

Baby Unicorns

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Veronica Sharpe

Setting address Sancton Wood School, 1-2 St. Pauls Road, Cambridge,
Cambridgeshire, CB1 2EZ

Telephone number 01223 471729 01223 471703

Email

Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Baby Unicorns opened in 2001 and operates from a purpose-built building within the grounds of the Sancton Wood Independent School in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to accept up to ten children in the early years age range. There are currently 21 children on roll aged between one and three years of age; most of these attend on a part-time basis. There are a small number of children on roll who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open each weekday during school term times from 8.45am until 5pm and until 4.15pm on Friday. A holiday club is provided when there is sufficient parental demand. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery employs four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this small and friendly setting. Staff are dedicated to the well-being of the children and have warm and loving relationships with them. Parents receive a wealth of information about the nursery and they say their children are extremely safe and secure. Children are particularly active, enthusiastic learners and therefore make rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Vigorous self-evaluation enables staff and management to ensure the outcomes for children are constantly improving.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- extending ways to help children explore and question differences in gender, ethnicity, language and culture, for example, by increasing multicultural resources in role play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The safety and welfare of children is given a high priority by every member of the staff team. Staff all attend training for child protection and have an excellent knowledge of safeguarding issues. Comprehensive policies and procedures are reviewed each time staff update their safeguarding training, which ensures information is accurate and in line with the requirements. Highly effective

recruitment and induction procedures mean any adults in contact with the children are safe and suitable to do so. Daily organisation of the nursery is exemplary with a firm focus on enabling children to move around and play in safety.

The nursery shows a strong commitment to equality and diversity and has clear and robust policies. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the children as individuals; they know about their home languages and lifestyles and do their utmost to support them. The environment reflects the diverse families that attend, which means children feel welcome and included. The manager and staff are aware that further resourcing in some areas, such as materials for the role play area, would enhance children's understanding of diversity. However, this is not yet fully in place. Languages of the children who attend are clearly displayed and the many photographs of the children at play give them a sense of belonging. Although there are no children on roll with special educational needs and/or disabilities staff continue to attend relevant training, such as behaviour management. Managers ensure policies and procedures are kept up to date and proactively source resources that promote inclusion, such as light boxes and treasure baskets. This ensures staff would be able to offer high-quality care to meet any additional needs.

Parents are extremely pleased with the nursery. They say staff are warm and loving to their children. All parents spoken to commented on how safe their children are and how much they enjoy being at the nursery. Parents are very well-informed about their children's health, safety and welfare and receive regular summaries of their learning and development. They are encouraged to take an active part in learning, for example, by taking books home or borrowing the impressive range of themed toys and story sacks. New parents are invited to stay and play sessions and receive an informative handbook, which both parents and staff agree gives children confidence and reassures parents during the settling-in period.

Transitions between the nursery and feeder nursery classes or schools are exceptional. Once children know their destination, school or setting, staff create displays showing their new classrooms and their teachers. Reassuring books are read about moving on and emphasis is given to practical skills, such as putting on shoes and coats. Teachers from many schools visit to meet the children in order to provide them with a friendly face on their first day. Comprehensive summative assessments of learning are shared to ensure continuity of care and learning. The nursery also works in partnership with other agencies, in particular, it has a strong relationship with the local authority early years advisors and the special educational needs coordinators.

Managers and staff demonstrate they have a clear drive to succeed and therefore ensure children have the best possible opportunities. Self-evaluation is very well-established and reviewed regularly. Parents' views are gathered formally and informally and the nursery has many examples where they have responded to comments and improved their service to parents. For example, they have extended opening hours and improved access to the learning and development folders. Staff enthusiastically embrace professional development and attend many courses to increase their knowledge of how children learn. Ideas are brought back, discussed

and implemented, for example, workshops on boys' learning and superhero play has resulted in outdoor den building that has excited all the children. This commitment and willingness to review and experiment ensures children continue to make excellent progress towards the early learning goals.

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

Records of children's learning and development are exemplary; they offer a comprehensive picture of children's achievements, from early starting points to next steps for the future. Comments from parents are usefully included to ensure there is a full picture of children's activities and interests. Staff's extensive knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements ensures each child has a personalised learning experience that fully meets their needs. Staff are extremely respectful of the children; they speak warmly to them and are quick to offer praise, which builds children's self-esteem. Children behave very well; they cooperate with adults and each other and understand their own responsibilities, such as helping to set the table for lunch. Children are very well motivated and eager to join in the activities. They thoroughly enjoy the exceptional range of activities and resources and show lots of confidence. Staff are skilled in offering support when needed, for example, helping a two-year-old add water to a sand tray.

Children's communication and language is extremely well supported as adults generate an infectious enthusiasm for books and stories. Spontaneous story times guarantee a gathering of children eager to listen. Children show they understand the concept of storytelling, for example, they anticipate what happens next in the story and pre-empt the ending. Many children show they are highly competent with numbers and use them spontaneously, for example, counting their toy railway carriages out loud. Staff promote the use of numbers in everyday activities, such as counting plates or cups. A plethora of numbers and shapes are displayed so children can touch, see and compare. Children's ability to listen, be independent and use everyday technology ensures they are well prepared for their future learning.

Children have everyday access to a wide range of media. They use sand and water freely, and watch with wonder as bubbles are blown into the sky. Innovative staff increase children's understanding as they add soap to puddles on a rainy day. Children mix paint colours themselves and understand that blue and yellow make green. Giant pencils and charcoal sticks amuse children and encourage them to investigate the marks they make. White boards and chalk boards are in everyday use, indoors and out, so children quickly become accustomed to scribbling and making their marks.

Although outdoor space is limited in size, staff work hard to provide children with a vibrant outdoor area that stimulates children's imaginations. Dens made by the children become imaginative areas for tea parties, or a place to shelter from the sun. A large sand tray means children can sit and cover their feet, recognising that

wet sand sticks to your feet and makes good sandcastles. Children are involved in all aspects of vegetable growing to build their understanding of life cycles. They plant seeds, water and tend the plants, then harvest the produce, which includes peas, carrots and rhubarb.

Healthy meals and snacks ensure children develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Although parents provide all food, staff offer clear advice and guidance on suitable content. Children share fruits and breads each day and confidently try out new vegetables, such as soy beans. Even the youngest children know and adopt very good hygiene practices and are competent hand washers. Staff instruct children extremely well in personal safety and enable children to take their own decisions, for example, they consider if the weather good enough to play outdoors without shoes.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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