



## **Abacus Childrens Nurseries LTD**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY309106
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Stephanie Graves
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<b>Registered person</b>	Abacus Childrens Nurseries LTD
<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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abacus Children's Nurseries LTD, in Longfield, opened in 2005. The group operates from four rooms in a detached building in New Barn, Longfield, Kent. A maximum of 33 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children, aged from 3 months to under 5 years, on roll. Of

these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs seven staff. The majority, including the providers and officers in charge, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff currently working towards a level three qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are provided with a range of experiences, which help to promote their knowledge and understanding of good health issues. For example, they are encouraged to be independent with routine self help skills, including toilet visits and hand washing. Effective procedures help to prevent cross infection. These include the use of antibacterial spray and designated cleaning cloths to wipe surfaces and the use of aprons and disposable gloves for nappy changes. Children benefit from procedures which ensure they are taken care of, if they have an accident or become ill. For instance, accidents are recorded and children do not attend if they have an infectious illness.

Children understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Drinks are readily available and children have opportunities to pour their own. They are encouraged to make healthy choices regarding the food they eat. Meals are nutritious and appealing and include fresh fruit and vegetables. Some children bring packed lunches and healthy options are encouraged. Children choose from a good selection of fruit at snack times, including apples, bananas and grapes. They learn that some fruits should be washed before they are eaten, to ensure they are clean. Staff work closely with parents, to ensure children's individual dietary needs are met.

Children learn the importance of physical activity through the nursery education curriculum. They have regular opportunities to experience fine manipulative experiences and vigorous outdoor play. They are beginning to understand the effect physical exercise has on their bodies and know when they need to rest.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure environment. There is enough space for them to move around and play freely within safe boundaries. Toys, equipment and furniture are checked regularly, to ensure they are safe and appropriate for all ages and stages of child development. An effective risk assessment ensures potential hazards are identified and reduced. For example, all rooms and the outdoor play areas are checked each day and any safety concerns are addressed. Children learn how to help keep themselves safe through meaningful explanations and activities. For example, they understand the importance of sitting properly on chairs to avoid falling off and hurting themselves. They learn about keeping safe through activities

and visits from professionals, such as the police. They are taught about road safety and how to 'be bright and be seen' by wearing reflectors when out walking.

Children are well cared for, because effective procedures promote their welfare and safety at all times. This includes an emergency evacuation procedure, which is practised with the children and child protection procedures, which demonstrate a sound understanding of current requirements.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are comfortable and settled at the nursery. They confidently move around and choose from a range of stimulating toys, resources and free play experiences.

Children have secure relationships with staff, who know them well and spend time playing and talking with them. The younger children are not afraid to communicate their needs and ideas. Staff understand the range of experiences required to enable children to make progress in all areas of learning. The setting has implemented the Birth to three matters framework. Staff are developing their knowledge through ongoing training, to ensure activities can be adapted to meet the developmental needs of babies and young children. Investigation through resources including paint, malleable materials, construction and interactive toys, encourages children to represent their experiences and ideas, and make connections as they play. The group have implemented heuristic play, where babies and young children are able to freely explore a range of objects, such as tins, bowls, cardboard tubes and spoons, while staff observe and record developmental milestones.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Their starting points are identified upon entry and children are observed and assessed until they leave. The staff working with the children have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage; they are developing their planning to ensure they provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning covers the stepping stones and early learning goals. Activities are evaluated and the next steps in individual children's learning are used to inform future planning.

Children demonstrate a sense of belonging, as they play and learn together. They are confident, friendly and well behaved. They are becoming independent learners as they move around the room, choose their own activities and help to tidy away. They use a variety of tools to make marks and some are able to write their names using correctly formed letters. Children learn to link sounds and letters through meaningful activities, including educational computer games and when using their name cards. They enjoy stories and group activities, although some children often become easily distracted due to high noise levels within the room. This means other children are unable to concentrate and enjoy the activities provided. Environmental print, including labels and posters, helps to reinforce pre-reading skills. Children are gaining confidence with mathematical concepts, although numbers are not widely

displayed around the pre-school room to reinforce number recognition skills. Mathematical activities and books include those relating to shape and patterns. Children use simple addition and subtraction during every day routines, for instance, when counting numbers of children. They use language, such as 'big' 'full' and 'empty' to describe size and quantity.

Children learn about themselves and the wider world through topics and small group discussions. They learn about different cultures and festivals, such as St. Patrick's Day, and share their home experiences. Investigation through resources, such as sand and water, inspires children's curiosity. They become fascinated by the changing texture and appearance as they mix water into sand. This is creatively extended by staff, who ask effective questions, such as 'what does it feel like now?' to help children think and respond. Children are developing good hand eye co-ordination, for instance, as they pour drinks and confidently click and drag the mouse when using the computer. Regular use of the outdoor area, promotes children's developing physical skills. They can play with a range of resources, such as wheeled toys, hoops, bats, balls and climbing equipment. Children are creative and use their imaginations, for instance, as they take part in role play opportunities and action songs.

Overall the provision plans and provides activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed into the setting and are cared for according to their individual needs. This is because staff enjoy being with them and strive to include all children in all activities. The younger children are settled and comfortable, because they are regularly acknowledged and affirmed. They develop self assurance and confidence when making choices and seeking comfort or help. Children learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others through toys, resources and well planned activities, which promote positive images of diversity. They learn the difference between right and wrong, because staff are good role models and encourage children to be polite and kind to one another. They praise children regularly for their achievements and good behaviour, although some messages are not always delivered discreetly, which may affect children's self esteem. Children benefit from consistency of care, because staff and parents work very closely together to meet children's individual needs. The provider takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about all relevant policies and procedures.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents of children receiving funding for nursery education feel included and informed; they are invited in to the setting to share and discuss children's individual progress records. Planning is clearly displayed for parents, they are updated regularly about children's progress and they are invited into the nursery to share their special knowledge and skills with the children. This helps to contribute towards the continuity of care provided. Children's

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are comfortable and settled within a generally well organised environment. They feel secure and at ease with familiar staff and their surroundings and can access a range of play opportunities. Systems are in place to ensure the adults working with children are suitable to do so. Action plans are in place to ensure minimum staffing ratios and qualification requirements are met. Staff training needs are identified and addressed and the owners are both working towards gaining higher qualifications. The registration certificate is displayed and the necessary records are in place and shared with parents. Daily attendance records show clear arrival and departure times for children and staff. Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted, due to the policies and procedures, which underpin the group's practice.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the group strive to promote the personal development and achievements of all children. Parents receive information about the nursery curriculum and are kept up to date with children's progress. The integration of care and nursery education, promotes positive outcomes in all areas of child development, although children have limited opportunities to concentrate and focus in some areas of learning. The monitoring of teaching and learning ensures the overall effectiveness of the curriculum is evaluated. The provider is committed towards the continuing improvement of the provision. For example, the group receive support from early years advisors and have a positive attitude towards implementing any necessary changes. The group provides a professional service. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the time of registration, the provider received fire officer recommendations. These included ensuring the kitchen door was fire proof, to ensure regular checks are carried out by appropriate persons regarding portable electrical appliances, fire safety equipment and smoke alarms. Also to provide a written risk assessment and ensure all checks were recorded.

A further visit took place, recommendations have been addressed and a clearance letter has now been received. The setting has taken steps towards ensuring children are safe and well cared for at all times.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **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):

- promote children's self esteem by delivering messages discreetly when discussing their personal care needs, (also applies to Nursery education)
- continue to ensure staffing ratios are adequate and action plans clearly identify how minimum staff qualification requirements will be met.

#### **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):

- promote children's concentration and enjoyment of group activities such as stories, by devising systems to reduce noise levels
- promote children's number recognition skills by displaying number concepts within the pre-school room.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)