

Inspection of Abacus Children's Nurseries Ltd

Balcarres, Southfleet Avenue, LONGFIELD, Kent DA3 7JG

Inspection date: 10 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children continue to receive inadequate care and education at nursery. The provider has failed to maintain all areas they started to develop following the last inspection. As a result, similar actions have been raised for breaches of the statutory framework. However, staff now have a secure knowledge of child protection matters. Recent staff changes, particularly in leadership roles, have meant that the provider has struggled to ensure that the training she has implemented has a positive impact on the children.

Staff do not give children clear behaviour expectations. For example, they tell toddlers to share when conflict occurs over toys with no explanation about how to manage this. At lunch time, all children are asked to wait to eat until everyone has their food but there are significant wait times. Some children ignore this, and those waiting struggle to do so. Staff do not identify that this is not appropriate or adjust their approach accordingly. Despite this, overall, children's behaviour is suitable. Older children begin to form friendships.

Staff support for children's learning varies widely. The curriculum intent is not age-appropriate to ensure that all children receive suitable learning experiences. Babies have more limited opportunities for suitable learning as the curriculum is not ambitious enough. For toddler and pre-school aged children, the expectations of learning are too great, with a heavy focus on literacy. In addition, not all staff interact with children to support their learning appropriately. As a result, children's learning needs are not being met.

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

- There are not enough qualified staff members to meet requirements. The lack of qualified staff means that aspects of children's care and learning are compromised. For example, staff move around between rooms to try and balance the numbers of the children. At times, children become upset that their close adult has left them. As a result, children do not receive continuity in their care and learning. The key-person approach is not effective.
- The new manager has a significant workload covering several roles within the setting, including being a key person. She has limited opportunities to focus on staff development and training. Staff report that they feel supported. However, the manager's time limitations mean that not all weaknesses in practice are highlighted or addressed. Consequently, concerns were raised at inspection that were not known to the leadership team.
- Parents report that they feel their children have made progress since attending the setting. However, communication is not consistent. Not all parents are aware of their child's key person or the focus of their child's next learning step.

- Not all children receive suitably challenging learning opportunities. Babies in particular, have fewer opportunities to have purposeful learning. For example, on the day of the inspection, some babies had already made Valentine's Day cards on another day and there was no other planned activity for them. Pre-school children have more appropriate sequenced activities. For example, they build on their interest of colour by mixing paint; children explore and predict the changes that might happen.
- Staff do not have a clear understanding of how to deploy themselves to be able to meet the needs of children effectively. They do not ensure that they communicate with each other well enough when routine tasks need to be completed, such as cleaning up. As a result, they focus too heavily on these tasks and not on the needs of children.
- Staff do not provide consistently engaging activities. This impacts on children's interest in learning to support their development. Children do not have opportunities to be engaged in purposeful learning, or thrive in their development. Children do not learn a range of skills to support them to be ready for their move on to school.
- The provider has made improvements to the support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The new manager works with outside agencies to seek advice and guidance. Generally, children get some of the support they need, however, weaknesses in other aspects of staff practice and interactions impact on all children at the setting.
- Staff work well to give all children appropriate outside learning experiences each day. They communicate well with parents as children have a good range of outdoor clothing to support them to explore. For example, children practise throwing beanbags into containers and climb up the steps to the slide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff are not able to adapt their risk assessment knowledge to ensure children's safety. For example, staff do not always recognise when babies are walking around eating. This continues to be an area of concern raised at inspection. However, staff have appropriate knowledge of indicators that may suggest a child is at risk of abuse. They have received training and have maintained their knowledge. Staff know the procedures to follow to if they have concerns about a child or conduct of a colleague.

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 staff have a suitable understanding of how best to deploy themselves to consistently meet the needs of children, with particular regard to those caring for babies	10/03/2023
ensure that the minimum qualification requirements are met to ensure that children receive good quality care and learning experiences	10/03/2023
ensure that staff understand how to promote children's good behaviour and give clear explanations to support their understanding of what is expected of them	10/03/2023
raise the quality of teaching so staff have a clear and realistic understanding of what children need to learn to ensure that they make consistently good progress	10/03/2023
ensure that the key-person approach is consistently implemented for children to have their individual care needs met throughout the day	10/03/2023
ensure that staff have a secure knowledge of risk assessments to support the safety of children, with particular regard to the babies.	10/03/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY309106
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10258957
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	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	29 September 2022

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, two of whom hold a relevant early years qualification at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Taylor-Smith

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and the provider to talk about the development of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss the curriculum intention for children's learning.

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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