

Inspection of Abacus Children's Day Nursery

Valley Court, Barras Lane, Carlisle CA5 7NY

Inspection date: 14 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive and make exceptional progress in the truly inspiring, language-rich environment created by highly professional and knowledgeable staff. Staff know the children exceptionally well and have a detailed knowledge of what children are interested in and what they need to achieve next. They seamlessly weave this through everything that children do while in their kind and safe hands. All children excel in their development. They develop independence skills from an early age, from the 'Baby Owls' to the 'Big Bears' and 'Big Badgers' pre-school. When children bring in items such as a forest tree cutting toy from home staff, quickly introduce logs and leaves into trays for children to act out their own experiences of tree felling. Staff are highly motivated and have high expectations for children. They ensure that their quality of teaching is pitched at the highest level to engage children and support their learning. Staff use favourite stories to increase children's concentration and attention span and build on their love of reading. Children enthusiastically join in and staff model clear pronunciation, which further enhances children's speech and language.

Children's behaviour is exceptional. They learn to manage their feelings and emotions and treat each other with kindness. Children flourish through the secure emotional attachments which are established with nurturing staff. They show that they feel safe through the confident way they tackle new skills. Children listen carefully to staff's clear instructions while using real hammers, saws and nails in the woodwork shed. They know how to keep themselves safe and confidently put on safety goggles and gloves before using the tools by themselves. Children's resilience is fostered well. They persevere with challenging tasks and show excellent determination to do up the fastenings on their clothing and while serving themselves at mealtimes.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The leadership team has a clear vision, ethos and sharp focus on continually evolving the outstanding facilities available. In addition, the high priority on supporting staff's professional development continuously maintains the high quality of education children receive. Staff say that they are extremely well supported. They enjoy working at the nursery and say that their well-being is a high priority.
- Children are exceptionally well prepared for their move from room to room and on to school. Staff provide fantastic learning experiences and ensure that all children have the knowledge and skills to prepare them well. Staff support children's understanding of what makes them and others unique. Children learn about their own cultural heritage and about the local community and natural world around them. Staff introduce discussions about climate change and

encourage children to think about saving the planet. Children learn to sit quietly in groups. They listen attentively when others speak, and spontaneously sing songs and rhymes. Older children count securely from one to 10 and learn a range of mathematical language. Children effortlessly explain what they know and hold thoughtful conversations.

- The quality of education, teaching and learning is outstanding. There is a very strong emphasis by managers and staff in providing a broad and balanced curriculum. The impact of this on what children know, understand, remember and can do is exceptional and highly effective. Children demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and engagement in the interesting opportunities created for them. Staff's knowledge of the importance of early years and child development means that they know how to promote children's learning very effectively. For example, staff place great emphasis on early reading. They provide high-quality reading materials for children to enjoy and constantly read with children, who develop a real desire to look at books.
- Staff demonstrate a deep understanding of children's learning needs and consistently deliver high-quality interactions that build on children's speech and language skills effectively. For example, pre-school children enthusiastically engage in listening games. They listen carefully to a hidden instrument and decide what it is from the sound it makes. Younger children predict what happens in a favourite story and learn to take turns while playing with their friends. Children consistently hear and use new vocabulary that enables them to communicate effectively. They speak with increasing confidence and fluency, which means that they are developing secure and strong foundations for their future learning.
- Staff support children to develop excellent physical skills. Babies learn to control their body while navigating undulating winding pathways, stepping up and down, or climbing in and out. Toddlers develop their large-muscle skills. They move well as they walk up steps and access balancing equipment outside. Older children pedal wheeled toys with gusto around the paved areas and climb on static tyres buried in the safety surface. They learn to handle real tools with care and develop their small-muscle skills while participating in numerous art and craft activities.
- Parents and carers are passionate about the help, advice and support they receive, including during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic lockdown. Each child's key person contacted the families weekly by telephone and through an online platform. They shared photos, home learning resources, stories via video links and gave parents suggestions for activities. The high focus on children's health, including oral hygiene, continued when they returned to the nursery. The excellent engagement with parents means that information is shared to help to support children's learning in the nursery and at home. Parents cannot praise the staff enough. They are eternally grateful for obtaining professional help when needed, and they are extremely pleased with the progress their children make, which they say is down to the staff in the nursery.
- Children in receipt of funded early education and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to reach their full potential. Staff working with the children have an exceptional understanding of their learning and

physical needs to ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes. Children's progress is constantly monitored, and rapid referrals are initiated to ensure that interventions are obtained when necessary. This results in children making exceptional headway in their development. Children's health and medical needs are catered for with precision, which enables children to participate fully in the routines of the setting.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The managers and designated safeguarding leads have a very secure knowledge of safeguarding and child protection. They clearly describe their role and responsibility to keep children safe and the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child in their care or an adult working with them. Staff are equally aware of the indicators of abuse, including any concerns associated with female genital mutilation or radicalisation. Staff take part in team discussions, and they access a wide range of training opportunities to keep abreast of topics such as online safety. Robust recruitment procedures and regular checks of ongoing suitability ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. A culture of implementing detailed risk assessments ensures that children play in a safe and secure environment. Accidents that occur over time are regularly reviewed to identify anything that can be changed to further protect children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY493351
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10207304
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	186
Name of registered person	Abacus Children's Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP534879
Telephone number	01228 712888
Date of previous inspection	2 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

Abacus Children's Day Nursery registered in 2015. The nursery employs 35 members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6 and have also achieved qualified teacher status, three hold qualifications at level 5, one holds a qualification at level 4, 17 hold qualifications at level 3 and three hold qualifications at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carys Millican

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and managers and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of education and carried out a joint observation with the manager to assess the impact of staff's teaching on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to children about their play and learning.
- The inspector held discussions with managers about the design of the curriculum and how it is being implemented.
- Discussions were held with the leadership and management team.
- The required documentation was reviewed, including paediatric first-aid certificates and evidence of staff suitability checks.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through face-to-face discussions, telephone calls and written testimonials.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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