

# Abacus Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	218077
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Janet Ashcroft
<b>Setting Address</b>	Frank Halfpenny Hall, George Lane, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6DX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 254168
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<b>Registered person</b>	Abacus Pre-School Playgroup Committee
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abacus Pre-School was registered in 1998. It operates from the Frank Halfpenny Hall in Lichfield, Staffordshire. The children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The setting is open from Monday to Friday during term time only. Opening times are from 09:30 until 12:00.

The setting is registered to care for 20 children at any one time. There are currently 35 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education.

There are nine staff who work with the children. Of these, four hold relevant qualifications to Level 3 or above and two are working towards Level 2. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The children are actively learning about hygiene through the staff's good example and practice. They inspire the children's interest through discussion and activities, for example, the children have helped to make the hand washing posters, which are displayed in the bathroom. Topic work, such as 'our bodies' inspires the children's interest in their health and well-being. They know the importance of exercise and good hygiene and talk confidently about the effects of both on their bodies.

Children are given frequent opportunities to play outdoors, where they are able to access a good range of equipment to practise a variety of physical skills. They particularly enjoy the walks to the local park and the sensory experiences which these offer, for example, looking at the flowers and smelling freshly mown grass.

Children's health is generally safeguarded through the setting's policies and records. However, the procedure to check the contents of the first aid box is not sufficiently rigorous and several items are beyond their usable date.

Children's nutritional needs are accommodated well and they are learning about healthy eating through exciting practical activities, for example, growing vegetables and grocery shop role play. A nutritious snack is offered daily and drinks are freely available. Snack time is a relaxed and social occasion, where staff and children sit together and where good manners and socially acceptable eating skills are developed and promoted.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The setting is exciting and stimulating; child-centred posters and examples of the children's creative work are attractively and extensively displayed, making a welcoming environment for all. The children enjoy independent access to a good range of toys and equipment, which is kept in a clean and safe condition and which effectively fosters all areas of their development.

The staff are aware of possible risks to children's safety and have taken thorough steps to remove hazards in the setting and as a result the children are able to play and eat in safe and healthy premises. Staff consistently reinforce aspects of personal safety and all children are actively learning how to keep themselves safe. Older children in particular are very knowledgeable about personal safety and share their knowledge willingly with their younger friends.

Children's protection from abuse and neglect is promoted through the well-planned staff development programme, which ensures that staff are highly trained in all aspects of safeguarding children.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The children are able to engage in a stimulating and well-balanced range of activities and experiences, which helps them make progress in all areas of development. The staff have enthusiastically embraced the 'Birth to three matters' framework and actively support the

children in their decisions and choices, helping them to become autonomous and competent learners. The children are able to engage in a good range of activities planned to develop their sensory and physical development. For example, during inspection, they were engrossed in a 'beach' activity, exploring the sand with their toes as they hunted for pebbles and shells.

Children's language and thinking skills are enthusiastically promoted through general conversation and through the frequent questions asked of them by the staff. Their confidence and self-esteem are enhanced as the staff listen carefully to their responses; social skills are developed as they are encouraged to take turns in speaking and listening.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning of funded children is good.

Children are interested and motivated to learn and participate eagerly in activities. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and are competent with its implementation. Activities have clear learning outcomes and the children's assessments are used to inform future planning, although the link is sometimes tenuous. The staff make good use of time and resources and their practice of providing daily opportunities for physical play has enhanced the children's skills in movement and coordination. They value and listen to the children's ideas and take full opportunity of spontaneous events to challenge the children and to extend their learning. For example, following a chance comment by one child at snack time, the children's understanding of how ketchup is made was very effectively fostered through discussion and sensory exploration.

Children enjoy listening to stories and are able to confidently discuss aspects of their favourite books. The print-rich environment fosters their understanding that print carries meaning and can be used as a method of recording and communicating. Children are using mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems and are learning to negotiate and work together. For example, during a trampoline activity, a small group worked cooperatively together to count and calculate jumps. Children are able to work independently and are developing skills of self-reliance as they freely access resources and activities. Their sense of responsibility is fostered through small tasks and daily routines, for example, tidying away toys and helping each other with coat fastenings.

Children investigate objects and materials through a variety of experiences. They are skilful in controlling tools and equipment to explore their environment, for example, using spades to hunt for shells in the sand. Their manipulative skills are increasing as they operate the computer keyboard during role play activities. Children are developing an interest in the natural world through topic work such as cultivating plants and bulbs. Frequent opportunities to explore shape, colour, form and space during creative activities are regularly provided and the children's creations are a true representation of their own interpretations of the world.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The staff have a commitment to equality of opportunity; they recognise children as individuals and as a result the children benefit from having their differing needs met. Through discussion, the staff described a proactive and sensitive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children are able to access a good range of resources to raise their awareness of diversity and to promote their understanding of others. Cultural festivals are acknowledged through role play and creative and cookery activities.

The children behave very well. Staff have high expectations of the children and strategies to promote positive behaviour are consistent, age-appropriate and positive. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Younger children respond well to gentle reminders to care for their environment, nursery resources and each other; older children are actively encouraged to resolve their differences through discussion, developing their skills of negotiation and compromise.

Children thrive as a result of strong continuity of care; this has developed through the first-class relationship that staff have built and strive to maintain with parents. Parents are very warmly welcomed into the setting and are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Staff provide parents with information about their children's progress, however, this is not clearly linked to the progress the children are making towards the early learning goals. A good range of leaflets and posters keep parents informed about current aspects of child care and education, including information on the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The children are able to explore and investigate as a result of the well-organised use of space, which has been planned to enable them to participate in a variety of stimulating activities. The effective and consistent adult support and the familiar daily routine fosters the children's sense of security.

The children benefit from the good practice of the skilled staff team and the setting's commitment to continuous improvement ensures that staff are kept fully informed of current trends in child care practice.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted through the staff's good organisational skills and all records and policies are appropriately maintained and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management is good. The staff regularly review the provision and the children benefit as a result of the improvements they strive to implement. There is a real commitment to the promotion of quality care and education for young children, evidenced by the strong programme of continuing professional development.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to improve the policies with regard to lost or uncollected children and child protection. These policies have been amended and now fully safeguard the children's welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to continue to develop the use of print around the hall. Posters and labels are now widely displayed and effectively foster the children's understanding that print carries meaning.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the contents of the first aid box are checked frequently and replaced as necessary

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that individual children are able to build upon their previous learning by using assessments to inform future planning
- ensure that parents are provided with information that clearly shows their children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)