

Harper's Nursery School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY349379
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Inspector	Lesley Boyle
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Registered person	Harper's Nursery School 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Harpers Day Nursery and Baby unit opened in 1999. The day nursery operates from a converted house in a village near Sandy, Bedfordshire. A maximum of 66 children may attend the nursery at any time. The nursery is open 50 weeks a year from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday. The nursery has the use of a separate entrance hall to the baby cloak room as well as access to the baby room which is on the ground floor. There is another separate entrance hall and cloak room on the ground floor for children aged from two years to under five years. Their play rooms are situated on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. There are currently 72 children aged from six weeks to under five years on roll. Of these, 31 receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with English as an additional language and are able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery employs 18 members of staff, 16 of whom have appropriate childcare qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are superbly protected from cross-infection as the setting has robust policies and exemplary procedures in place. Staff always wear disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing and all surfaces are changed and cleaned after use which reduces the risk of contamination. Sick children are excluded from the setting which prevents the spread of infection. This helps to maintain the health of all. Children's health is further promoted as they follow well-established personal hygiene routines. Children know that they need to wash their hands properly after visiting the toilet and before eating. Older children do this without prompting as they fully understand why such routines are necessary. As a result, they actively contribute to their own well-being and rapidly take responsibility for meeting their own personal needs. Children are able to sleep according to their own individual routines and have separate rest areas with individualised bedding which prevents the spread of infection. These measures support the extremely high levels of cleanliness within the nursery environment.

Children significantly benefit from the healthy and nutritional food that is provided. The nursery has been commended with an oral hygiene and healthy eating award as a result of its commitment to meeting children's nutritional needs. All children select from a range of fruits at snack time and enjoy a well-balanced meal at lunch time. The nursery employs a talented cook who carefully devises the delicious menus from local seasonal produce. Both the cook and manager hold food hygiene certificates and the nursery has achieved a 'five stars' certificate from the department of environmental health. Menus are displayed for parents to see and the staff highlight the number of fruit and vegetables that are in the meals so that parents can see that their children have had their 'five a day'. Children have constant access to fresh water as they independently help themselves to water and named water bottles go with the children during outside play. This ensures that they remain hydrated throughout the session. Babies are provided with regular fluids in accordance with parents' wishes and there are meticulous procedures for ensuring that parents are kept informed of their food and milk intake.

Children enjoy fantastic opportunities for physical exercise. The nursery frequently arranges outings to local parks and places of interest as well as providing children with regular active play in the superb outside play area which has been expertly designed to enhance children's enjoyment. The area provides exceptional opportunities for children to play imaginatively while developing their physical skills. Children run and jump with glee as they explore the nature area, go digging, pedal tricycles around the paved area or play 'going on a bear hunt' with tents at the bottom of the extensive garden area. Younger children have daily opportunities to explore the outside area and have fresh air. They are given a range of multi-sensory toys and natural objects to play with to enhance their experiences and nurture a positive attitude to the outside area. All children have access to boots and suitable clothing so that the outside is used in nearly all weathers.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is given a very high priority and risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff are extremely vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Staff know what to do in the event of an emergency and practise their evacuation plan frequently.

to ensure the safety of the children. Thorough daily risk assessments are in place and specific written assessments are prepared for certain activities such as using the boats outside and the recent visit from the 'zoo lab'. Staff are clear about checking the identity of unknown callers and visitors are vigilantly signed in and out of the premises. There is a video and camera entry system in place and no one gains entry who is not a named collector.

Children have an excellent understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are consistently given explanations by staff and understand the importance of listening to instructions and using equipment safely in order to prevent accidents. Staff make use of their spontaneous play to help them develop their awareness of being safe. For example, they make children more aware of safety around electrical equipment by using toasters and kettles in the role play area and talk about safety features while they are playing.

Children use a wonderful range of safe, high quality toys and equipment. For example, the furniture in the baby room is especially chosen for its versatility to be arranged in different ways to meet children's individual needs. Toy lists are arranged under Foundation Stage areas and 'Birth to three matters' which helps staff to highlight any shortfalls. Bright displays of children's work and hanging mobiles enhance the environment and reinforce and consolidate learning in an age-appropriate manner.

Policies, procedures and paperwork that support children's safety are exemplary. These include procedures to ensure that all toys and equipment conform to safety requirements, guidelines for the safe preparation of food and additional procedures to safeguard children on outings. Without exception, these are comprehensive documents which fully support practice. Consequently, children's safety and well-being is successfully promoted to an extremely high standard.

The expert knowledge of child protection procedures demonstrated by staff helps to ensure children are protected from harm and neglect. All staff fully understand the correct procedures to follow for recording concerns. They have a clear understanding of signs and symptoms that may alert them to child abuse, having all completed in-house safeguarding children training. They are regularly involved in assessing risk to children and are diligent in recording any ongoing incidents or concerns. The setting has a strong commitment to safeguarding all children as all decisions are made with the child's best interests at heart.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children relish their time at the setting and are exceptionally confident and happy. They are eager to attend and remain enthusiastic throughout the day as they enjoy superb opportunities to play and learn. All children have warm relationships with each other and with the staff. This is a result of the considerable commitment staff make to ensure they feel welcomed. All children are treated with respect and their contributions to the setting are valued. Their work is displayed around the room and they are encouraged to share their home life with staff and children. For example, they are encouraged to bring in items of interest from home to share with staff. Older children have 'all about me' books which consolidate the links between home and nursery, and the children contribute to a lively display about themselves and their family members. This effectively encourages them to develop a sense of belonging. There are plenty of opportunities for children to snuggle up with staff as they read stories or play alongside them. As a result, children are relaxed and comfortable.

Children enjoy a wonderful range of stimulating experiences that encourage their intellectual and creative development. Their preferences are respected as they move freely around the setting to access resources. For example, children are given a wonderful opportunity to see and hold a range of unusual animals through the visitors such as the 'zoo lab', however, staff are also extremely sensitive to children's anxieties and allow children to decide for themselves how much they participate with the activity. Quieter activities such as reading, crafts and jigsaws are also enjoyed. Babies develop their exploratory impulses as all their senses are used as they investigate 'treasure baskets', explore the sensory area or play with messy or textured materials. They are thriving through the meticulous attention given by staff to details such as providing babies with over trousers to encourage them to explore the outside areas. Staff encourage all children to be actively engaged and their language skills are rapidly developed as staff talk to them about their activities. As a result, children's social skills are excellent.

Staff are highly skilled in using effective methods to maintain children's interest, sitting with them and extending their play in all areas. They are versatile, including all children by engaging them in groups or on an individual basis. This ensures that more reserved children or those with additional needs are equally well supported. The vibrant and animated style used by staff helps to ensure children remain focussed. For example, during an imaginative role play activity outside the children convert the climbing frame into rocket. Following on from this interest, a member of staff gets a story sack about bears visit to the moon and children share in a spontaneous story time outside on a blanket. Another example of the lengths that staff go to engage in children's interest is in their obtaining real boats and canoes for children to play in to capitalise on children's interest in the seaside and holidays. Children are completely engaged and excited as they sit in the boats, wear life jackets, go fishing and swim to imaginary far off lands.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff demonstrate an exceptional understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They have undertaken professional training to a high standard and have a comprehensive knowledge of how children progress through the stepping stones. They work well as a team, devising and delivering planned activities across all areas of learning. A wide range of practical and engaging experiences are offered to children, supporting all to develop their potential. These are expertly delivered to ensure that all learning opportunities are fully exploited throughout the day. For example, routine times are used to full effect as staff consistently engage and involve children in them.

The system for assessment is successful and children make rapid progress. All staff make quality observations which are then recorded in the children's individual files. Staff review the children in their own key worker group and ensure that their progress is monitored. This effectively ensures that they have a clear picture of children's individual levels of attainment. These are supplemented by photographs with related text to explain the contexts within the areas of learning. Accordingly, they convey a graphic picture of children's progress with indications of their achievements and the information is used to plan the next stage in learning based on the children's interests. This impacts positively as staff are always clear about the level of challenge that individual children require.

Children's attitude to learning is outstanding. They concentrate well beyond that expected for their age and stage of development as they spend time designing their own creations or participating in circle time. Their self-help skills are developing rapidly as they wash their hands before their lunch and pour their own drinks at snack time. Children's language skills are excellent. They speak clearly and are confident taking turns in spontaneous conversation and

in more formal situations like circle time. Children link sounds to letters and older children are starting to develop their phonological skills further as they explore rhymes and alliteration. They produce their own books which are attractively laminated and bound, valuing the children's efforts. Children are familiar with seeing other words in print as the setting uses clear labelling. Opportunities for children to use writing equipment are always available inside and outside and children mark make with increasing control and meaning.

The children begin to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They match and sort, are using mathematical language such as more than, one more and one less to help them to solve problems across a wide range of practical activities such as songs rhymes, games, puzzles and in their imaginative play. More able children are beginning to add and subtract and are being introduced to some mathematical symbols. Children have a very good understanding of shape, space and measure as they spontaneously look for shapes in the environment and have good experiences of sorting shapes and puzzles. They use the language of measuring in their play, for example, they make a 'cherry cake' from sand and weigh up the ingredients. Staff support them skilfully in this activity asking children to think about whether something feels light or heavy and remind children to make sure the weighing scales start with zero.

The children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in a very exciting and interesting environment. They have a wealth of opportunities to observe, explore, question, and be curious in a broad range of activities that form the foundation of later learning in history, geography, science and technology. They enjoy exploring the natural world as they look for bugs and beetles in their digging area outside and show interest in creatures who live in the sea. Staff fully promote their learning by organising visits that correspond to the topics covered. For instance, they organise a visit from the 'zoo lab' where children have the opportunity to look at and hold animals such as snakes, millipede and spiders and learn about these creatures. There is also ample opportunity for children to learn about materials and their properties through the multi-sensory learning environment where children have free access to resources that supports their play. For example, a child pretends to be a builder and uses a jug and a funnel to 'mix the cement' then announces, 'I'm nearly finished now, I just need my drill but I must first put on my glasses so that I don't get dust in my face.' Children benefit from the rural environment and are able to look at the horses from close proximity, comparing their features to their own and noting the similarities and differences.

Children are offered very good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Staff encourage them to use the outdoor apparatus in different ways encouraging them to move over and under it and discuss different ways of travelling. Children also develop their hand-eye co-ordination through throwing and catching bean bags and different size balls. Children develop their fine manipulative skills to a high degree as they engage in bead threading activities and jigsaw puzzles. They use one handed tools competently, for example, with modelling clay and show increasing control as they design pictures and decorate them with collage materials. Their creativity is valued as they are free to use their imagination while staff sensitively give support with ideas and suggestions to explore different colours during colour mixing. As a result of this freedom, children confidently explore colours and textures and produce work of a high standard.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There is a robust and comprehensive equal opportunity policy. This supports excellent practice. All children are treated with warmth as staff have respect for children's individuality. The setting is committed to recognising family identity and individual diversity. All children's records are extremely well detailed to ensure that they receive appropriate care relating to their own requirements. The professionalism contributed by staff to this area ensures that children's individual needs are addressed to a superb standard. Children also learn to value diversity in others through a range of interesting activities. For instance, they learn about a range of Russian celebrations, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Chinese New Year and Diwali. This helps children to recognise and value the wider community. Children learn about the local community through walks in the village to the local church or village hall and through walks in the beautiful countryside. Children also learn to make a positive contribution to society through supporting various charities and becoming involved in local fundraising events.

Behaviour is exemplary from all children as they happily share and take turns independently. The expert practice of staff ensures children understand the rules of the nursery, have a good understanding of the boundaries within the nursery and respond to direction from adults in a positive fashion. They eagerly respond to the consistent approach followed by all adults. This impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children develop secure levels of self-esteem with consistent encouragement and support from the staff. Highly effective behaviour management defuses situations and distracts and engages children in worthwhile activities. Staff have up-to-date knowledge of how to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through ongoing training. Additional needs are discussed with parents who are involved in their children's care at every stage. Specialist support services are available and there is a policy which provides very detailed information of how to obtain any specialist knowledge they may need. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The first visit to the nursery is the starting point of the staff and family working together to share information about cultures, home languages, interests and specific needs. Staff give a generous amount of time to new enquirers and ensure that parents and carers have ample opportunity to become familiar with the setting. There is a lending library which provides a wealth of information for parents which includes general care and educational literature as well as books and advice on child development and other topics of family interest.

Parents are given superb information about the educational programme, for example, the nursery has designed their own leaflets about various aspects of Early Years education such as water play, mark making and outdoor play to keep parents fully informed as to why they provide the activities they do and the importance of children learning through play. There are excellent systems in place such as home to school books and diaries, newsletters and an email link to enable high quality information to take place between parents and staff. Parents have ample opportunities to be involved in their children's learning and daily activities and are encouraged to make 'play and stay' visits as well as more formal opportunities to speak to the staff. This includes a session where parents can watch a video that typifies a day at the nursery. The nursery is extremely flexible and are fully committed to meeting the needs of the whole family. As a result, parents and carers are highly complimentary about the level of service provided.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Through superb planning and effective staff deployment children receive high levels of care from extremely well-qualified individuals. Children's play and learning is significantly enhanced as experienced, enthusiastic staff work alongside them throughout the day. There are robust recruitment and vetting procedures to employ appropriate staff. Effective procedures ensure their continued suitability. New staff receive a comprehensive induction which ensures that they are quickly familiar with the robust policies and procedures. This effectively promotes the welfare of children.

The leadership and management is outstanding. Children are progressing and achieving rapidly because of the superior teaching methods. Staff are dedicated, keen and knowledgeable. They are clear about their roles as they are led by a strong management team. The setting evaluates its own performance and is successful in identifying its own strengths and weaknesses. There is a clear commitment to continued improvement which is shared by all staff. Aims and objectives focus on the development and achievement of all children.

All staff are actively encouraged to take part in their own development through the well-developed supervision and appraisal systems. They are fully supported in accessing further training up to degree level. Children benefit as new ideas and techniques are put into practice to enhance their experience. As a result of the unquestionable dedication displayed by staff, all children flourish. Documentation is consistently of a high standard, available for inspection and stored appropriately with due regard for confidentiality. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the nursery was asked to make plans for the maintenance of the high standards they set for themselves. They have achieved this through vigorous self-evaluation and ongoing staff development and training.

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 the 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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