



Inspection Report

Abacus Day Nursery

**Abacus Day Nursery
26 Lion Street
Abergavenny
NP7 5NT**



Date Inspection Completed

31/10/2023

About Abacus Day Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Sarah Storey
Registered places	19
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	19 June 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

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<u>Well-being</u>	Adequate
<u>Care and Development</u>	Adequate
<u>Environment</u>	Adequate
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Adequate

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

Summary

Children have suitable opportunities to make choices. They are settled and interact well, cooperate, and play happily together. Children enjoy free play and engage confidently in their chosen activities.

Overall, staff engage in children's interests and respond to their needs. They encourage a self-directed learning environment however, there is a lack of balance to include some planned activities to promote children's developmental skills. The staff team are kind and caring and interact well with the children in their care. They have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. Almost all staff are suitably qualified and have opportunities to attend further training relating to their role and responsibilities.

The premises are adequate for purpose. There is ample space for the children to play in the garden. In the main the management team ensure children have an adequate range of age-appropriate furniture, toys and equipment. However, some resources need assessing for safety and suitability.

The manager has policies and procedures in place to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of children. However, some paperwork such as the statement of purpose does not fully reflect the practice with regards to healthy and nutritious menu.

Well-being

Adequate

Children have sufficient opportunities to make choices and decisions about their play. Some children can explore their environment freely and are confident to move about and play as they wish. For example, in the pre-school group some children chose to do an activity in the arts and craft room and some children chose to take part in outdoor play. Older children enjoy choosing where and which area of the garden they want to explore and what resources they want to use while spending their mornings outside.

Overall, children are settled in the setting. They are happy and ready to start the day. Younger children who are a little unsettled receive sound support and attention from staff. The younger children generally use the first floor as their base rooms and move between the messy play area and their adjoining room choosing from activities set out in the role play area, looking at story books or choosing construction toys to occupy them. Staff sit with the younger children joining in with their play. Some younger children were observed to play in the messy area with two members of staff helping them to dip dinosaurs in muddy waters. Staff told us that brown muddy water was made up with melted chocolate and water. This helped the children to learn about temperature and texture using a different medium.

Children interact and behave well as is appropriate for their ages and stages of development. They are learning to play together and with support are beginning to resolve disagreements. Children respond well to staff who explain things to them positively and clearly. Older children are confident talking to each other, to staff and with us. For example, during the afternoon session the older children were happy to show us that they were making a den in the garden. They collected blankets and draped this in the corner of the garden to make their den dark and cosy.

Children are engaged in their play and learning and enjoy a sufficient range of activities and opportunities. We observed the older children spending most of their day choosing to play in the garden area. We saw toddlers in their base room choosing story books to hand to staff sitting nearby, who smiled and said, "*Oh I thought you might choose this, it's your favourite at the moment!*". The toddler nodded with a smile and settled down on a cushion to listen to the story.

Care and Development

Adequate

Staff show a good understanding of how to keep children safe. They have appropriate training, and they understand that they have a responsibility to protect children and confidently explained what they would do if a safeguarding situation arose. The nursery employs a cook but the cook left the post over a year ago, therefore the manager is responsible for preparing most of the meals. The board in the kitchen displays the weekly menu. During the inspection we observed the older children eating lunch. The food offered was limited and lacked choice; there was only one item on the menu. Some children told staff they didn't want to finish their meal. They were offered a cracker with cheese and sliced banana instead. Staff follow the relevant procedures in relation to accidents and incidents and they maintain appropriate records. They implement necessary measures to ensure they know how many children are present. Fire drills are practised regularly with the children, so they know how to respond in an emergency.

Staff are consistently responsive and interact positively with the children demonstrating warmth and kindness. They listen and respect children's choices and provide praise and reassurance when needed. Staff know children well and are good role models as they encourage good manners and prompt the children to say *"please"* and *"thank you."* They use positive behaviour management techniques such as distraction or explanation and give comfort to children who are upset. Staff encourage children to take turns and share; they give praise when they see it and they offer alternative suggestions when there is a disagreement. For example, *"Have you seen this? And it won't be long before for your friend is finished and then it's your turn."*

Staff support children in their chosen play activities. We saw staff reading stories to younger children both to individuals and as a small group. Most staff play alongside children to model how to use resources and they talk to children about their ideas and what they are doing. In the main, the play opportunities available in the older age group, promote children's learning and engages their interests. For example, older children are encouraged to self-select toys, activities, and resources. They help to tidy up as is appropriate for their ages and stages of development. However, there is no formal planning as greater emphasis is set on the older children initiating their own play. Although this can be a strength, it can be limiting for those children who are not confident maximising their own play and learning. Observation and assessment records are not always consistent in clearly identifying children's next steps.

Environment

Adequate

The management team, ensure that the environment is suitably clean, safe, and secure for the children. For example, the external doors are locked, and safety gates are in place in the play areas such as the hallway and kitchen. Outdoor play spaces are securely fenced. The management team ensure systems are in place to keep the children safe. For example, they carry out regular maintenance checks and have sufficient risk assessments for all areas of the premises. Daily safety checks are in place and completed by staff. They have identified that some carpet areas such as the stairs have rips and snags and we noted that some steps have had the carpet removed but no replacement has been made. This can cause accidents injuries to the children, staff, and visitors. Outside the garden area is largely set out in zones such as a growing area, a mud kitchen area and there were sufficient sheltered areas for children to use such as taking cover during inclement weather. However, we noted that part of a walkway had been decked but this area was slippery. This can cause injury to the children and adults. Regular fire drills are conducted, and records are appropriately in line with regulations.

Overall, the environment is suitable and friendly. Staff display children's artwork on the walls which provides children with a sense of belonging and creates a warm and colourful feel. They ensure that children benefit from low-level furniture that enables them to access resources and toys independently. The managers provide suitable facilities to meet children's needs appropriately, and staff ensure children are given privacy and dignity during nappy changing. The outdoor area is overall safe and provides a good space for the children to play and explore. However, we noted some outdoor toys such as dolls and prams were very tired, worn and muddy. This does not encourage the ethos of teaching children to care and respect their toys and resources.

Overall, the management team provide resources that are appropriate for the different ages and stages of development. Indoors the resources and equipment are of suitable quality, which supports children to extend their imaginative play. The layout of the base rooms enables children to choose resources independently. The staff ensure that separate areas within the playrooms allow children to choose whether they want or need quiet time, could rest and sleep. The babies' sleep room was warm and clutter free. However, we noted that the cots were very closely placed next to each other. This can cause children to trap fingers between cots or toddlers can reach out to others who are sleeping and disrupt them. Younger toddlers have sufficient space to do messy play such as painting, and a role play area is set up for them to move around independently.

Leadership and Management

Adequate

Overall, leadership is adequate, and the management team are proactive when changes are necessary. They have a statement of purpose in place. However, this is not fully reflective of the practice. For example, the weekly menu that the statement of purpose identifies has a variety of foods and overall, the menu looks inviting with lots of choice. However, this is not the case. During the inspection, on asking what was for pudding or dessert, we were told that there was none. Staff told us that this was because children would not eat their main and relied on the dessert, so it was taken off the menu permanently. The setting has a suitable range of policies and procedures that they review regularly and implement within the setting. Staff record accidents and incidents promptly and share the information with parents and carers. Daily records such as registers accurately reflect which staff are caring for each age group. This reflects the staff arrival and departure times in the setting. During our visit the annual safety certificate could not be located. The manager/register person produced a copy before the inspection was completed. But the back copies could not be located easily. We have reminded the provider to ensure an annual copy is included in their operational records for each year. This is part of regulation.

The manager has completed a regular online annual self-evaluation, and this is in place. This seeks the suggestions and comments of parents and carers as well as children and include them in their review. The manager has demonstrated that she follows a safe recruitment process to safeguard children and has satisfactory systems in place to update suitability checks as required. They ensure new staff have induction training and keep staff up to date with training such as paediatric first aid, safeguarding and food hygiene when needed. The manager has an appropriate system in place for supervision and appraisal to support staff in their roles. However, these were somewhat repetitive and did not fully record how staff are supported in their roles. The manager assured us that the processes would be improved immediately. This was confirmed during the feedback. Staff we spoke to said they enjoy working at the setting and feel well supported.

The management and staff teams have developed good partnerships with parents. They share information with them through diaries and verbally, depending on parents' preference. Parents and carers feel welcome at the setting and appreciate the exchange of information they receive from staff. They are confident to approach staff if they have any concerns and are happy with the care that is provided. The managers also develop partnerships working with relevant local authority and flying start advisors.

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
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Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 12 - Food and drink	Ensure that meals are nutritious, healthy and has choice of foods on offer.
Standard 24 - Safety	Ensure that cots placed in the baby room are placed apart considering safety.
Standard 3 - Assessment	Ensure that staff understand the purpose for planning and record these. Ensure that there is a good balance between adult led and child initiated playing experiences. Children's observations and assessments should clearly identify next steps in learning.
Standard 24 - Safety	Ensure the flooring around the nursery is made safe and secure and replace any flooring such as the decking and stair carpets as soon as possible.
Standard 14 - Organisation	Ensure that the statement of purpose accurately reflects the practice at all times.
Standard 24 - Safety	Ensure annual safety checks are conducted each year and copies kept and made available for inspection purposes.
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure that all staff receive regular supervisions and appraisals making sure these records are not similar.

Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children’s well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children’s well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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Date Published 30/11/2023