

Abacus Children's Nursery

Kingfisher Drive, Walderslade, Kent, ME5 7NX

Inspection date	10/12/2014
Previous inspection date	18/09/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children and babies play in a safe, welcoming, friendly environment, where they are able to select resources independently.
- Staff work well together as part of a team, deploying themselves effectively to meet children's needs well.
- Staff have good relationships with parents which helps to meet children's individual needs and promote continuity of care and learning.
- Staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding matters and give high priority to children's safety.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not follow risk assessment procedures, put in place to minimise the hazards in the environment, to ensure that babies are kept safe and healthy at all times.
- Staff provide the children with fewer opportunities to see the written word in the outdoor environment to extend their literacy and communication.
- Professional supervision is not sufficiently embedded in practice to ensure the quality of teaching improves outcomes for all children.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector sampled a range of documents on the day, including self-evaluation forms, action plans and children's records.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the director.
- The inspector observed staff's interactions with babies and children and spoke to them at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took the views of those parents spoken to on the day.
- The inspector held discussions with the director, the manager, the special educational needs coordinator and playroom staff at appropriate times throughout the day.

Inspector

Sara Garrity

Full report

Information about the setting

Abacus Children's Nursery registered in 2006. It is owned by Abacus Children's Nurseries Ltd. It operates from a purpose-built single-storey building in the grounds of Kingfisher Primary School in Chatham, Kent. There is a secure outdoor area. There are currently 105 children on roll aged from birth to up to five years. It is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for two, three and four year old children. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm, all year. The nursery serves the local community and children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery has two directors and employs 14 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate qualifications at National Vocation Qualification level 3 or above. The nursery also employs four lunchtime supervisors and has two apprentices who are completing their National Vocation Qualification at level 3. The nursery has close connections with the local children's centre and receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure staff carry out daily risk assessments and follow set procedures to minimise any risks to the health and safety of the children and staff in their care.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- extend children's learning by providing a rich outdoor environment, where children are stimulated by visual representations of numbers and letters
- continue to support staff improve their skills and knowledge to ensure they have the expertise required to able them to provide consistently high-quality teaching experiences.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff provide the children and babies with an interesting array of activities and resources, which immediately engage them. All staff have a clear understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, which helps to support children's learning and development effectively. The children use the resources on offer to expand their play. For example, they placed the cars in the sand to make sure they were very dirty before taking them to the pretend car wash to clean them in the bowl of water. Children used their imagination to become actively involved in their play and learning. Staff interacted with the children, encouraging them to share the glittery modelling dough with their friends. Staff broadened the children's experiences, as they compared and contrasted to see which was the biggest piece of dough as well as who had rolled it out the thinnest. Consequently, children have suitable opportunities to improve their mathematical knowledge. There is a good balance of both adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff make good use of spontaneous events, as for example they encouraged the children to touch the worm they had found in the garden. Staff expanded this further as they helped the children examine it with the magnifying glass. Staff are supporting the children to learn about the world around them by exploring their immediate environment as well as investigating the variety of natural resources on offer inside.

Children have cosy areas where they can read independently, as well as join in storytelling activities. They enjoyed listening to the little pigs story, brought to life with props. The children eagerly joined in 'huffing' and 'puffing' as the wolf appeared. The staff encouraged their participation as well as developing the children's storytelling skills, recalling what will happen next. Babies also independently access the book area to sit and look at books. Children demonstrate a keen interest in literacy. Staff provide the children with many opportunities to see words and signs in the playrooms. However, there are limited opportunities for children to learn that words have meaning in the outdoor environment. Children enjoyed chattering away with staff and friends, talking about the Christmas play they had taken part in that morning. Staff listen to the children and respond well by asking appropriate questions. However, some staff miss opportunities to interact and talk with the babies to expand their communication and language skills.

Staff carry out observations on the children to assess their learning. They keep records of their progress, which means they have a sound understanding of the children's individual abilities in all areas of learning. Staff make effective use of their assessments to plan activities based on the children's interests and stage of development. They provide the children with educational programmes that offer them interesting activities that are suited to all their needs. Staff complete the progress check on children at age two as well as reports ready for children moving on to school. They have developed positive relationships with parents, who are supported well to encourage their children's learning at home.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The nursery environment is secure and welcoming to all children and their families. The key-person system helps to ensure children receive support and consequently bond well with staff. Staff work closely with parents, gathering information so that they are able to meet children's needs, therefore supporting babies and children's ability to settle and

enjoy their time at the nursery. The buddy system enables children to have a familiar person to turn to even if their key person is not around. Staff support the children to learn about routines with the use of time lines and picture cards, which help the children to understand what is happening next throughout the day. Staff reassure and comfort children who become fractious and upset due to change in routines, for example, when joining in the Christmas play. The staff explain what is happening, as well as being close by for a reassuring cuddle. This enables children to feel valued and comfortable at the nursery.

The children's behaviour is appropriate to their stage of development. They are becoming confident and developing their self-reliance. Children show they are happy and participate in activities. They behave appropriately and staff encourage them to follow the rules of the nursery, for example, walking when inside. Staff praise the children when they offer their chair to a friend so that they can join in an activity. The children enjoy interacting with friends and inquisitively explore the interesting play resources and activities. Staff have a sound understanding of how to organise the nursery so that children feel valued and accepted. Children, including those who are receiving support from specialist services, enjoy being at the nursery and show confidence in staff who successfully enhance their self-reliance and progress. They have developed good relationships with other schools and professional agencies to provide help and advice. This helps to ensure that children are making progress from their initial starting points.

Mealtimes are social occasions. At snack times, the children sit in small groups to enjoy the variety of foods on offer. They pour their own drinks and help tidy up plates and cups. At lunchtimes, children sit in large groups to eat their healthy packed lunches prepared by parents. Staff encourage the children to try to open packaging and offer lots of praise for their achievements, as well as being close on hand to assist where needed. Staff are aware of any allergies or food preferences the children might have. They work closely with parents to ensure that the children have healthy meals during the day and learn about a healthy diet. Children have water available to them throughout the day, which helps them to develop an awareness of their own needs.

The children have daily opportunities to play outside in the large garden area. They enjoy climbing to the top of the large frame, practising their coordination skills as well as developing their muscles. They carefully manoeuvre bikes and pushchairs around the path, making sure they do not bump into friends or staff. The children are learning to manage their environment and developing a sense of their own and others' safety. The staff provide the children with plenty of opportunities to exercise outside in the fresh air. Therefore, staff are strengthening children's interest in developing a healthy lifestyle.

Children show they are keen to manage their own care; they wash and dry their own hands after using the toilet and before eating meals. Staff support the younger children where needed, however they do not always follow the nursery's risk assessment procedures to minimise the risk of cross-contamination when changing babies' nappies. As a result, staff do not fully assure children's well-being.

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

The management team have a sound understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children. Staff are vigilant at all times and are aware of the safeguarding procedures to follow if they have any concerns about children. They also have a clear understanding about whistle blowing and their role in protecting children. The management have put in place comprehensive risk assessments to manage the hazards in the nursery. However daily checks on the environment, and procedures put in place to minimise the risk of cross-contamination are not closely followed. Therefore, staff do not sufficiently maintain children's health and safety at all times.

Robust recruitment and vetting processes help to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Regular supervision and annual appraisals enable on-going professional development. The management recognise the importance of training and encourage all staff to regularly attend training sessions. However, supervision and monitoring of staff's practice are not always sufficient to ensure all children receive high-quality teaching and learning experiences throughout the day. All staff have up-to-date paediatric first-aid qualifications, enabling them to offer prompt care and attention in the event of a child becoming unwell or having an accident.

All previous recommendations have been addressed, which demonstrates a commitment to self-evaluation and improving practice. The management have a sound understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. They have taken into account the views of parents and children when reflecting on the service they provide. The management team have clear action plans in place to drive the nursery forward, which improves the outcomes for children.

Staff work well together as a team, and deploy themselves effectively to meet the needs of the children throughout the day. The staff monitor the children's progress to enable them to plan a stimulating and engaging environment. They receive support from the special educational needs coordinator to put in place targeted plans to address any concerns.

Parents benefit from regular verbal communication with their children's key person as well as daily notices about what they have been doing in the nursery. The nursery provides parents with leaflets and newsletters about events happening in the local community. The parents spoken to were extremely pleased with the support they received from all staff. They commented that the staff were approachable and friendly. These close connections that staff have formed with parents, means that children receive the right support they need throughout their time at the nursery.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

actions)

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health and safety of the children and staff in their care (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health and safety of the children and staff in their care (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY331809
Local authority	Medway Towns
Inspection number	834693
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	105
Name of provider	Abacus Children's Nurseries Ltd
Date of previous inspection	18/09/2009
Telephone number	01634 863 332

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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