

Inspection of Abacus Children's Nurseries Ltd

Balcarres, Southfleet Avenue, LONGFIELD, Kent DA3 7JG

Inspection date:

29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Weaknesses in safeguarding practice mean that children's safety and well-being are put at risk. Furthermore, although children enter the setting happily, they are not all offered the support and teaching they need. For example, leaders and staff fail to provide a curriculum that meets all children's learning needs, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teaching is inconsistent across age ranges and, at times, is weak.

Not all children benefit from purposeful interaction or play experiences to support their identified next steps in learning. For instance, younger children wander around and drift between activities, even though they are identified as needing support in their social skills and communication and language. There are limited resources in certain areas of the setting. Some children become disengaged and do not engage in any purposeful learning. However, there are times when children enjoy interactions that consider their interests and next steps in learning. For example, a new child is encouraged to join in with activities that encourage collaboration and teamwork. Children hunt for animals that have been hidden in places in the garden. They become excited when they work together to explore the grounds. They build confident and secure relationships during their play.

Most children behave well. However, some children are not given the encouragement they need to develop good social skills. At times, staff do not challenge children in their behaviour when, for instance, children shake their heads and refuse to follow instructions. Despite this, children have access to some activities in the garden that engage their interest and support their self-initiated learning. For example, children explore with magnifying glasses and enjoy investigating the natural world.

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

- The safeguarding knowledge and understanding of some staff are not secure enough. Although all staff have had safeguarding training, leaders have not identified that some staff do not know how to recognise signs that a child may be at risk, including from extreme views. This compromises children's welfare.
- Leaders and staff do not complete adequate risk assessments to keep children safe. They fail to identify and remove some risks, including failing to deploy staff effectively during key times. For example, there are insufficient staff to meet children's care needs well, and staff do not recognise when items may pose a choking hazard to young children.
- Leaders do not have effective oversight of the learning curriculum. Although staff plan educational programmes to support children's interests and aspects of learning, they do not effectively build on what children already know and can do.

Due to weaknesses in teaching and in staff deployment, some children play without any interaction from staff for long periods and are not included in the activities. As a result, while happy in their play, children do not make good enough progress in all areas. Leaders do not ensure that staff have a good enough knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. For example, staff working with the toddlers are unsure how to support their development. The arrangements to support the learning for children in the pre-school are more successful.

- The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator works closely with other agencies to provide consistent support for children with SEND. However, at times and due to poor staff deployment, targeted strategies are not effectively put into practice. This has an impact on the amount of progress children with SEND make.
- Staff provide parents with information and photos of their children. Parents feel that they can approach staff with any questions or concerns they may have. They share key information about their child's specific needs and feel confident that this is communicated well among staff.
- Children are encouraged to follow appropriate hygiene practices. They wash their hands before mealtimes and learn to wipe their nose. Children are provided with a range of healthy foods during mealtimes. This helps to raise their awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- The manager is unable to undertake her role effectively due to staff shortages. Although leaders have clear intentions for staff induction, these are ineffective due to workload constraints. Consequently, monitoring of all staff is not sustained well enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The manager and staff do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection matters. Some staff are able to recognise when children may be at risk of abuse and know how to report this. However, there are staff who do not have a clear understanding of different types of safeguarding issues, in particular the 'Prevent' duty guidance and county lines. The information that leaders provide to staff is not always accurate. This means concerns about children may not be identified swiftly. The provider ensures that all staff working with the children have a suitable Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

| | Due date |
|--|------------|
| ensure that all staff have a robust, up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and know how to promptly refer any child protection concerns | 19/10/2022 |
| provide better support for staff to know how to assess risks and take action to keep children safe | 19/10/2022 |
| ensure there are enough staff, effectively deployed, to be able to supervise children and to effectively meet their needs | 19/10/2022 |
| ensure that staff have a thorough understanding of how young children learn to enable them to plan purposeful and challenging learning opportunities and a learning environment to improve outcomes for children | 19/10/2022 |
| ensure staff understand the importance of maintaining positive behaviour and attitudes for all children | 19/10/2022 |
| implement a robust key-person system to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their needs, in partnership with parents. | 19/10/2022 |

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

| | Due date |
|--|------------|
| implement effective systems to support children with SEND to ensure that targeted plans are delivered effectively. | 19/10/2022 |

Setting details

| | |
|--|---|
| Unique reference number | EY309106 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10214220 |
| 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 | 1 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 33 |
| Number of children on roll | 34 |
| Name of registered person | Abacus Children's Nurseries Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP905440 |
| Telephone number | 01474 702190 |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 October 2021 |

Information about this early years setting

Abacus Children's Nurseries Ltd registered in 2005. It is located in Longfield, Kent. The setting is open Monday to Friday, from 7.30am until 6pm, all year around. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The setting employs five members of staff, three of whom hold a relevant early years qualification at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kate Williams

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022