

Baby Unicorns

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY287711
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Heidi Falconer
Setting Address	Sancton Wood School, 1-2 St. Pauls Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 2EZ
Telephone number	01223 471729 01223 471703
E-mail	sturdy@sturdy.demon.co.uk
Registered person	Baby Unicorns
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Baby Unicorns opened in 2001 and operates from one main room in a purpose-built building. It is situated in the centre of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire. The nursery is open each weekday during school term times from 08.45 to 15.15. A late stay club operates until 17:00 each day and a holiday club is provided when there is a demand. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged under five years on roll. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery employs five members of staff. Of these, four, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about the importance of good personal hygiene routines and keeping healthy. Two low-level sinks in the main room allow children to independently wash their hands before snacks and after messy play activities. Photographs displayed by the sinks help to

reinforce these routines. Older children say that they wash their hands because they have 'germs and nasty's on them' and 'if they get into our tummy's you get ill'. Good procedures are in place to care for children if they become ill or have an accident at the setting. For example, staff record all accidents, incidents and the administration of medication fully and share these records appropriately with parents. All staff hold current first aid certificates.

Parents are requested to provide any meals, snacks and drinks that their child may require. To ensure that these foods remain safe and appetising to eat a fridge is provided to store foods which need to be refrigerated. To further promote food safety the fridge temperature is checked on a daily basis and good procedures are in place to ensure that food which needs to be warmed up is heated up to the correct temperature. To encourage children to ask for their drinks as they require them, staff have recently placed photographs of them having drinks on the fridge door. They hope that particularly young children will point to these to signal that they want a drink.

Children have regular opportunities for exercise, which helps to maintain their good health whilst promoting their physical skills. Each morning and afternoon they play outside using equipment such as bikes, scooters and balancing equipment. Children also enjoy crawling through play tents and banging metal items such as saucepans which have been hung up to create a sensory area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe as staff carry out effective daily risk assessments and appropriate safety equipment is in place to minimise potential hazards. For example, Perspex has been fitted to low-level windows to make the glass inaccessible and cleaning products are kept out of children's reach. The outside play area is safe and good security measures are in place to ensure that children are not able to leave the premises unsupervised. A coded entrance door ensures that visitors to the setting can be monitored to safeguard children. Good procedures are in place ensuring that children's safety is maintained when they are on outings. For example, prior to the visit staff record the route which will be taken and details of the children who will be going out.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming setting. They are greeted warmly by staff on arrival and quickly become engaged in the activities on offer. Staff regularly clean and check the toys and resources to ensure that they are well-maintained and suitable for the ages of the children present. To encourage independence and free choice the staff are currently reviewing the organisation of equipment and resources. For example, a graphics table has recently been introduced to give children free access to crayons, chalks, paper, scissors and glue. There are plans in place to lower a display board in the room to allow children to access painting activities freely each day. Children who require a sleep during the day, rest in a curtained off area of the room. There are plans in place to further improve the sleeping area provided for the children.

Children are protected from harm because the staff understands their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice if necessary. Staff have attended training in this area and a clear written policy ensures parents are fully informed of their responsibility to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and babies are happy and settled at Baby Unicorns. They benefit from the warm and caring relationships that they build with staff which enables them to feel safe and secure. Children's care and development is promoted well through the positive interactions they receive from staff as they play. For example, children's language skills and interest in books is developed by staff who spend time reading stories to them and asking the children questions about the pictures that they see. Children snuggle up with staff as they read to them, laughing and giggling as talk about fish with 'wibbly, wobbly eyes'. These books are read to the children with enthusiasm which maintains their interest. Once each story has finished children eagerly choose another books saying 'this one, this one this one'.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to plan a broad range of activities for babies and young children. Children take part in many activities which allow them to represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. For example, all children enjoy playing in the role play area. Older children enjoy the range of dressing up outfits and proudly announce that they are 'princesses' as they walk about in gowns and headdresses. Younger children play with tea sets and pretend food in the role play area. Children enjoy exploring sand using scoops and spades to pour it through a sand mill to make a wheel turn. Children find out about and identify some features of living things through planned activities. For example, they have recently planted some garden peas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the effective partnerships that staff build with their parents. Good communication ensures that both parties are fully informed about children's changing needs and their achievements. For example, parents receive daily written information about sleep, nappy changes, food intakes and activities which children have taken part in. Through the settings, web site, notice boards and newsletters parents are kept well informed about the setting and the policies and procedures which are followed. Children behave well, playing alongside others happily and learning to share resources. Older children are sensitive to the needs of others. For example, they show care and concern for the younger children as they pass them toys.

Children's receive appropriate care to their individual needs. Parents complete an 'Induction' form to provide staff with valuable information including sleep routines, eating habits and favourite activities that children have. Children are learning about diversity of the wider world around them through discussions about festivals and tasting food from different countries. For example, each year staff plan a food week where each day children are able to taste foods from around the world. Children learn about their local community as they go on outings to the local botanical gardens and go to watch the schools sports day. There are suitable systems in place to support children who may attend who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff work well as a team under the guidance of the manager and director of the setting. Together they have a clear ethos for the provision of good quality care. Robust procedures are

in place for the recruitment and employment of staff. This ensures that children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced adults. Good induction procedures make sure that all staff are fully aware of the setting's policies and procedures, ensuring that children benefit from consistent care.

Staff maintain and use appropriate forms of record keeping. They implement the setting's policies and procedures well in order to promote children's care and learning. However, staff information is kept in a central office and is not available on the premises to support the manager in deploying staff effectively. All records which related to the children are stored appropriately to ensure that they remain confidential. Staff show care and concern for the children and support the children well in their play. This helps the children to feel welcome, comfortable and at ease in the setting. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to further develop their knowledge and understanding of special needs and disabilities. Since the last inspection staff have received some training in this area. As a result, they are able to provide fully inclusive care which is accessible to all children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to improve the sleeping area for children under two to enable them to sleep undisturbed
- ensure that staff information is readily available on the premises to enable them to be deployed effectively.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk