



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 106892

DfES Number: 530414

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	19/01/2004
Inspector Name	Timothy Butcher

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Abacus Day Nursery
Setting Address	6/8 Emery Road Brislington Bristol BS4 5PF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Ms Helen Driscoll
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ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Abacus Day Nursery opened in December 1996. It operates from four rooms (one on the ground floor) in a two storey building, in Brislington, Bristol. It is situated on the edge of a small industrial estate, close to a Park and Ride Bus Service, and within very easy travelling distance of the Avon Ring Road.

There are currently 62 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes 20 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The Nursery currently supports a number of children with special needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week, all year round, from 08.00 to 18.00, apart from Bank Holidays and the Christmas and New Year Holiday period.

Two part-time staff and twelve full-time staff work with children. Ten staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level two or three. One staff member is working towards an early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Abacus Day Nursery Provides good care for children. The nursery is generally well organised. There is a comprehensive operational plan that sets out policies and procedures. Some detail requires minor revision. Good use is made of staff and resources. The premises are in the process of refurbishment. Whilst the building work is going on staff are taking suitable steps to ensure that the care of children is not compromised. Children are grouped appropriately. The nursery is well resourced, with a good range of toys and play opportunities for each age group.

Staff promote good health and hygiene practices. Appropriate records are kept. Children's dietary needs are well met. Drinks are readily available for children in Hippos and Elephants rooms. Babies in the Panda room follow their own routines. Children are well cared for. Staff are vigilant about children's safety at all times.

There is a thorough risk assessment for the premises and positive steps are taken to reduce risks and prevent accidents. The risk assessment for outings requires recording in more detail. All staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures.

There is a good range and balance of activities and play opportunities for children in each age group that supports their development and helps them progress in all areas. Staff plan well for both Hippo and Elephant groups. Young children and babies have a less structure plan to take account of their routines and their differing needs. A small issue exists in regard to continuity of care when nappy changing. All children have the opportunity for play outside each day. A key worker system is in place and staff have a clear understanding of the individual needs of the children in their care. Plans reflect this and activities are adapted to meet the needs of all children.

There is a good working relationship with parents. There are a number of methods in place for ensuring that the child's day and progress is shared regularly with parents.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the nursery agreed to make a cupboard in the hallway safe and make repair to the building in regard to areas of concrete and flaking paint. The nursery has made the cupboard safe by removing the sharp fitting. As a result, the cupboard no longer poses a risk of injury to children. The nursery has embarked on a major plan of refurbishment to and extension of, the whole nursery. The building work is currently underway. When completed, possibly in March 2004, the whole of the nursery will have been refurbished, redecorated and extended.

What is being done well?

- Children are well cared for. Their individual needs are well met. A good relationship exists between children and staff. As a result children are happy and contented. Staff have good skills, appear enthusiastic and to enjoy their work, paying good attention to children.
- Good use is made of staff and resources. Children are grouped appropriately. There are sufficient staff working directly with children. Children in the panda room, for example, are not left crying or upset and have their need for attention quickly met. In the Hippo's room, staff are aware and intervene quickly to resolve minor differences between children before behaviour can escalate. As a result children learn to get along and treat each other with respect.
- All groups are well resourced. There are a good range of toys and play opportunities for each age group. These are sufficient in number and appropriate to the stages of development of children. Each group has sand and water play available, a soft play or quiet area, a home corner and space for floor play and table top activities. Toys, equipment and materials are used constructively to provide a balanced range of activities that promote learning in all areas.

- Staff promote the good hygiene and health of children. For example: through their own practices, when changing children's nappies; and by encouraging children to follow good practices themselves like hand washing. As a result, children have a good understanding of why they need to wash their hands before eating.
- Staff take the safety of children seriously. For example, children are closely supervised when using the stairs, premises are kept secure and access to the provision is monitored.

What needs to be improved?

- the operational plan, in some small detail and to make it more accessible to parents;
- the record of the risk assessment made when going on outings;
- the complaints procedure: in that it requires the regulator's address and telephone number.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Review the operational plan.
6	Conduct a risk assessment when on outings identifying any action to be taken to minimize identified risks.
12	Make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint that includes the regulator's address and telephone number.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Abacus Day Nursery provides effective nursery education and children are making generally good progress towards the early goals, with some areas being very good.

The quality of teaching is generally good and staff build positive relationships with the children. They engage with the children during activities and ask appropriate questions to make them think. Staff are very supportive on a one to one basis and give children time to develop self-help skills. They have a good understanding of the early learning goals and their planning shows how all areas of learning are covered throughout the day although, opportunities are sometimes missed to bring learning into free play and routine situations. Staff provide interesting and appropriate activities for children using a themed approach. However, more attention could be given to supporting and building on children's own ideas and imaginative development.

The leadership and management of the setting is very good. There are clearly defined senior roles with good opportunities for staff development. Regular staff meetings encourage team involvement in the day to day running of the nursery. Staff receive annual appraisals which identify strengths and weaknesses and training is organised as required. The nursery is committed to improvement of care and education for all children and is planning to work towards The Bristol Standard which is a recognised, early years quality assurance scheme.

The setting's partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Staff provide a friendly welcome and talk to parents about their child's wellbeing and achievements. Written reports on children's progress are maintained throughout the year and shared with parents on request. Parents receive information about the setting through newsletters and notices, which are clearly displayed. However, there is a lack of information about the Foundation Stage and how it is implemented in the nursery.

What is being done well?

- Staff's interactions with children encourage participation in activities and build good relationships.
- Curriculum planning covers all areas of learning and focuses on the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage.
- The wide range of activities and outings which develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The opportunities provided for children to engage in a variety of physical activities.
- The well structured support that staff receive from management.

What needs to be improved?

- the information given to parents to include guidance on the Foundation Stage and how it is integrated throughout the routine of the day;
- staff's recognition of the importance of children's early attempts at writing before more formal work is introduced;
- the integration of mathematics in all areas of the setting and throughout the routine of the day so that children gain an understanding of its practical application;
- the opportunities and support provided for children to develop their own ideas and imagination through child initiated, rather than adult led role play.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to (1) provide children with more opportunities to recognise numerals and (2) find ways of recording children's findings by the use of graphs and charts. At that time the nursery curriculum was based on the Desirable Learning Outcomes which has now been superseded by the more appropriate early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. With this new curriculum it would be considered inappropriate for children of three and four years old to be expected to understand the concept of using charts and graphs to record data.

However, since the last inspection the staff have considered the provision for mathematics and have set up a designated maths area. Children are encouraged to select materials for classification and simple maths games. In addition there are interesting posters and resources around the room which clearly show numerals in written form.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are interested and eager to try new activities and actively participate in large and small groups. They are given time to develop self-help skills through dressing, bathroom routines and serving their own food and drinks. Most children show confidence when they separate from their parents and clearly have good relationships with the staff. The children are well behaved. They respond well to the praise and encouragement of staff and demonstrate a caring attitude towards each other.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

The children use language to communicate and make their needs known. They join in with familiar songs and listen to stories. They confidently offer opinions and answer questions posed by staff. The children have access to writing materials in meaningful situations, although there was no evidence of emergent writing. The labelling around the room provides a print-rich environment. Most children recognise their own written name. Worksheets are used to teach letter formation.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

There is a wide range of resources that allow children to practice counting, sorting and weighing. Displays around the room to help children to recognise numbers, and group times are used to practise counting skills. However, opportunities are missed for simple calculation, at snack time for example. The children are gaining an awareness of quantity and measure through sand and water play. They also use mathematical language such as more and less, bigger and smaller, in play situations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children show curiosity in their environment and engage in various themed role-play situations. They make good use of the outdoor area and are often taken on trips in the local vicinity. The children have easy access to a wide range of materials for building and construction. There is also a computer available and most children are able to operate simple games. Various festivals are explored throughout the year and children talk of past experiences with family and friends.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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There is an emphasis on outdoor play where children run, jump, climb, and move wheeled toys with control and co-ordination. They eagerly join in with weekly music and movement sessions with a peripatetic teacher. They learn to 'warm up' their muscles before exercising and they gain balance and body awareness. Children's fine manipulative skills are developed through regular access to threading, building, painting, drawing, cutting and malleable materials which all encourage good pencil control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have access to materials and resources for painting, drawing and model making. There are wall displays of children's own work and adult-directed art work. Role play is supported by a wide selection of well organised, props and dressing-up clothes and staff regularly change the focus of the role play area. However, activities and role play are often adult directed. The peripatetic music teacher encourages children to express themselves through a range of movements and action songs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- provide parents with information about the Foundation Stage and how it is integrated throughout the routine of the day
- provide more opportunities and support for children to develop their own ideas and imagination during child initiated, rather than adult led, activities and role play.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.