

smalltalk

Early Years Wales members' magazine

Winter 2019 | Issue 136 | £7

Spotlight on...

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Pre-school: Early Years Wales
Setting of the Year winners

CIW Online:

We have some important information
from the Inspectorate

Progress for Success:

Your future starts now!

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of Type 1 diabetes?



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Early Years
Wales
Blynyddoedd
Cynnar Cymru

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From January 2020 all providers must carry out all business with the inspectorate online. We provide you with the benefits and timeline for getting yourselves activated!

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Abacus Day Nursery, Swansea were the deserved winner of our Early Years Wales Setting of the Year Award. We share a glimpse into what made them our 2019 winners.

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The Progress for Success programme has been re-focussed. Welsh Government tell us how the programme aims to enhance provision that is already available.

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Diabetes UK Cymru's Know Type 1 campaign aims to raise awareness of the common symptoms of the condition. Do you know the symptoms?

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Visit our website
earlyyears.wales

Early Years Wales 2018 | Blynyddoed Cynnar Cymru 2018

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Early Years Wales Awards 2019

Spotlight on... Abacus Day Nursery and Pre-school, Swansea

Early Years Wales Setting of the Year

Welcome to the second of our series of features focussing on the winners of the Early Years Wales Awards 2019.

In this issue we introduce you to our Setting of the Year winners - Abacus Day Nursery and Pre-school, Swansea and give you a glimpse into the work that they've been doing and what made them stand out to the judges.

To be awarded Setting of the Year, the judges were looking for a setting driven by their passion for supporting early years children and quality childcare. Where the main focus is to produce a safe, clean and stimulating environment and where children are encouraged to play, learn and thrive. A setting that holds their staff in the highest regard and has excellent links with parents, external partners and the local community. The setting must have achieved or are working towards an Early Years Wales Quality for All (QfA) award and external reports such as Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) are of a high standard.

It was clear from their supporting evidence that Abacus Day Nursery oozes passion! A small bilingual nursery based in the Uplands area of Swansea, registered for just 43 children, aged from 3 months to 7 years.

Abacus' philosophy is to provide a holistic, child-centred approach where children are encouraged to develop in a nurturing environment.

Abacus aims:

- ★ to provide high quality day care that enhances the development, care and education of pre-school children in a safe and stimulating environment, where they learn through play.
- ★ treat children as individuals and listen to the children's voice as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ★ to support parents and aid them in understanding and providing for the needs of their children.



“Abacus initially shone out as a fantastic nursery for us due to the bilingual element, but it is clear that this is not the only thing they do well. I was impressed how all the staff know all the children and vice versa, even when they are not in their age group. The weekly and seasonal themes ingest variation into the activities and also reflect the range of teaching given to all ages. Their ethos recognises friendships, understanding and caring for others and also caring for yourself. My children became determined to become independent at dressing themselves, feeding themselves and drinking out of a cup. The outside playing space is great, as is the inside soft play area. We even get some baked goodies come home that our children have made.”

– Clara (parent)

The setting has excellent links with parents, the community and external partners.

Parental Engagement

Online

The nursery keeps parents and families up to date with important information via a monthly newsletter which they publish on their website (www.abacus-day-nurseries.co.uk) and they aim to post updates of the work they've been doing with the children on their Facebook page (@[abacusdaynursery](https://www.facebook.com/abacusdaynursery)) at least 3 times a week

“The photos onto the Facebook page are an added bonus”

– Jodie (parent)

“The activities offered are varied with parents being kept up to date by photos on social media of activities and also daily reports”

– Dr Lamah and Dr James (parents)

Diaries

At the weekend the children (and their families) are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They complete a diary, detailing what healthy snacks they've had, when they brushed their teeth¹, and what exercise they've done.

Morgan Mouse

Morgan goes home with the children and with a little bit of help from their families they can document in Morgan's diary what they've done with him. This encourages communication as the child shares their news of Morgan's stay and is especially useful for new children at the nursery.

Community Links

The children love exploring their local area. They regularly visit the park, the shop where they buy fruit for snack time and posting letters at the post office! They also enjoy visiting the local church.

The children have also learnt a lot from recent visits by the RNIB - the children were able to experience what it is like to be blind or partially sighted. They also had the opportunity to meet a guide dog and are now fundraising for the charity (www.guidedogs.org.uk).

Fundraising

As well as for the Guide Dogs, the children enjoy raising money for lots of different charities including a local charity – Matthew's House. Matthew's House supports homeless and vulnerable people in Swansea. The children collect food for Matt's Café and deliver it themselves (matthewshouse.org.uk).

Health & Well-being

At Abacus the health and well-being of the children and staff are paramount.

The setting has worked hard to incorporate well-being in to all aspects of nursery life.

You've got a friend in me

The children gained an understanding of how we are all unique – disabilities, friendship and kindness

Don't worry, be happy

Within this theme the children looked at well-being, anxiety, sharing, friendships, kindness and emotions



Team Around the Family (TAF)

Team Around the Family offer workforce development training to professionals who support children and their families within Swansea.

Some of the courses accessed by Abacus over the past 12 months include:

Gro Brain

(The importance of the first 1001 days on children's physical and mental wellbeing)

Motivation and Communication

(How we can help motivate parents who appear to be stuck and practical tools for communicating with parents in a way that encourages engagement)

Moving forward and well-being

(The importance of looking after our own well-being as professionals so that we are best placed to support others)

Leanne Stephens, Team Around the Family Co-ordinator had this to say about the Abacus team:

Staff from Abacus Day Nursery played an active role in discussions throughout the sessions, including sharing examples of how they have practically implemented some of the suggestions/strategies they have learnt within their setting. For example, how they have openly discussed staff wellbeing and put goals in place with individual staff to ensure they know how important they are as part of the running of the nursery.

This has also included examples of emotional literacy exercises and 'don't worry be happy' weeks with the children. Supporting children to understand their emotions at the earliest possible opportunity and allowing children to have a voice is key to building resilience within families.

I fully support the efforts of Abacus Day Nursery in their endeavors to make this a reality for their families.

Yoga

The children have weekly yoga sessions with a professional yoga teacher, as well as with the staff throughout the week.

Walking

As the setting is based between two local primary schools, the school runs are completed on foot.



Sensory room and soft play

All the children can access the settings soft play and sensory rooms. The rooms really help in the development of the children's fine and gross motor skills, problem solving and team work.



Staff Well-being – the ‘well-being wheel’

The ‘well-being wheel’ was introduced in order to encourage the settings staff to open up more, discuss how their feeling and establish where they may need some extra support. It has proved to be highly effective.



Staff member:
Manager/Senior staff:
Date:

What was discussed:

Would you like any additional support?

Any targets or further actions needed:

Safeguarding Sonia & Behaviour Barry

Safeguarding Sonia joined Abacus in April 2018.

Sonia is a great way to further safeguarding training and provides the staff with real life situations. Different scenarios are put in Sonia’s pocket and she is hid in various locations around the nursery. Once found staff must decide on what action to take and who they need to speak to regarding this.

Behaviour Barry joined the setting in March 2019.

Barry is similar to Sonia but has behaviour management scenarios. He is used to reinforce positive behaviour management.

Awards

As a small nursery, Abacus boasts an excellent team of staff who are conscientious and continually developing and striving for excellence. The team works above and beyond to gain awards and qualifications to support the children within their care.

Recent awards & training – a snapshot!

Awards:

- ★ **Early Years Wales** Quality for All (QfA) – Highly Commended 2019
- ★ **Healthy Working Wales** Small Workplace Health Award – Bronze 2019 (working towards silver)
- ★ **NDNA** The Healthy Body, Happy Me Oral Health (2019)
- ★ **NDNA** The Healthy Body, Happy Me Award (2018)
- ★ Gold Healthy Snack Award Plus (2018)
- ★ Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme – pending assessment

Training:

- ★ Safeguarding and Child Protection
- ★ Paediatric First Aid
- ★ Welsh Training
- ★ Cooking with the Early years
- ★ Levels 2/3 & 5 CCLD



Learning and development

Foundation Phase

The children have a say in the activities they take part in, and their progression is recorded within their individual development books, including photographs and examples of their work. Each child's individual needs are considered.

Welsh

The children converse in Welsh daily and many of the children go onto Welsh-medium primary schools.

Cooking

The children are encouraged to get involved with the food preparation at meal times. They prepare and cut the fruit and vegetables and take part in a weekly cooking class, where they also learn to weigh and measure the ingredients.

Outdoor Classroom

The setting has been fortunate recently to receive a grant to develop their outdoor spaces.

At Abacus they have two outdoor spaces. One is grassed and the other has a safety surface. To encourage creativity there are always plenty of loose parts and recycled materials available for the children to play with.

Being qualified Playworkers, the team at Abacus have the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable the children to enhance their play, allowing for risk taking and promoting independence.

Conclusion

In testament to the high standards achieved by the team, the nursery has featured in local and national press. S4C recently interviewed the children about the importance of recycling.²

Abacus has several male workers within the nursery and as such feel it is important for children to see males in a caring role. As such, they have been working with Social Care Wales to encourage more men into sector as part of the We Care campaign.³



WALESONLINE.CO.UK | BY LUCINDA REID

What would the world be like if nobody cared for each other?

WeCare Wales is raising awareness about the importance of working in...

References:

¹ <https://www.designedtosmile.org/>

² <https://www.facebook.com/abacusdaynursery/videos/986551624864030/?t=12>

³ <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/special-features/wecare-wales-working-in-care-15934928>

Editors Note

Abacus Day Nursery have recently been asked to take part in an event showcasing UNCRC in practice in the Early Years. Congratulations to all involved!



The Early Years Wales Awards 2020

If you've been reading our 'Spotlight on...' series and thinking 'we do that', 'I do that' or 'we do that...and some!!'

Then why not nominate yourselves for an Early Years Wales Award 2020.

Following on from the success of our inaugural event in May, we are delighted to announce that our second celebration of childcare excellence in Wales is being held at the Hilton Hotel in Cardiff, on Friday 12th June.

Nominations will open on Monday 6th January. Keep an eye on our website and social media for more information as it is released.