



Childcare Inspection Report on

Abacus Day Nursery

**Newmarket House
26 Lion Street
Abergavenny
NP7 5NT**



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Description of the service

Sarah Storey is the registered Person of Abacus Day Nursery and is registered to provide day care for 32 children up to the age of 12 years. It operates from a converted three storey town house situated in the centre of Abergavenny. Care is conducted through the medium of English with some Welsh incorporated as part of the daily routine. The Registered Person (RP) is also the Person in Charge (PiC) with day to day responsibility for the running of the service. This is an English speaking service with incidental Welsh used throughout the day.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Abacus Nursery is generally run effectively, employs enthusiastic staff and ensures that resources are plentiful and of good quality. Children have access to a very good range of interesting learning experiences which they find stimulating and enjoyable. They are well settled and form close bonds with their carers who have very good knowledge of the children's needs and provide nurturing, supportive care. The environment is generally well maintained and safe for children.

2. Improvements

No recommendations were made at the previous inspection. The outside play space has been developed even further providing a rich and stimulating play area that encourages children explore and develop.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The nursery is compliant with regulations. Some recommendations have been made which are discussed within the report and listed at the end.

1. Well-being

Summary

The nursery provides children with very good opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and experience a sense of achievement. Children have access to a variety of resources and activities that support their all-round development and this encourages them to enjoy their play and learning. These experiences build their confidence and independence and supports transitions within the nursery and onto more formal education.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children of all ages are allowed to make choices and staff actively support this. We saw that children had a choice of activities and free play opportunities. We saw and heard staff encouraging all children to participate and express their opinions, giving them time to make choices and supporting when needed in their chosen activity. The resources were easy for children to access which ensured their play choices were met. We saw that all children had access to the outside play space timetabled into a large part of their day. We heard children speaking and talking confidently with staff and inviting staff into their play. The staff listened and responded in a warm, animated manner which encouraged children to engage further and explore their ideas.

Children are encouraged and confident to express themselves and know their views will be respected.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children are settled and comfortable and they are valued by the staff team. There are procedures in place, including a key worker system, to promote children's feelings of security and emotional well-being. We saw that staff sat with children and comforted and cuddled them at appropriate times either at children's requests or when they saw a child needed support. Children chatted and smiled during their play which demonstrated they were happy and relaxed. We saw that children's wishes and needs were recognised by staff and children were responded to warmly and appropriately. Parents told us that their children were happy at the nursery and well supported by their carers.

Children gain a sense of security within their surroundings and with their carers.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact well with their peers and are supported in their social development by staff and the daily routines. Children participate in a wide variety of activities giving them opportunities to practise their social skills such as sharing and listening. We saw that children were able to participate appropriately in play, being polite, able to take turns and respond appropriately to staff instructions. We saw children demonstrating good manners and frequently heard them using 'please' and 'thank you' throughout our visits. Children were calm and able to co-operate well, for example, two older

children were enthusiastic and eager to tell us about the rocket they had built together. Younger children were learning appropriate social interactions and developing an ability to share and play alongside other children.

Children are learning how to socialise with their peers and develop positive relationships.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children enjoy the opportunities available to them and have a wide selection of activities to promote their learning and development. Play was well organised and children could choose to join in with focused play such as messy/sensory play involving sand, painting or play-dough. If they did not wish to participate, children could freely move from one area to another and choose activities of their own interest. For example, we saw children really enjoying looking at books in the pre school room and others were fascinated looking at pet stick insects. Children had lots of opportunities to enjoy a great deal of outdoor play with a variety of water based activities. They really enjoyed the large outdoor space, playing in dens, walking along balance boards and watering the flowers. Children demonstrated real enjoyment and reward in their play.

Children enjoy the play and learning opportunities provided at the nursery.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children are provided with opportunities to gain independence, develop and learn through their play and daily routines. At lunch time we saw that children were encouraged to use their cutlery to feed themselves and generally improve their self-help and social skills around meal times. At snack time we saw that children were encouraged to clear their plates and mugs away themselves. Children were encouraged to wash their own hands and help tidy toys away. The storage of resources enabled independent choice and the different activities such as the home corner, books and construction helped encourage children to develop different skills.

Children are given time, space and frequent opportunities to learn and do as much for themselves as they can.

2. Care and Development

Summary

There is a well established team and staff who are experienced and motivated. Relationships with children are warm and affectionate and staff work well together to meet the needs of the children. Staff understand key policies and practices and generally follow these in their every day work in order to keep children safe and healthy. However, we have recommended that routines around snack times for children are reviewed to ensure they receive the support they need. Children's interactions are managed well and staff plan and provide a good range of activities to ensure children are engaged in their play and learning.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff have a good understanding of the systems in place to protect children but some procedures need to be revisited to ensure that they are embedded within the service. We saw that there was a file to log any concerns and referrals to the local authority safeguarding team and we have recommended a review of these logs to ensure details recorded are clear and precise. Staff understood safeguarding procedures and their own responsibilities in order to keep children safe. However, some staff training needs to be renewed. There were effective procedures in place regarding food hygiene and we saw that snacks and meals provided were healthy, freshly prepared and of a high quality with water available throughout the day. The nursery is registered with the Environmental Health department and have achieved a level five food hygiene rating. The fire log book demonstrated that emergency evacuation procedures are practised but we recommended additional information be added to the log and to ensure drills are undertaken regularly. Staff completed accident and incident forms and we were told that managers complete monthly audits of these to help determine any trends of problem areas. Younger children were supported in their toilet training needs. Initially hand drying facilities were unsuitable however this was quickly addressed and paper towels were available for children by our second visit. Information relating to allergic reactions of children was displayed in the kitchen and staff knew children's specific dietary requirements.

Staff ensure that children are kept safe and healthy but some systems and procedures need to be more firmly embedded into the service.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff generally support interactions very well. There is a behaviour management policy which provides guidance to staff and which informs their practice. They are consistent in their approach and set realistic boundaries in line with the developmental ages of the children. We heard staff using calm and gentle tones and distracting and diverting children as needed. For example, during water play staff were getting squirted with water. In order to divert the child to more appropriate behaviour, one staff member suggested squirting the floor "to see what marks you can make" whilst another set up

a table with three toy ducks, filled a large water gun and encouraged the child to aim the water at the ducks to move them off the table. The child loved this game and was quickly joined by others. We saw staff kneeling down to the child's level and providing comfort, reassurance and guidance. It was clear that positive, supportive relationships were in place. We saw staff pre-empting children's needs and this helped maintain a relaxed atmosphere. We heard staff giving children praise and complimenting them when they made attempts as well as on their successes. Conflict situations were kept to a minimum as children were well stimulated and enjoyed their activities. We observed the routine at morning snack time did not consistently support the needs of older children and we have recommended that this routine be reviewed.

Staff promote the emotional well-being of children by managing interactions with the use of positive behaviour management practices but need to review procedures supporting morning snack time.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

Staff know the children well and children's individual needs are mostly identified and met. We spoke to all of the staff and they were able to discuss with a high level of confidence, the individual needs of the children in their care. The nursery provides early years education to pre school children and had received a positive report from Estyn regarding this age group. Whilst attempts were made to record, track and identify next steps for children under three years, we found that some of these records had not been maintained. We have recommended that managers support staff to complete documentation to ensure staff can confidently meet children's individual needs. However, we observed that all of the activities set up for children were seen to be creative, stimulating, age appropriate and engaged children for good periods of time. We saw staff spontaneously respond to children's learning needs setting up or altering activities to meet the needs of the children. For example, one child did not wish to play with the water and chose to play with recyclable resources. Staff helped them turn a cardboard box into a pirate ship with a sail and we heard them singing pirate songs which the child really enjoyed. We also saw photographs of children undertaking a variety of activities including playing on a 'beach' they had constructed at the bottom of the garden by constructing a pipe system to channel water through the garden. It was evident that a fun exploratory emphasis was placed on development and learning. The PIC is also the identified Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and both she and her staff were able to explain the needs of children and the support they received in preparation for transition into education.

Staff are able to meet children's individual needs to a good standard. The documentation for tracking and planning for children's individual learning needs should be consistently completed.

3. Environment

Summary

The nursery operates from a three story converted house with children under three occupying the first floor and all other children's base rooms on the ground floor. The nursery is bright and inviting for children with a large outside play area that is accessed in all weathers. A wide range of good quality resources are available to children. Overall, care is taken to maintain safety in order to ensure the well being of children although there are areas for improvement. We have also recommended that the infection control audit tool be reviewed to ensure standards are maintained throughout the nursery. The service also provides an After School Club provision which uses a room on the ground floor which is also used for messy play and mealtimes for nursery children. However, staff are mindful about how to best use the base rooms so that children's needs are met.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

Children are cared for in a generally safe and secure environment. Staff ensure that the nursery is secure and that no unauthorised access is allowed. We were asked for identification upon arrival and to sign a visitors' book in and out. The front door was locked and the parents' entrance was locked and secured with staff monitoring the garden when children played outside. Children's attendance was recorded appropriately and children were carefully supervised. We saw that records were kept regarding accidents/ incidents that had occurred on the premises. The nature of the accidents was typical of the age and stage of development of the children and did not raise any concerns about the safety of the premises. Daily risk assessment checklists were completed and monitored but required greater attention. We have recommended that the infection control audit tool and risk assessments and procedures are reviewed. We noted that the safety gate into the kitchen was only secured by a hook and eye mechanism that was not child proof. The RP has informed us that she has commissioned a new gate to be made for this area to ensure children's safety. As the nursery does not employ a cook only the PIC or staff with food hygiene training are involved in food preparation ensuring that hygiene and safety procedures are followed. Staff positioned themselves well throughout the setting and maintained good communication with their colleagues via walkie talkies especially during free flow play. Consequently staff could monitor the children's safety in an unobtrusive manner and be on hand to offer assistance if needed. This ensured that all areas of the setting were suitably supervised and supported children to play and explore their surroundings safely.

There are systems in place to ensure the safety of the environment but some of these would benefit from further development and the gate into the kitchen needs a more secure locking system.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

Children are provided with suitably adapted indoor and outdoor play spaces and facilities. Base rooms benefit from good natural light and the environment is welcoming and attractive. There are some limitations within the indoor environment as although there is a separate sleep area for babies, there is not a designated sleep area for older children. However, staff are mindful of this and use the routines of the day to identify quiet areas/rooms where children can sleep and rest undisturbed. There are a wide range of play opportunities providing a variety of experiences to develop children's skills. The furniture is child sized, sturdy and well designed. There are toilets which are easily accessible and adapted for use by children. However, we this area needs urgent attention as there were no doors on toilet cubicles and this situation impacts negatively upon the dignity and respect of children, in particular as one toilet can be observed directly from the passageway. The outside play area is very well equipped with a range of resources such as a mud kitchen, planting areas, dens, climbing frames, and ride on vehicles. These areas provide children with excellent opportunities to gain new skills and experience a wide range of outdoor play experiences. Children told us that they loved playing outside.

Leaders have provided a play environment which is well designed and resourced for children's needs however the toileting facilities need urgent attention.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Children have access to a good range of developmentally appropriate play and learning resources indoors and outdoors. These are good quality and available in sufficient quantity to ensure children have variety and choice. We saw that resources were clean and generally well maintained although we discussed that some routines needed to be revised as we found that headphones and torches within the preschool base room had not been charged and were therefore not available to children. There is a good selection of multi cultural toys and books that promote diversity and equality, available for the children. Furniture is appropriate for the age of the children and is of good quality.

Resources that enhance children's play and learning experiences are of a good quality but better routines need to be established to ensure that they are maintained in working order.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Overall we found that the quality of leadership and management at the service is adequate and they are able to manage the service so that it meets, and in some areas exceeds, National Minimum Standards. Recruitment procedures are followed and safety checks are completed to ensure staff are suitable to care for children. However, supervisions with staff and more rigorous identification to monitor training is needed. We also found that some documentation needed to be updated and strengthened. Management were very responsive and receptive to implementing this as soon as possible.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Management of the service needs to be more effective and ensure that all documentation is in place and used in order to support staff and the day to day running of the nursery. The service has a statement of purpose but this needs to be clearer in its description of how the After School Club operates. Robust recruitment procedures are implemented and staff receive suitable induction. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and team meetings with staff are undertaken, are productive and used to share information effectively. The Self Assessment of Service (SASS) had been completed and sent to us as required. We found that the safeguarding records would benefit from additional information, medication forms require the addition of a witness and we have recommended that pre existing injuries forms are developed. We also discussed developing an action plan for the nursery identified from its annual quality of care review. Public Liability insurance was in place.

There are systems in place to ensure that the nursery is managed adequately on a day to day basis but these would benefit from further development and implementation. .

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Management are continually developing the service provision and take into account the views of children, parents and staff. The quality of care review used questionnaires to gain information from staff and parents and used key worker information to ascertain the wishes of children. Incident and accident records are evaluated monthly and staff are asked for feedback to improve the service. We have discussed elsewhere in this report the need for risk assessment and daily visual checks to be improved and used as a means of monitoring the service. The PIC was able to discuss with us improvements that had been made to the garden which had a significant positive impact upon children's play experiences.

Management are able to identify and make improvements to the service but this needs to be more consistent.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

The management of staff and resources needs to improve although the nursery generally operates smoothly, supporting children's learning and play. There are qualified and experienced staff who are effectively deployed to care for the children. Records evidenced that some training needs for staff had not been monitored appropriately and this resulted in, for example, the Paediatric First Aid training for both the PIC and one member of her staff expired on 29 June 2018. We discussed the implication for supervision of children and the PIC explained that she was due to attend training within a fortnight. We also noted that whilst staff reported that they felt well supported as the RP was also the PIC and had daily contact with her, recorded 1:1 supervisions were not taking place and this is an important system to monitor training needs of staff and support good working practices. We noted that resources were of a good quality but some items had not been changed and on our first visit paper towels had run out and children were sharing a towel to dry their hands which does not meet infection control advice.

Management of staff and resources needs to improve.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The service understands the need to obtain the necessary information relating to the care of children at the time of registration before they start attending the service. However, these systems need to be robustly implemented to ensure all information about children's individual needs is clear and understood by all of the staff. We spoke with parents who told us that they were pleased with the level of communication they received about their children. Parents also told us that they had supportive relationships with the manager and staff and felt confident to discuss any issues with them. Regular information about developments and events at the nursery are shared with parents and there is also a parents' information board at the entrance to the nursery.

Effective partnerships are in place and built with parents. The nursery has identified that recording initial information regarding children needs to be precise.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- review safeguarding logs to ensure details recorded are clear and precise;
- monitor more closely mandatory training such as safeguarding and paediatric first aid so that it does not expire;
- review the routine at morning snack time to consistently support the needs of all of the children;
- ensure all staff have the time to complete documentation to ensure they are meeting children's individual needs;
- review the infection control audit tool and risk assessments/daily visual checks;
- ensure children's dignity and respect is maintained when using the toilet cubicles;
- ensure the safety gate into the kitchen is child proof;
- update the statement of purpose to reflect how the After School Club operates;
- undertake and record supervisions with staff;
- update documentation so that medication documents have witness signature and develop a pre existing injuries policy and
- ensure all information gathered at registration is clear and concise.

6. How we undertook this inspection

An unannounced, full inspection was undertaken over two days by one inspector, with feedback given on the second visit. A total of approximately 10 hours was spent at the nursery. The following methodology was used to gather evidence for this report:

- Information held by CIW and consideration of a range of policies, procedures and records kept by the nursery;
- observations of care routines and practices undertaken;
- visual inspection of the setting, both inside and outside;
- discussions with the staff and management team;
- conversation with the children attending the nursery and
- verbal feedback from parents who were dropping off/collecting their children.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Sarah Storey
Person in charge	Sarah Storey
Registered maximum number of places	32
Age range of children	Birth to eight years
Opening hours	8.00am – 5.30pm Monday - Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	13 October 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	19 and 26 June 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early year's education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The provider does not provide the 'Active Offer' in relation to the Welsh Language. An 'Active Offer' means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. This is part of the Welsh language Policy to develop and strengthen Welsh language in services.
Additional Information:	