



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 221582

DfES Number: 524427

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 12/02/2004  
Inspector Name Lisa Jane Faulkner

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name Abacus Day Nursery  
Setting Address Old Church Hall,  
Green End Road, Chesterton  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB4 1RW

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Miss Lynne Carol Crussell

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

Abacus Day Nursery has been registered since 1985. It operates from a single-storey building and adjacent mobile unit in Cambridge. Both buildings have enclosed outdoor areas.

There are currently 37 children on roll. This includes 10 funded three and four year olds. Children attend a variety of days each week. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens 5 days a week, for 51 weeks of the year. Opening times are 8.00am to 5.45pm.

Nine full-time and one part-time staff work with the children. Half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The nursery receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The nursery is beginning to implement the High/Scope curriculum.

### How good is the Day Care?

Abacus Day Nursery provides satisfactory care for children. Staff make the best of sometimes inadequate premises to provide an inviting environment for children's play. Space is well organised to enable children to be independent in their choice of activities, and good quality resources are provided which support children's learning in all areas.

Overall, safety at the nursery is satisfactory, although safety checks are not reviewed sufficiently to make sure all hazards are addressed on a day-to-day basis. Staff pay satisfactory attention to children's health and hygiene, but they have insufficient knowledge of young children's nutritional needs, resulting in the menu for the babies at lunchtimes being sometimes unsatisfactory.

Consistent staffing and an effective keyworker system in the baby room enables the

babies' emotional and developmental needs to be well met, so that the babies are happy and settled. Staff spend lots of time talking and playing with the babies, and this enables them to grow in confidence. This confidence remains in evidence once children move to the older age grouping, where children are secure in their relationships with staff, and enjoy exploring and investigating in their play. Staff have consistent strategies to manage children's behaviour, and children behave well.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff have developed very good relationships with parents, and they work together to ensure children's individual needs are well met. Most documentation is in place.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Staff give good attention to meeting the individual needs of the babies. They develop close and secure relationships, so that the babies are happy and settled.
- The environment is well planned to enable children to be independent, and children are confident in making their own decisions about resources and activities, including whether to play indoors or out.
- Staff have consistent and clear expectations for children's behaviour, so that children are secure and behave well.
- Staff have developed good relationships with parents. This helps the nursery to meet each child's needs.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the attention to safety, regarding fire safety and regular safety checks
- staff's knowledge of young children's nutritional needs, regarding the menu for babies and the provision of milk to drink
- some aspects of documentation.

#### **Outcome of the inspection**

Satisfactory

## CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

### The Registered Person must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
2	Devise a procedure for lost children.	12/03/2004
6	Meet any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer	13/03/2004
8	Ensure all aspects of the menu are suitable for babies.	31/03/2004

### The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
6	Ensure that any further recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer are addressed
6	Initiate regular safety checks to identify and minimise risks to children.

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Abacus Day Nursery is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a good knowledge of how children learn; they successfully organise the environment, resources and timetable so that children can exercise their independence and curiosity as learners. Staff have developed close and trusting relationships with the children; they interact well in children's play, and use effective questioning to extend their learning at activities.

Planning is based upon the High/Scope curriculum, and although it makes reference to the Foundation Stage Curriculum, the breadth of coverage of the early learning goals are not monitored, resulting in some areas not being sufficiently planned for. Plans do not identify how the more able children can be extended in their learning. The assessment system is insufficiently completed and is not used to identify the next steps for children's learning.

Leadership and management is generally good. The manager is keen to improve the educational provision, and has sought advice from a High/Scope mentor and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) teacher. She has built a strong staff team and is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of each staff member, ensuring successful teaching strategies are shared.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are well informed about the curriculum, but receive less information about the day to day activities. They do not have sufficient opportunities to be informed about their child's educational progress.

### What is being done well?

- The relationships between staff and children are very good. This helps the children to feel safe and confident.
- Children are developing very good story-telling skills. They make up stories with staff, write and illustrate their own nursery books, and talk about the story at group reading time.
- Staff make good use of photographs throughout the nursery. Children look at photographs to plan their day, and to talk about their friends and events that have happened in the past.
- The nursery makes good use of the outside play area to promote all areas of the curriculum.
- There is good planning and resourcing for children to explore their creative ideas in art and design.

- The environment is well organised to enable children to be active and independent learners.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the frequency and use of assessments in order to identify the next steps for children's learning and to inform future planning
- the breadth of planning for all the early learning goals in the long-term plans
- the planning of the curriculum for mathematics
- the information available to parents about the day to day activities at the nursery and about their child's progress.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The nursery has made generally good progress since the last inspection. Children now have good opportunities to develop their writing skills, and to play imaginatively. Parents now receive good information about the curriculum, and planning has been improved to make reference to what children should be learning from each activity. Staff have received training in the early learning goals so that they can use these in planning activities. However, assessments of children's progress are still not satisfactory, so that children's next steps for learning are not being planned for.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident and independent, both in their interactions with staff and in their choice of activities within the nursery. They easily approach staff for help or support, and are motivated by the praise and encouragement they receive. This enables them to concentrate and persevere for long periods at activities, for example, when building with bricks in the construction area.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff encourage children to express their needs, to talk about themselves, and listen to others. Children are developing very good story-telling skills, which they use to make up stories with staff, and independently when playing with small world figures. Children enjoy books and handle them properly. They have good opportunities to begin to write in play situations, but their handwriting is less well supported.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's mathematical language is developing well. Staff make good use of the everyday activities and routine to extend children's mathematical knowledge; they talk about the size of the containers in the sand, and count the bricks and name the shapes. However, mathematical activities are rarely planned for, and therefore children's early calculation skills, and their ability to solve simple mathematical problems and to recognise numerals, are not sufficiently supported.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy looking at the photographs in the nursery to talk about events that have happened in the past, and about the world around them. They have lots of good opportunities to design and build, particularly in the well-equipped creative area, and they are skilled at selecting the right tool for the job. Children investigate a range of media and materials both indoors and outdoors, and are encouraged to ask questions about why things happen and how things work.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children extend their movement and co-ordination skills during well-planned outdoor play. They climb trees, balance on logs, and negotiate the climbing frame. They also have indoor movement sessions where they are learning an awareness of space and to move imaginatively. There is a wide range of opportunities for children to handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials, so that their fine manipulative skills are progressing well.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children's imagination is nurtured and fostered; staff join in their role play, and help to extend their story-telling skills. Staff provide good opportunities for children to listen and respond to different types of music, for example, painting to classical music. The creative area is well used by children to explore colour, texture, shape and form in meaningful and imaginative ways.

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.**

## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

## **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- further link the long-term plans to the early learning goals, to ensure that all early learning goals are planned for. Pay particular attention to the planning for mathematics.
- make use of more regular assessments to plan the next steps for children's learning, and to identify how to extend the more able children.
- provide further opportunities for parents to be informed about nursery activities on a day-to-day basis, and about their child's progress and any identified next steps for learning.

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*