



## Abacus

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY285787
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Dawn Butler
<b>Setting Address</b>	Squirrels Heath Infant School, Salisbury Road, Romford, Essex, RM2 5TP
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<b>Registered person</b>	Abacus
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	Out of School 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

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.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Abacus out of school club (Squirrels) is one of two out of school care provisions run by Abacus, which is a private partnership organisation. It opened in 2004 and operates from a Portacabin within the playground of Squirrels Heath Infant School. It is situated in a residential area of Gidea Park.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the out of school club at any one time. It is open each weekday from 15.10 to 18.00 during term time only. All children share access to the secure enclosed playground.

There are currently 43 children aged from 4 to 11 years on roll. Most children attend Squirrels Heath Infant and Junior Schools. The after school club will support children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language, though there are currently none on roll.

The after school club employs five staff. All of the staff, including the joint managers, hold appropriate childcare qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing a good understanding of how to take care of their own personal hygiene. They are well protected from infection through practitioners maintaining consistently applied and appropriate procedures. Children are safely escorted by practitioners to suitable toilets, which are checked for cleanliness prior to each session. Children know to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating their snack, and when participating in cooking activities. Children know not to eat food if it has fallen on the floor.

Children's good health is promoted by the provision following appropriate sickness policies and procedures, which are effectively shared with parents. During the summertime children are encouraged to use the shady parts of the playground, to minimise their risk of sunburn and over exposure to the sun. Children can expect to be treated appropriately in an accident or emergency situation, with a fully equipped first aid box kept in the playroom. A second set of supplies are taken into the hall when this area is used.

Children are very confident and very happy to be at the club, which contributes effectively towards their emotional well being. They excitedly choose from the range of activities on offer.

Children engage in a very good range of activities which effectively promote their physical development. They have free access to the enclosed outdoor playground. Outdoor physical pursuits are popular with the children. They enjoy playing football outdoors, as well as using the outdoor play apparatus for climbing and swinging. Additionally, children enthusiastically participate in a planned session which takes place in the large hall on a daily basis.

During the daily snack time children can choose from a range of healthy eating options, for example, salad, a range of different breads, and fruit is always provided. Jugs of drinks are available at all times to which children help themselves, which encourages their independence. The needs of children with special dietary requirements are known and effectively met. Children sit together and chat happily when eating, which promotes their social and emotional development.

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

The provision is good.

Children are able to move around safely, and negotiate space very well. The risk of accidental injury is minimised through the effective organisation of the equipment, furniture and resources within the environment. Children's safety within the premises is ensured as a result of secure perimeter fencing and the use of gates and doors, which are kept locked so that children do not gain access to unsuitable areas. In addition, the system for controlling entry for visitors is effective.

Children can access resources safely, and are encouraged to take care of their own personal safety and that of others. When undertaking activities and eating their snack they sit on small chairs and table, which are comfortable and safe. Practitioners demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries and help children learn about safety rules, for example, when it is necessary to walk and not to run. However, when using the hall safety rules are not fully implemented due to inconsistencies regarding footwear, when some children keep their outdoor shoes on when they play, and others are barefoot.

Children's safety is assured when playing outdoors, through practitioners providing effective supervision and noticing, for example, if a child needs to tie up his or her shoelaces. Children are consistently reminded to look after each other's safety when playing football, to ensure they do not run into each other.

Children are well protected in the event of a fire. Fire drills are regularly undertaken, and there is appropriate fire fighting equipment and signage around the premises.

Children are well protected as a result of practitioners having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection, and their ability to implement relevant procedures. All practitioners are vetted, and there is a suitable collection of children procedure in place.

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

The provision is good.

Children enthusiastically participate in the well planned, broad and varied range of activities, which are on offer to them. They enjoy pursuing arts and craft activities, which include making lanterns, as part of Chinese New Year celebrations, and making sweets, associated with the Islam festival of Eid. When making the lanterns, children talk about Chinatown in London, and one child describes having visited this area during Chinese New Year. When making sweets, children are interested to explore the properties of the icing sugar, and compare this with flour. They add water, and see what happens to the mixture, and describe it as sticky. They are well supported when they have their own mixture to work with, and competently use cutters and rolling pins. They make the sweets into different shapes, which they enjoy eating later. Children continue to learn about cultural diversity when role playing, eating in a Japanese restaurant.

Children play well individually, in pairs and in small or large groups. Children play well together when playing board games, and with a racing car set. A quiet area is

available for those children who wish to read, and children are well supported when undertaking their homework. Children are encouraged to vary their activities, and therefore to broaden their experiences. Both girls and boys equally engage enthusiastically in the full range of activities, and the older children play very well with the younger children, helping and encouraging them. During the summertime children enjoy picnics outdoors, and play with sand, paint and other media within this environment. Children enjoy playing group games in the large hall. They run, dance, learn to comply with game rules, devise strategies, learn to communicate effectively with each other, and they express delight and excitement as they play.

In general, children are confident and very happy to be at the club. They feel secure in the well-planned routine, are able to make choices, and can pursue their interests in a variety of environments.

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

The provision is good.

Children learn about themselves and the wider society by exploring various cultural traditions. They enthusiastically engage in a broad range of activities to promote their awareness and understanding. They use resources which present positive images reflecting cultural diversity, for example, in books, puzzles and role play resources. There is good support for children who speak English as an additional language. Girls and boys mix and play together very well. Girls enthusiastically play football, and boys enjoy the cooking activity. Children's individual needs are known and well met. Younger children who need additional support are responded to effectively by practitioners. They attend to their needs by providing individual attention and working sensitively with them to resolve any issues or concerns. Effective arrangements are in place to support children with special educational needs.

Children are very well behaved, and form very good relationships with each other and with practitioners. Practitioners act as positive role models and children learn to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and age-appropriate management of behaviour. Children feel valued, affirmed and respected. Consequently they develop high levels of self confidence. All children willingly comply with the rota system set up to share popular resources, for example, the play station. Children's views are welcomed and encouraged as to how the club should operate. Their views are sought as they contribute to the suggestions box. Children help to formulate the ground rules, which are in their writing and displayed. They confidently suggest and implement ideas for activities, which can spontaneously develop during the course of a session, or become part of a future planned activity.

A range of methods promotes effective communication with parents. Parents are welcomed into the club when they collect their children, and information exchange happens in a relaxed and friendly manner. Parents receive a handbook which contains all written policies and procedures and they sign up to a parent agreement. They receive newsletters every half term. Space for displayed information, however, is limited, and the programme of activities is not currently displayed for parents to

view. Parents' wishes are adhered to by effective arrangements being in place, so that children can attend specialist activities run by the school in addition to attending the after school club when these have finished.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The committed management team implement effective and well organised systems to promote the smooth running of the after school club. The joint owners are also the managers, and both attend most sessions. They are both suitably qualified and experienced in caring for children, as are all the practitioners. The managers ensure practitioners implement consistent policies and procedures. They diligently review and monitor practice at all times, and are very keen to seek views from parents, children and practitioners.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment. Practitioners are deployed effectively, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The high number of practitioners employed ensure that children's needs are well met. There is good commitment to training of practitioners, performance appraisals, and meetings take place on a regular basis to discuss development, policy and practice.

Record keeping is well organised, with required information kept and easily retrievable. There is a good range of written policies and procedures in place of which all parents and practitioners are made aware. All relevant information is recorded in children's record forms, which are suitably stored in a confidential manner. A daily register is drawn up, when children are signed in and out. However, this does not always include times of arrival and departure. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

## 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):

- maintain consistent policy regarding footwear when using hall to ensure children's safety
- ensure parents are routinely informed of programme of activities
- ensure attendance register records times of children's arrival and departure

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)