

Abacus Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 218077
Inspection date 02/07/2010
Inspector Jasvinder Kaur

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

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. They come from a wide catchment area.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It provides care for a maximum of 20 children in the early years age group at any one time. The setting is open each weekday during school term-time. Sessions are from 9.15am to 12.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 29 children from two years to under five years on roll.

The playgroup employs six members of staff. Of these, five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 2 or 3. The playgroup receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The care of the children in the setting is promoted by friendly and welcoming staff, and the manager is enthusiastic and dedicated to making further improvements. In general, the environment offers an inclusive service for all children and their parents. Children enjoy their time and for the most part are engaged in play which interests them. Staff normally establish positive relationships with parents to promote the children's care and education. The systems to evaluate practice are in the stage of development in identifying both strengths and areas for ongoing improvement to advance outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- maintain a record of aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis and when and by whom they have been checked (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) (also applies to the both parts of the Childcare Register). 12/07/2010

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve further the system of sharing information with parents, especially in regard to planning of daily activities and records of children's progress
- broaden children's creative, communication and technology experiences through organising appropriate resources and opportunities

- improve the key person system to help the children to become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe
- develop a systematic approach to observing children and use the assessment to plan next steps in learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding children in relation to child protection. They are aware of their responsibility to report any concerns to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A robust recruitment procedure ensures the suitability and qualifications of all adults looking after the children or having unsupervised access to them. Risk assessments are undertaken both inside and outside the provision to minimise hazards, and the security of premises is well maintained. Although daily safety checks are carried out in all areas, the formal risk assessment report does not include the playroom to fully promote children's safety. The record should also show when the assessment was carried out and by whom. Most children develop a sense of belonging and behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others through regular input from staff drawing attention to any possible dangers in their everyday life. Staff support and reassure the new children. The key person system, however, is not devised effectively to fully support their emotional needs. Children are protected from the spread of infection, because there is a procedure in place to exclude any with infectious illnesses.

The new manager has commenced a process of self-evaluation through collating the views of staff in order to identify areas for improvement. Targets have been set to tackle key priorities about further improvements to the provision and outcomes for children. All policies and procedures are under continual review in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are qualified and update their professional skills by attending training workshops to enhance the quality of care. In general, staff establish positive relationships with parents and carers and recognise their contribution as partners in their children's care and well-being. However, the system of sharing daily planning of activities and the records of observation and assessment of children's progress is not the most advantageous to promote learning efficiently. The partnership with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage is developing sufficiently in respect of promoting continuity of children's learning and well-being.

Children are encouraged to understand and respect the values and differences of others, as they celebrate festivals all through the year, including the Chinese New Year, Diwali and Easter. Sufficient resources are available depicting positive images of diversity. Policies and procedures are inclusive and implemented successfully to promote diversity. Although staff create a friendly environment, the toys and equipment are not always sufficiently organised to challenge children towards the six areas of learning, with particular reference to creative, technology and communication skills. This means children's learning is not fully supported to meet their individual needs.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are provided with satisfactory opportunities to help them make adequate progress across the six areas of learning. A suitable range of activities is planned which is varied and fun. However, observation and assessment of children do not clearly identify their next steps towards the early learning goals. This means they are not always sufficiently challenged to make maximum progress across all areas of learning and development.

Children generally extend their communication skills through routine activities, such as, visiting the library, singing nursery rhymes, listening to stories and making marks using chalks, pencils and crayons. They develop their vocabulary through talking to peers and familiar adults. The book area is made inviting, to encourage the children to help themselves to books and read stories with staff or peers, but opportunities to write, read or recognise their own names are rather limited. Sufficient opportunities are provided to learn about shape, colour and size, as they sort toys into groups or make towers with large and small blocks. As well as counting objects and toys during play, some number games help children to develop their numeracy skills.

A variety of themed activities is planned to supplement children's learning and knowledge of the environment. This includes trips to the library, shops and fire station, and occasional walks in the area. Children learn about different people, animals and creatures through artwork, talking and books. However, limited resources and opportunities are provided to develop their technology skills. Children use their imaginations and express their thoughts while taking part in role play and colouring in flags of different countries. Although some textures and sensory experiences are provided, including play dough and shaving foam, opportunities for children to explore their senses through paint, water or sand are restricted. This means children's creative talents are not sufficiently supported.

Children's physical skills develop effectively through a range of resources and challenges in the outdoor play area. They walk to their local amenities on a regular basis. Younger children show increasing control in holding and using mark-making tools. All through the session, plenty of opportunities are provided for all ages of children to advance their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. Children's health is promoted well. At snack times they enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables, toast, cereal and milk. Drinking water is readily accessible at all times. All children understand the importance of basic personal hygiene and the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

Children play together cooperatively and harmoniously in a pleasant environment, responding positively to guidance from staff. They happily help to tidy up after play. Staff encourage and praise their efforts appropriately. Children are well behaved and wait patiently for their turn in a queue to wash hands.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment). 12/07/2010

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment). 12/07/2010