

Abacus After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Anthony Mundy

Setting address Hacton Primary School, Chepstow Avenue, Hornchurch,
Essex, RM12 6AU
Telephone number 07903708764
Email sharon.annewilliams@ntlworld.com
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Abacus Out of School club at Hacton School, Hornchurch, opened in 2006, in in the London Borough of Havering, and is registered on the Early Years, compulsory and voluntary Childcare registers.

The club is open each weekday from 3.10pm to 6pm during school terms. All children are pupils at the adjacent primary school. A maximum of 26 children aged from four to eleven years may attend at any one time. Currently 14 children aged from four to eight years are on roll. The club is based in the school dining hall, with access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor area. The club employs four members of staff. Three have an early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The children are happy and secure, and the club offers a good range of activities to promote their learning and social development. All children are pupils at the adjacent primary school. Relationships between staff and children are consistently good. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the club's family atmosphere and the close attention given to every child. Managers are focused on continual improvement and have prioritised areas for development. They have good capacity for sustained improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- strengthen the system for monitoring observations and assessments to ensure it is consistently linked to the planning of activities
- refine the current self-evaluation process to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development
- extend opportunities for children to use a range of large equipment in the outdoor area to ensure children have consistent chances to gain in all aspects of their physical development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding is outstanding. Safe recruitment procedures guide staff appointments and induction processes are extremely thorough. The managers and all staff are regularly trained in procedures for safeguarding and child protection. They understand clearly how to respond to welfare concerns, and are vigilant in ensuring that children understand how to keep themselves safe at the club, and in the community.

Parents and carers nominate individuals to collect their children at the close of a session, and a password system helps to verify unfamiliar adults. A secure environment is maintained by a daily programme of checking the environment for risks which includes health and safety checks. In addition a fire drill is practised by the children each half-term. Each drill is timed, recorded and reviewed to emphasise to children the importance of responding immediately and calmly to sudden danger. All adults have first aid certificates, and one has a paediatric first aid certificate.

All staff contribute to a self-evaluation process accurately identifying the club's strengths, although this includes some areas of improvement currently there is less emphasis on this aspect. However, the managers are resourceful and responsive, and are keen to improve their provision and have considered some areas for improvement based on informal assessments of their practices and procedures. The single issue identified at the last inspection has been addressed to ensure that play resources now promote ethnic and cultural diversity.

Engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. They are always welcome at the club, and participate in activities whenever possible. They receive very detailed information about the club through regular newsletters and lots of high quality information is displayed on the notice board. The extremely strong partnership working with parents ensures high responses to the clubs regular questionnaires. Parents use the questionnaires as an opportunity to share their high level of appreciation for the club's services. In the reception area, an album of contemporary photographs contains an array of photographs which show the number of different types of activities the children participate in. Parents and carers are informed each day about their children's experiences and successes. In discussion during the inspection, they expressed high regard for the commitment, thoughtfulness and helpfulness of staff, and parents and carers highlighted the staff's skills in quickly settling young children at the club. They confirmed their children's delight in attending, and the daily anticipation of a variety of interesting activities. They recognised the club's encouragement of their own contributions to their children's learning. One parent said 'The club always responds to our suggestions for activities, and will buy toys especially for individuals'.

Resources are good overall, in good condition, and are effectively deployed to offer challenge and stimulation for all children. However children do not always benefit from a full range of toys to promote their large motor skills. The managers are aware that this sometimes limits children's experiences in some areas of physical development. Although most families and children are of white European heritage, many resources, including books and dressing up clothes, have been selected to promote ethnic diversity. Planning includes the celebration of numerous festivals, including Diwali, St Patrick's Day and Australia Day. Consequently, children have good knowledge of a variety of cultures and religions.

The club has a good working relationship with the school which the pupils attend. Pertinent information is shared on a daily basis to provide continuity of care between the school, the club and parents. The club has a similarly good relationship with the local authority.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children enjoy attending the club, and they make good social and educational progress. Staff respond promptly to their individual needs and preferences, guided by meticulous policies and procedures to maintain children's health and ensure their safety.

Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They ensure that children learn through their play activities, and they have good knowledge about what each child knows, enjoys and can do. However the system used to link this knowledge to planning activities for children is not yet fully developed. Children are engaged in a variety of interesting activities, including gardening, soap making and trading on a market stall. Staff contribute well to each activity, they make timely interventions and provide good levels of advice and encouragement to children. Younger children, new to the club, spontaneously discussed their activities as they played computer games and ball games, often with older children. As a group, they closely followed staff's instructions when mixing ingredients to make soap. A good variety of resources encourages children to engage in reading, mathematical and construction activities, puzzles and games including table skittles and table football.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles, including the importance of regular exercise. The youngest children can name some healthy foods and, at teatime, are encouraged to add finely cut vegetable pieces to their pitta bread or sandwich options. At all times, they select and pour their own drinks. Children have satisfactory access to physical play in the building, and good access in a small outside area. Further away, the school playground is large, but the club does not have the variety of resources to use it fully. During the inspection, children lined up engagingly, with adults and a variety of prams, dolls, balls and plants to make their way to the adjacent outside area for a gardening and games session. In the limited outside space, their behaviour, and their consideration for each other, was outstanding.

Relationships between children and staff are consistently good. They listen to each other with good humour and mutual respect. Children know that staff value them, and will always respond to their suggestions and requests. Staff are very reassuring. They speak kindly and calmly, encouraging good peer relationships by engaging children of all ages in common activities. Through this attentive interaction and consistently good care, children feel safe and secure in the building and outside areas.

Children's behaviour is consistently good, and is sometimes outstanding. They are developing valuable skills for the future, including attentive learning, persistence in activities and the exchange of opinions and feelings. They always care for each other's welfare.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met