

Inspection of Abacus Ark

1-4 The Parade, Regents Plaza, Kilburn High Road, LONDON NW6 5TR

Inspection date: 20 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are confident and motivated to learn in this warm and happy nursery. Staff value each child and have high expectations of them. They find out about and follow babies' care routines from home. This helps babies to settle happily. Children enjoy activities and concentrate well. Staff take time to find out about children's interests, which are reflected in the curriculum. All children develop valuable skills in preparation for school.

The curriculum is varied and interesting. Children gain a good understanding of the world. For example, staff plant and grow seeds with children. Children learn about and respect difference. Staff play songs from around the world and discuss different cultures with children. They ensure that children have access to toys and resources that reflect different races, religions and cultures. Children act with care and caution. For instance, they wipe water spillages to prevent accidents. Staff teach children a good awareness of road safety.

Children are expressive and creative. For instance, they enjoy exploring movement of coloured lights and different textures in a sensory room. Children play different musical instruments as staff sing songs with them. They use a range of tools and materials to draw and paint pictures. Children learn to share and take turns well. For instance, they share outdoor toys and resources.

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

- Children develop good mathematical skills. Staff make the most of everyday opportunities to teach children how to count. For instance, children count the number of aprons needed for a group activity. Staff teach children mathematical language to describe shape and size, such as 'square', 'circle', 'long' and 'short'.
- Staff support children's communication, language and literacy development well. Children practise their language skills as they show and talk about interesting items from home. Staff read stories and sing action rhymes and songs, which helps children to learn new words.
- Children gain good independence skills. Older children take on roles, such as helping to lay the table at mealtimes and snack times. All children learn how to put on their coats and shoes. They help to tidy away at the end of play sessions.
- Children behave well. Staff share group rules with children, which are displayed in pictures to remind children of positive ways to act. For instance, children use quiet, indoor voices and listen to others.
- Children gain good physical skills. The outdoor area is spacious and provides good opportunities for children to develop climbing, balancing and jumping skills. Staff organise challenging games using balls and cones to develop children's physical coordination skills. They also enjoy a range of activities to support

children's physical development further, such as yoga.

- The manager supports staff well. She discusses staff's work performance with them regularly and provides support where needed. This includes one-to-one coaching for staff from an early years specialist. The manager promotes staff's well-being. For instance, she ensures that staff have access to subsidised self-care treatments, such as massage and aromatherapy.
- The manager is keen to develop staff's skills and knowledge of staff. She provides access to a wide range of courses to enhance their skills. For instance, staff attended a course on understanding babies, which has led to improvements in this area.
- The manager identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery through regular evaluation. She sets clear goals for improvement, such as developing the curriculum further to promote best outcomes for children.
- Staff work effectively with parents. Parents describe staff as friendly and caring, and felt they were kept well informed of their children's progress. Staff give parents ideas on activities to carry out at home to support children's progress further.
- Staff have started to teach children about oral hygiene. However, this has not been fully developed to support children's awareness of how to keep their teeth and gums healthy.
- The manager ensures that meals and snacks provided to children are well balanced, nutritious and meet their special dietary needs. However, staff do not consistently help children to learn about the value of eating well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff regard children's safety as paramount. They carry out daily cleaning and safety checks covering all aspects of the nursery to reduce the risk of hazards. Staff are vigilant about children's safety outdoors. They complete thorough risk assessments to ensure that children are protected from harm. The manager carries out comprehensive background checks on all staff as part of the recruitment process. Staff have good safeguarding knowledge. They are aware of possible signs that a child might be at risk of abuse. Staff know the procedures to follow to report their concerns to keep children safe. They attend regular training to keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- extend children's awareness of good oral hygiene further
- develop children's understanding of the value of eating well consistently and more fully.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY459238
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10279851
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	Abacus Ark Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP532378
Telephone number	0207 625 5337
Date of previous inspection	2 August 2017

Information about this early years setting

Abacus Ark registered in July 2013 and is located in Maida Vale in the London Borough of Camden. The nursery is open for 50 weeks of the year, from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays. There are 13 staff, including the manager. Of these, 11 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. This includes two staff who hold qualified teacher status and one member of staff who holds early years professional status. The nursery accepts funding to provide early years education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jenny Beckles

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- During the inspection, the inspector went on a learning walk around the nursery with the manager to discuss the aims of the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children and spoke with children when appropriate.
- During the inspection, the inspector considered the views of staff and parents.

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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