

Abacus Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Christine Williams

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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 School is privately owned and opened in 1998. It operates from four rooms within converted, single storey buildings. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is situated in a small business site in the Lickey End area of Bromsgrove. The nursery is close to main commuter and motorway links. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 75 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special education needs and there are suitable procedures for supporting children with disabilities and children with English as an additional language.

There are ten members of staff, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ Level 2 or 3. Four members of staff are qualified to degree level, two staff member have achieved Early Years Professional Status and another is a qualified teacher. The setting provides funded early education to three and four year olds and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This highly innovative nursery provides outstanding care and early education for children. Rich, stimulating learning experiences, combined with high quality early years teaching, ensure children develop to their full potential. All areas of children's welfare are promoted to an exemplary level and their well-being is significantly enhanced through high levels of support. The outstanding partnership with parents, local schools and other agencies is a key strength and makes a substantial contribution to the exceptional outcomes achieved. Inspirational leadership and highly motivated staff work effectively together; evaluating everything they do and ensuring that best practice is consistently maintained.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extending opportunities for children to recognise that their learning journeys and achievements are unique to them.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Senior leaders are highly effective in ensuring children are safe. This is achieved through rigorous attention to child protection, safety, vetting and recruitment procedures. Staff have all received up-to-date safeguarding training and demonstrate a high level of awareness and understanding. For example, they understand that children often communicate non-verbally and that this can be significant in recognising safeguarding issues. Protocols and practices for referrals are clearly understood and ensure staff are well placed to respond to any issues that may arise. Important information about children, such as collection and living arrangements, are gained from parents and notice boards around the nursery highlight the role all adults play in keeping children protected and safe. Security arrangements are robust and flexible attitudes, policies and everyday practices are highly successful in promoting children's welfare.

Leadership and management is outstanding; the nursery's inspirational manager provides exceptional leadership, and staff are fully focused on the needs of children. Development planning is aligned to local and national early years initiatives and those in charge are proactive in seeking out new ways to enhance the quality of the nursery. Outcomes for children are evaluated, monitored and measured and the expertise and skills of a united staff team combine to ensure that a high quality service is provided across the nursery. Staff constantly update their knowledge through training, research, regional networks and conferences. For example, some staff have taken additional training on specific issues such as 'loss and change' and this has been used extremely well to support and prepare those children who have had to deal with unexpected challenges in their lives. Much of the nursery's work is innovative. For example, initiatives to promote healthy eating has included helping parents to recognise the high sugar contents of some fruit drinks; and this is helping to change attitudes and practices.

The setting has excellent knowledge and experience of multi-agency working and effective links with several local schools. This ensures they are able to play their part in ensuring that children receive timely and well-coordinated support, both during their time at the setting and when moving on to school. Transition arrangements are effective, with visits from reception teachers and close contact with school staff ensuring that children and their families are fully supported when it is time to move on to full time education. Partnerships with parents are exemplary. Parents are highly complimentary about the nursery and highlight the extremely strong bond that exists between nursery and home as one of its key strengths. They talk enthusiastically about the progress their children are making and are appreciative of the nursery's caring and knowledgeable staff. Parents say they feel listened to and respected. Their views are sought regularly through informal conversations and formal evaluations. When parents suggest things, the nursery strives to put these in place. For example, parents' asked for simple ways of being informed about what their children do each day and this information is now displayed on a white board.

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

Children make outstanding progress and show high levels of confidence and self-worth. They are confident, happy, healthy and adventurous which is key to their future success. Children gain much from the superb range of high-quality learning experiences that spark their imaginations and curiosity. For example, there are tubes, tyres and ultra violet light resources to experiment with, as well as hiding dens and comfortable places where they can snuggle up to soft toys. These build on what children know and extend their learning across all areas. Children's progress is continuously observed, monitored and extended. Excellent early years teaching and education strategies, such as 'Every Child a Talker', make valuable contributions to children's progress and ensure that all their needs are met.

Children show exceptional independence and are eager to take on new challenges. Excellent resources encourage them to work things out for themselves and four year olds show great pleasure when learning more complex skills. For example, they beamed with pride when using a number square to help them to count to 100. Children are taught to be kind, gentle and to share; for example they willingly say 'sorry' if they accidentally bump into each other. Children's efforts and achievements are celebrated through displays, photographs and videos, although there is room to do more to support children in recognising the uniqueness of their own learning journey.

Children's language skills are supported to an exceptional level. They love chatting to staff and each other and the latest early years strategies are used very well to develop strong early reading and writing skills. Fun games, songs and rhymes linked to phonics help children link sounds to letters and they draw, make marks and write their own names at every opportunity. There is a wealth of different books to look at and enjoy; including those that staff have made about children's own families or the people they know. Stimulating projects and challenging activities build on children's own interests, and are used particularly well to support the different learning fascinations of both boys and girls. For example, there are lots of opportunities to find out how things light up, move or come apart. As a result, children confidently use cameras, load their pictures onto digital picture frames, search for insect or use torches to make light patterns in the dark den. Children become engrossed in their imaginary games, creatively express their ideas in their artwork and construction play and listen to lots of different music.

A rich range of learning experiences fully support children in understanding about the benefits of a safe and healthy lifestyle. Many creative and innovative ways are used to help children grasp complex things; such as how germs are passed through touch. Their daily routine is carefully balanced to ensure they have lots of fresh air, exercise and rest and children enjoy a quiet period after lunch, doing simple yoga exercises or listening to classical music. Strong physical skills are built as children slide, pedal, balance and crawl in the nursery garden. Fresh fruit, raw vegetables and interesting foods such as fresh popcorn are offered at snack time and children learn about food as they cook biscuits and help to plant, tend and pick fruit grown in the nursery garden. Strong messages about safety ensure

children know how to be careful; particularly when pedaling their bikes. They know how to behave responsibly and are confident to try new things because they know staff are always close by to help.

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