

Abacus Nursery and Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY309870

Inspection date

22/11/2010

Inspector

Sue Hall

Setting address

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Telephone number

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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 Nursery and Childcare is a non-profit making company and a registered charity. It was registered originally as St. Nicholas Early Years Centre which opened in September 2005. The setting operates from the grounds of St. Nicholas Primary School in New Romney and is currently open from Monday to Friday during term time. A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time and is open from 7.50am to 6.00pm. It incorporates a pre-school nursery and out-of school club. The out-of school facility which is open for breakfast from 7.50am to 8.50am and after school from 2.50pm to 6.00pm, uses a kitchen area, school hall and adjoining outdoor play area. Children in the nursery are based in a designated mobile unit with access to several secure outside play areas. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting serves the local and surrounding area. There are currently 63 children on roll, of whom 31 receive funding. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. There are 12 staff working with the children. Ten staff hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications and the other two are qualified to hold roles in food preparation. The setting receives support from the local authority and The Pre-school Learning Alliance. The setting works in collaboration with St. Nicholas Primary School and other local schools, for example, in supporting children through transition to primary education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals because the staff share an excellent understanding of how to meet the needs of all the children both in the nursery and out of school activities. The manager provides excellent leadership which ensures that parents are delighted with the quality of provision and all children are fully included in a very interesting range of activities. There is very clear understanding of what works well and where improvements can be made which has ensured excellent progress in meeting the recommendations from the last report. Staff are very well qualified and there is a clear commitment to undertaking additional training which supports the capacity for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- consider reviewing the provision for nappy changing facilities and adult toilets to ensure the best quality provision.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager of the setting provides excellent leadership by embedding ambition in the staff team and by driving improvement. The safety of the children is a very high priority which is reflected in good policies and routines that ensure everyone is kept safe. Site security is well considered and there are very careful checks made of those who work with the children to ensure their suitability. Health and safety are clear priorities. For example, careful dating of the milk and juices used at breakfast shows when cartons were opened and when they should be used by. Pastoral care is of high quality as seen in the warm greetings that staff give to children and in how they respond with cries of delight on their arrival. There are well organised systems for first aid reflected in the care given to a child in the breakfast club who slips and bangs their arm. Parents are very well informed should a child need, for instance, to use an inhaler. Daily risk assessments are carried out on the premises and with more searching checks made on a regular basis. However, while there is broadly adequate provision for nappy changing and for adult toilets, these are cramped and shared and are not of the same high standard seen in other parts of the setting.

Links with parents and carers are outstanding and those spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in their praise for the setting. Adults and children are involved in discussions about how well things are working and what could be improved. Children have been instrumental in deciding what else they would like in the outdoor refurbishment and when deciding on a bridge they looked at catalogues and this helped influence decisions. There are weekly newsletters that inform parents including when policies are being reviewed. These are available for all and the manager takes on board their ideas and those of the setting's directors and external advisers. The setting has recently updated its policy regarding staff use of mobile phones on the premises. This further enhances children's safety.

Self-evaluation procedures are excellent because the setting listens to and acts upon the suggestions of others. A recent audit identified that lunchtime arrangements for the youngest children included a move to another much noisier building where the older children were. Subsequently changes were made to routines which are much more suited to the age and developmental needs of the children. The staff also responded very positively to areas for improvement made in the previous inspection and changes were made which has ensured what was already a successful setting has continued to improve.

Resources are of excellent quality with a particularly strong feature being in the development of very stimulating outdoor learning areas. While indoor space is limited, every inch is used to promote learning and personal development. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well catered for. The manager leads this area of provision and liaises very well with external services. This ensures that for example very well tailored and specific support is provided for identified children and their families. Transfer arrangements into local schools are carefully considered to meet individual needs. Parents of children speaking English

as an additional language are carefully consulted resulting in support that is individually tailored to the different needs of the children and their families.

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

Children really enjoy their time in the nursery. They make outstanding progress in all areas of their early learning and personal development and achieve very well. The curriculum provides an excellent balance of child-chosen and adult-led activities. This is illustrated in early morning activities where children are encouraged to work with their allocated key worker alongside lots of opportunities to make choices in their learning. Some older children in the nursery enjoy making 'junk' models or sea pictures when listening to an audio CD of sea sounds whilst others choose to play outside. Here they make excellent progress in their social development by cooperating with others. They enjoy using bikes and trikes around a track area and working out where to store their trikes by labelling these with their names for future use. Similarly children using an interesting array of plastic tubing and enjoy watching how the water changes direction when moving along the zigzag arrangement of pipes attached to the wall. Children in the out-of-school group also make choices in what they do which supports their personal development well.

Children have an excellent understanding, for their age, of how to keep safe. They know that when they are using equipment outside they have to be aware of others too and they learn to share and take turns well. Children in the out-of-school group also realise they must make sure the youngest amongst them is safe when they play 'the ice cream' game. All children have a very good understanding that eating healthily is important for them. Staff ensure that daily menus are well balanced and very good quality; appetising meals are cooked on the premises. Nursery children are widely encouraged to try foods that are new to them as noted in parent comment books. Children have the opportunity to make a contribution to their nursery community by taking on small responsibilities, such as ringing the bell and announcing 'the snack shop is open'. They are also involved in work for local, national and international charities. Children in the nursery are very well behaved because they are keen to live up to the high expectations of the staff. Because they are treated with respect and given appropriate responsibilities this helps them grow in confidence which prepares them well for their future.

Children learn and develop an excellent range of skills because of high quality contributions from the adults working with them. The well organised system of key workers ensures continuity and consistency for all children. Staff are very good at using lots of questions to encourage the children to develop their vocabulary well, for instance, when discussing what happens to soft modelling materials when they are squeezed or twisted. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is supported very well by the development of natural areas outdoors including the bird-hide where they are encouraged to observe and identify the different types of bird in their area. Children are encouraged to learn how to start to make marks to record their ideas and have lots of opportunities to estimate and count different items. There are excellent systems to observe and record what children do which

feeds into the production of individual records of 'My Unique Journey' which are much valued by parents. Such information is used very effectively to ensure an excellent range of stimulating activities is provided.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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