal contact with their child's key person. Children with learning difficulties are supported effectively and their progress is good.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff are attentive and supportive towards children who are settling in and any tears are soon replaced by smiles. The youngest children play peacefully in their own room where they can safely explore their environment. They play with stimulating toys and resources which attract their interest. These resources include treasure baskets filled with everyday objects for babies to touch and feel. They join the older groups for meals and some activities in the main hall, which provides stimulus, variety and opportunities for them to play with older children and siblings. Key staff remain with the babies at all times to support their play and

keep them safe. They gently soothe them off to sleep after lunch and take turns to remain in the room to monitor the sleeping children.

The main hall provides ample space in a very well organised environment for children under two years six months old. They eagerly engage in imaginative play in the 'Social Play' area where they dress up and take dolls in buggies on excursions around the hall. Building tall towers with large plastic bricks is a source of much excitement and laughter when the towers collapse. Children explore their toys and resources with rapt concentration finding new ways to play. Staff provide them with a good range of sensory materials including sand, water, dough and cornflour, and the children handle them with pleasure. Children look at books on their own and with staff and they listen well to stories. They are keen to take part in dance/drama activities with visiting staff. They lie down and play under a canopy of fabric, which they touch with their toes. They sing songs, clap hands, stretch, jump about energetically and the staff infect the children with their enthusiasm.

The older group of children become fully involved in adult-led and self-initiated activities. They make good use of the indoor and the outdoor area for play and learning. Staff set out an interesting selection of resources including construction toys, materials for planting seeds and a range of mark making materials that are used well. Older members of the group are interested in writing and they are beginning to write recognisable letters and numbers. The children take great interest in plants and animals. They look closely at spiders with bug viewers before gently and considerately setting them free outside. The children are well behaved and responsive. They listen well to stories and explanations and they ask thoughtful questions. Staff are planning to rearrange the resources on open shelving in the room for older children to give them more opportunities for self-selection to further develop their independence. Staff make good use of the local area to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They go on walks to the local library for story time with the librarian. They visit the park and they sometimes go to the market to see what is for sale. Children are eager to explore and learn which makes a positive contribution towards their future economic well-being.

Staff follow well established routines and procedures to maintain good standards of hygiene in the setting for the children. They explain to the children that clean hands are needed to eat snacks and meals. A trained first aider is present at all times and all of the required information and written permissions are obtained from parents to enable staff to promote children's continuing good health and well-being. Information about medication and accidents is recorded in a way which maintains confidentiality, although the names of staff and children do not include their family names which means the records are incomplete for future reference.

Healthy meals are prepared on the premises by a dedicated cook who is trained in food hygiene. Snacks include a tasty selection of fresh fruits, salad and raw vegetables. Most of the children eat very well and several enjoy second helpings with obvious pleasure. The provider brings seasonal, organically produced fresh fruit and vegetables to the setting from her own garden and the children also grow vegetables and salad ingredients at the nursery. In this way they learn about

healthy eating and they sometimes help to make fresh juices themselves. Children learn to keep themselves safe through learning about road safety on walks and outings and through learning to walk indoors to prevent accidents. Risk assessments are regularly carried out and recorded for the premises and for outings, although those for outings are not sufficiently detailed.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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