

Apricot Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY352812
Inspection date	07 May 2008
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
Setting Address	Longsands College, Longsands Road, ST. NEOTS, Cambridgeshire, PE19 1LQ
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Registered person	Sunhill Daycare ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Apricot Day Nursery has been operating since 1991 and is located in the grounds of Longsands College, St Neots, Cambridgeshire. Since 2007 it has been part of Sunhill Daycare (Europe). The nursery building consists of four group rooms, toilets, kitchen, office and staff facilities. There are several enclosed outdoor play areas.

Opening times are from 07:30 to 18:30 each weekday all year round with the exception of bank holidays and one week at Christmas. The nursery is registered to provide care for no more than 47 children aged up to five years. There are currently 46 children on roll, including 23 three and four year olds eligible for early years funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A small number of children who attend have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 11 members of staff and a nursery cook, 10 members of staff have appropriate childcare qualifications to at least level 2. Five staff are currently working towards improving their qualifications.

Apricot Day Nursery is located close to the Apricot Out of School Club, which operates from the adjacent Priory Park infant school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Older children have a well developed understanding of healthy eating. They relish fresh fruit, vegetables and salad and confidently say how many of their 'five a day' they have had. Food is freshly prepared on site each day and is interesting, tasty and nourishing. Mealtimes are friendly social occasions as staff and children sit together to share conversation as well as their food. Babies eat food from home or nursery meals according to parental preferences and have their own times and routines for snacks and meals. Children in all areas of the nursery access water freely and they show good levels of independence as they pour their drinks and dispose of used cups.

Children learn how to care for themselves and understand the importance of personal hygiene, for instance, they wash their hands thoroughly in order to 'make the germs go away'. Pictures in the toilets help children sequence their self-care, showing them how to use the soap dispensers and the hand driers. Staff encourage children to be clean and hygienic and provide them with good explanations. However, they do not always follow their own advice, such as washing their own hands before food preparation or service, therefore there are times when children are not effectively protected from cross-infections. In addition some snacks are served to younger children directly onto the tables without using plates or bowls. Although staff clean tables with an appropriate anti-bacterial spray this still increases children's risk of cross-infection.

Children's health and safety is promoted well overall because all members of staff hold an appropriate first aid qualification. A first aid kit is easily accessible and all necessary documents are in place. Accidents and incidents are shared with parents and carers so they are well informed, which helps to protect children.

Children in all areas of the nursery enjoy plenty of fresh air and exercise. The nursery gardens are pleasant and well-equipped, providing a good range of activities that help children learn to clamber, balance and slide. Children move with confidence as they climb over a home made obstacle course and they use wheeled toys skilfully, manoeuvring round their peers safely. In hot weather they always wear their hats and stand patiently to have sun cream applied because staff provide clear explanations about safety in the sun. Indoors children energetically move to music and sing along to songs such as 'dingle-dangle scarecrow' or 'hop little bunnies'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a comfortable and welcoming environment. Photographs of the children at play, cheerful posters and mobiles make the rooms bright and stimulating and give the children a sense of belonging. The premises are safe and secure with locked gates to the outdoor play areas and a coded lock at the entrance. Staff follow the risk assessment procedures rigorously to make sure all areas are safe and suitable.

The outdoor play areas have suitable surfaces so children make use of them all year round, which promotes their enjoyment of fresh air and physical exercise. Staff provide a stimulating range of play opportunities, such as chalking, dressing up, puzzles and games so children look forward to their time outdoors. New gardening areas have been developed so children can

extend their understanding of the wider world and where their food comes from as they plant and tend flowers and vegetables.

Equipment and toys are mostly in good condition and kept clean and hygienic. Children benefit from a good selection of age appropriate resources that meet their individual needs. Throughout the nursery resources are well organised to enable children to make independent choices, for example, collage and painting materials are easily accessible to children aged two to three years. Staff encourage children to make their own choices, although the routines of the nursery day sometimes impact on children's ability to sustain their play.

Children's safety and welfare is assured because staff show a good understanding of child protection. They all attend suitable training and know about the setting's policies and procedures. Senior staff make sure any unvetted adults present, such as students, are supervised until checks are completed. This helps safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children show they enjoy their time at nursery by their happy, enthusiastic attitudes. On arrival they greet staff with great affection and settle easily to their activities. Babies play confidently, seeking out new toys with excitement and show warm relationships with their key worker, who gives them cuddles and plenty of attention. Younger children seek out laps for story time, or to have their shoes put on for outdoor play. They greet strangers with confidence, which demonstrates their sense of security.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities and ensure children's individual development needs are met. Stimulating activities and experiences take into account children's interests as well as their age and stage of development so they are purposefully occupied and engaged. Staff involve themselves in children's play and offer lots of praise and encouragement so children approach new learning with confidence.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a developing understanding of the foundation stage and support children well in their learning. They show confidence in the way they present the curriculum, which gives children a secure foundation for their ongoing progress. Observations are collected daily and are used effectively to plan for children's next steps. Staff know the children well and take into account their likes and dislikes when planning activities so children take part with enthusiasm. Although children are beginning to benefit from the introduction of some free-flow activities their ability to sustain their play and thinking is sometimes limited by the routines of the nursery day, such as tidying away before outdoor play or snack time.

Children have lots of opportunities to mark make and they access painting and writing materials freely. They enjoy using books and listen intently to stories; they handle books with care and point to pictures of interest and words they recognise. Many of the children recognise their own names in print and can identify their initial sounds. Children's understanding of language is developing particularly well because staff take time to engage the children in worthwhile conversations. They gently encourage children to contribute their ideas and show they value those ideas by listening and responding positively.

Staff involve children in activities that increase their awareness of numbers, such as finding out how many cups are needed for snack. Games such as dominoes or matching cards help children develop their understanding of sequencing and numbers, as well as their sharing skills. Children build with enthusiasm, using a good range of both small and large construction equipment. In the garden children use their problem solving skills to build their obstacle course from crates, boxes and ladders. Their hand-to-eye coordination is developing well as they use a wide range of tools and materials, such as scissors, brushes and building blocks.

Practical activities help children learn about the world around them, for example, they look at the lives of children in developing countries and have built links with sponsored children in Africa. They make pictures of their homes and families and discuss with much interest new babies and how they arrive in the world. Children enjoy using colourful paints to create individual art, or work together to make large cooperative displays that demonstrate their lively imaginations.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well and show confident and friendly attitudes, they are developing a sense of responsibility as they help tidy away their toys, or lay the tables for lunch. Staff use praise and encouragement effectively so children show high-levels of self-esteem. Settling in procedures mean key workers develop firm links with parents and carers, which enables them to meet children's individual needs. Staff know the children well and understand about their likes and dislikes, which they take into account when planning for children's next steps. This means children are purposefully engaged in enjoyable activities that promote their development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn about the wider world through books, games and activities, for example, they explore Chinese food for Chinese New Year, or learn about children in a developing country. Personal festivals, such as birthdays are celebrated together and children learn about each other's families as they discuss, for example, their siblings or parents and their interests.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents speak highly of the staff and say they have confidence in the quality of care and learning. Individual records are easily accessible so parents can help themselves and read up-to-date information about their children's progress. Regular open evenings enable parents and key workers to discuss all aspects of the children's lives in the nursery. Most parents say they exchange comprehensive information on a daily basis that reassures them of their children's welfare. Daily boards and newsletters keep parents and carers informed of events and changes. Detailed information is collected from parents and carers to enable staff to meet children's individual needs, including any learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the early years education is good. Senior staff monitor the practice and the staff team meet frequently to offer each other support and advice. Because of the recent change of ownership staff are having to adjust to new roles and responsibilities, including those who plan and present the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result they are currently attending training to increase their knowledge and understanding of early years

learning. This ensures children continue to benefit from ongoing improvements in the provision of nursery education.

All the staff working with the children are knowledgeable about the National Standards and therefore keep children safe and well. They work well as a team and offer effective support to each other, working independently and confidently. Staff work with cheerful enthusiasm and show a real commitment to the children; they take an active part in the future development of the setting, as demonstrated by their contributions to the comprehensive self-evaluation process. Continuous professional development is given a high priority so all staff benefit from training that helps them maintain children's health, welfare and safety, such as first aid and child protection.

Appropriate recruitment procedures mean adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Any new or temporary staff are supervised by the manager or room leaders until their checks are verified and induction completed, which helps keep children safe.

All necessary documentation is in place and kept with due regard for confidentiality. Policies and procedures have regular updates and are shared with parents and carers so they understand about the provision of care and education. Ofsted is kept suitably informed of any changes to the setting. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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):

- ensure staff carry out good hygiene practice consistently, such as washing their own hands and ensuring children are protected from cross-infection at snack times.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- continue to increase children's opportunities to develop their independent learning and sustain their play.

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