

Abacus

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Narinder Dohel

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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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 out of school club (Squirrels) is one of seven out of school care provisions run by Abacus, which is a private partnerships organisation. It opened in 2004 and operates from a Portacabin within the playground of Squirrels Heath Infant School in Romford, Essex. Children share access to the secure enclosed playground. The club is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a residential area of Gidea Park. A maximum of 26 in the early years age range may attend the out of school club at any one time. There are currently 49 children aged from four to 11 years on roll, of whom nine are in the early years age range. The club is open each weekday from 3.10pm to 6pm, during term time only. All children attend Squirrel 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 four staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Abacus Out of School Club (Squirrels) is a good club. Children enjoy their learning and development needs met in a safe and friendly environment. The recording and evidence of children's progress over time is of good quality though does not always show gains children have made during their time at the club. A real strength of the club is the relationships between the children, and between children and adults. This ensures that all children enjoy attending and are engaged in the activities provided. Overall, the welfare needs of children are met well. The owners review the work of the setting with their staff and devise good action plans to help them improve showing that the setting has a good capacity to improve further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that children's dietary needs are known by all staff
- refine planning and observations so that evidence is clearly dated and children's records clearly summarise learning and progress over their time at the club

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding is taken very seriously. All staff have undertaken safeguarding, first-aid and paediatric training. Policies and procedures are all in place, reviewed and signed by all staff. Each adult has a good relationship with every child which ensures that individual needs are met. The owners and manager of the club make every effort to ensure that the provision and experiences of the children are appropriate for their age and that children enjoy their time after school. Planning and activities demonstrate that all staff focus on ensuring the learning and development needs of the youngest children are met well. There are good systems for planning, observing and monitoring the progress of children and the provision within the club, although these do not always demonstrate the gains children have made against the early learning goals over their time at the club. Parent questionnaires, 'children's council', staff appraisals and external monitoring are used to inform improvements. There is good understanding of equality and diversity which is evident in planning and activities. This means that the needs and interests of all children are being met effectively. All staff review their practice regularly. They are clear about their strengths, such as children's safety, behaviour and relationships as well as the areas which need addressing. These are targeted at improving the provision of access to information and communication technology. Staff are well deployed to ensure that children have a wide range of experiences each day and over the longer term. Children are asked about what they enjoy and what they would like on a daily basis as well as through the children's council and suggestion areas. Partnerships with parents and carers and external agencies are good. The club is attended by children from the host school. Information about children's welfare and safety as well as developments in children's learning, is shared between the school and club staff on a regular basis. Parents and carers also have the opportunity to provide this information when they collect their children or by writing in the comments book. Parents and carers feel that their children are happy and well cared for and enjoy attending the club. They receive newsletters and information about events and activities though these are not readily available on the parent notice board. There are good opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their child's progress.

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

Children have good self-esteem and confidence. They know the routines of the club, access equipment and are sensitively supported by adults to settle into their chosen activities quickly and purposefully. The children who attend the club clearly enjoy being there. They achieve well and make good progress, which is observed and recorded. Staff have developed a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and requirements and this is demonstrated through their relationships and quality of conversations with children. This ensures that children sustain interest and engagement in activities. A wide range of play-based activities and experiences are planned for, and staff make regular observations of

children's learning and progress. There is good photographic evidence of children's experiences and enjoyment, although these are not always dated to show when the learning took place. Children benefit from working together at a wide range of art and play activities, for example one group of children was helped by older children and staff to mix paint for their art work. Staff are committed to providing a warm and welcoming environment in which children say they feel safe. They encourage children to independently access resources and make choices about their learning and development. Children are very aware of being safe and playing safely, their good behavior is a real strength of the setting and contributes well to its smooth running. Children show good knowledge and practice of being healthy. All children are offered and encouraged to eat fruit and salad with their sandwiches. Water is available at all times and children wash their own cups and clear up after snack time. Although key staff know the dietary requirements of children in the setting, this is not clearly communicated for all staff. Children particularly enjoy the outdoor activities such as wheeled toys, bats and balls, role play, connect four and are creative in their outdoor play. Children's understanding of equality and diversity is developed effectively through books and posters about other countries and cultures. Planning and photographs show how festivals and food from around the world are celebrated. The club has also invited visitors to talk about different jobs such as a veterinarian, soldier or nurse and children make an extremely positive contribution to activities outside school. Younger children play confidently together both indoors and outdoors which means that all children, can be fully engaged with any activity. For example, during the inspection, younger children played with older children in homework club, playing video games, and painting. Outside they played skillfully in a game of football or tennis. Activities and resources focusing on children's basic skills, means that they are well prepared for the future.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

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