

# Abacus Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 131802  
**Inspection date** 10/11/2010  
**Inspector** Christine Stimson

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**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).

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 pre-school is a committee run registered charity. It opened in 1992 and operates from three halls within the premises of The New Malden Methodist Church, which is situated in the centre of New Malden, Surrey. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.10am to 12.10pm term time only, and a parallel group runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.30am to 12.30pm term time only.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 52 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 46 children aged from two years to under five years on roll, some in part time places. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language and are able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are 12 members of staff, including one who is a qualified teacher and eight who hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2. Two members of staff are currently studying for an Early Years Foundation degree. The setting provides funded early education for three and four year old children, and is part of the Local Authority Quality Assurance Scheme.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are supported by staff who provide a range of stimulating activities that engage and challenge children, resulting in them making good progress in their learning. The manager and staff have established good relationships with parents, which help children's development and promotes inclusion. The manager and her staff embrace training opportunities to improve outcomes for children, and self-evaluate their practice to ensure continuous improvement. Children are cared for by staff who have a sound understanding of how to protect children from harm. Risk assessments are carried out on the premises, but basic smoke detection equipment is not in place. Improvements have been made since recommendations were raised at the last inspection; however, activity planning for individual children, based on their next step observations, is yet to be implemented.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure appropriate fire detection and control

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equipment such as smoke detectors and fire alarms are provided on the premises and kept in working order.

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

- ensure a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines are kept on site for referral and that it is in line with your Safeguarding procedures
- create learning plans for each child based on information gained from observations and next step notes. Make sure next step details are acted upon to ensure every child's learning journey is unique.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are safeguarded by the staff's sound knowledge and understanding of their duty to protect children from harm. They are confident about who to contact if they have a concern about a child in their care. Safeguarding procedures are shared with staff and parents, but the pre-school do not have a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines on site for referral. All adults working with children have been vetted for suitability. The pre-school undertake daily risk assessments on the premises and outdoor areas to ensure it is a safe environment for children to play. Children regularly practise the fire drill to ensure they know how to leave the building quickly and safely. Fire extinguishers are in place together with a fire blanket in the kitchen, but there is no smoke detection equipment within the ground floor area where children play.

The manager is keen to continue to strengthen her provision and the recent self-evaluation has provided her with a focus for improvement. For example, she has identified the need to ensure that the topics they cover encourage opportunities for all learning styles and respond to children's cultural experiences at home. The manager recognises the importance of staff embracing training opportunities to improve outcomes for all children. All records and regulatory documentation is maintained to further safeguard children's welfare. Parents' views have been sought through questionnaires and their replies have helped the manager to identify strengths and weaknesses, with the aim to improve practice.

Children are provided with a wide range of toys and equipment that are suitable for their age and stage of development. Staff are deployed well and a high staff/child ratio is maintained. Staff set out activities based on group planning, and other items can be selected by children as they are kept at child height in boxes, marked with pictures and labels. This enables children to make a choice in their play. Staff sit with children as they take part in activities, asking open questions to make children think. Since the group's last inspection, when three recommendations were raised, there has been an improvement in practice. Children can now access water throughout the session if they are thirsty and independence is encouraged at snack time as children attempt to pour their own drinks. The pre-school has divided the children into two groups to ensure they are

provided with sufficient and suitable challenges. The pre-school were asked to develop record keeping of children's progress to show clear links between observations and planning. Learning journeys are now in place, and comments in these are based on staff's observations of the child's achievements. However, next step notes are not yet linked to the planning of activities, which is written for the group and does not target individual children.

The pre-school provide a service to all families, maintaining positive relationships with parents by keeping them informed about their child's progress. Learning journeys are sent home each half term for parents to look at, and they are encouraged to add comments to it about what their child does and says at home. Staff are available at the beginning and end of sessions to talk to parents. When children first start, parents can stay with their children until they feel settled. Currently children at the pre-school do not go to any other care providers, but the manager is aware positive relationships need to be established, to ensure continuity of care and learning, if this arises.

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

Children enter the setting with confidence and choose their name labels from the table where they have been put out. Most are able to do this unassisted by parents who come in with their children. Parents leave and children are happy to go off and play, joining together to explore the activities set out on the tables. Some friendships have formed and children are happy to see each other. Children have access to a wide range of colourful resources within their rooms. Activities, set out on tables, are both challenging and age appropriate. For example, in the hall where younger children play, there is lots of construction equipment to stimulate children's imaginations. Road tracks, started off by staff, enable children to build, extend and create interesting roadways on which to run their cars. Other children explore torches and find out from staff, and each other, how they work and what makes them light up. Older children have lots of opportunities to make marks, using paper attached to clipboards and tubs of pencils that are left out for children to make notes as they play. Some of the writing shows children are forming letters, whilst others use pincers to pick up magnetic letters they recognise as being in their name.

Each day one child from each group is chosen to be "Star of the day". They are given a certificate detailing the reasons they have been picked, which is usually because they have been kind, helpful or achieved a goal like speaking up in a group situation for the first time. Other children receive star stickers that identify one good thing they did that morning. This boosts children self-esteem and confidence. Children often have role play and re-enact their favourite story using props and dressing up clothes. Children confidently use the mouse on the computer, clicking and dragging as they work their way through the programmes already set up for them. Children from both age groups are competent users of

two-wheeled bikes that are supported by stabilisers. This is a popular activity during each day's physical playtime, so much so that an egg timer is used to make sure children take turns and share. Numbers are explored through singing songs, and through using number lines in rooms and outside. In the hall where younger children play, a table to stick cut out shapes onto coloured paper has been created. Examples of each shape have been laminated in a larger form, and children are encouraged to identify them. Children make any picture they like, but the member of staff suggests a house and some children choose the square shape for the house and a triangle for the roof.

Children's health is promoted as the pre-school encourages parents to provide healthy snacks for their children. These are consumed during a café style snack time, enabling children to choose when to take refreshments. Drinks are provided throughout sessions to prevent children from becoming dehydrated. Daily exercise is taken either in the large hall upstairs or out in the small playground. Bikes, scooters, sit and ride cars, climbing frames, balls and tunnels are provided to help develop children's physical skills. Children have learnt about their bodies and are aware their heart is a muscle. They are encouraged to run fast to see if they can detect a change in their heart beat. Children's safety is important to the staff, and regular talks with children about road safety, with scenarios re-enacted in the outside area, are conducted by staff. Children are learning to behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others, with staff offering explanations about sweeping up sand in case someone slips over. Children are well behaved, occupied, join in, cooperate and share with each other following the example set by staff, who act as good role models.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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