

# Harpers Nursery School Ltd.

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY349379

**Inspection date**

12/04/2011

**Inspector**

Lynne Talbot

**Setting address**

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**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## **Description of the setting**

Harpers Nursery School and Baby unit is privately owned and registered in 1999. The provision operates from a detached purpose-built setting in Blunham, Bedfordshire. The building is accessible to all children via entrance ramps. There is a set of steps to negotiate in the outdoor play area and stairs to the first floor. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The provision is open each weekday for 50 weeks each year. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 66 children may attend the provision at any one time. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare register. There are currently 86 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range. The provision provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. The provision is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently no children on roll in this age range.

Some children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or childminders. The provision supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. The provision employs 18 members of staff including the cook and director. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, level 3 or above. There is one staff member with Early Years Professional Status as well as an external Early Years Professional support.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage builds from every child's individual interest and stage of development supported by responsive planning. This ensures that children receive highly imaginative experiences that foster rapid progress in their learning and development. The staff group create a superbly welcoming environment, using significantly focussed safeguarding procedures and thorough risk assessments. They ensure that they have cohesive knowledge of each child's needs to ensure that every child is totally included. Partnerships with parents and carers, together with those with all other agencies, are key strengths showing dedication to meeting all children's needs. The owner and managers communicate clear ambition and drive to secure purposeful continued development using in-depth self-evaluation.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- continuing to implement strategies and activities to support children's appreciation of the environment and its advantages for children's learning.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Comprehensive policies and procedures for safeguarding are implemented robustly to ensure that children are fully protected. Managers use a highly effective safeguarding audit tool which is continually evaluated and updated, as well as introducing new measures gleaned through training and reviewing investigations and outcomes from national case reviews. This vigilant approach, daily routines and staff professionalism ensures that safeguarding procedures work at all times. Close monitoring of visitors, internal release systems for doors and video screen security systems support the overall security. Senior managers ensure that all persons required undertake the appropriate checks to safeguard children. Children are safeguarded by the extensive recruitment and vetting procedures, including the in-depth induction of new staff. Mentors, staff-on-staff observation, regular supervision and appraisal systems all form part of the excellent reflective practice that takes place. The owner and managers are exceptionally successful in inspiring the staff team to work towards sustaining ambitious targets. High expectations and superior standards are embedded across all areas of practice. All staff pursue continued professional development and cascade new knowledge to the team within staff meetings before going on to implement new practice. Early Years Professional practitioners work across all areas and successfully ensure that the different areas are recognised and supported. Risk assessments for the premises and outings undertaken are scrutinised to ensure their efficiency. Self-evaluation at all levels reflects rigorous monitoring and analysis to bring about sustained improvement. Exemplary reflective practice takes place. Progress Matters training is implemented to address all areas of learning, collating how children achieve and monitoring the impact for all sectors of children attending. Development plans for the whole nursery are made for each three months, incorporating priority areas from the Early Years Foundation Stage and Every Child Matters. SWOT analysis takes place whilst staff take roles to look at specific areas for development such as the outdoor play provision. The nursery has been involved in the 'I Can' project for the enhancement of communication across the provision. Parents and carers contribute to self-evaluation through comments, sheets and questionnaires, ensuring that all parents are involved, thereby supporting inclusion.

Children's individual learning styles are fully respected. The provision works across two floors with the youngest children on the ground floor. The induction for new children and families is thorough and dictated at the pace for each child's and family's need. Transition procedures and information for families as children move from room to room are highly informative and aid security. The environment is highly conducive to learning, extremely safe and well-cared for, with an excellent range of quality play provision used to achieve the planned goals. The staff team are extremely well-deployed throughout the day. Although children cannot have free movement between the indoor and outdoor area, this is managed well to ensure that the outdoor environment is accessed as widely as possible for the full range of learning opportunities that it offers. Partnerships with parents and others

are exemplary and key strengths. The inclusive systems of communication used to engage parents and carers ensure that there are consistent and productive partnerships resulting in strong levels of engagement. For example, the daily diary for the youngest children has a full page devoted for parents to complete each day to ensure that staff have all the information needed to provide quality care. Out-of-hours meetings in the evenings, or on Saturdays, are offered to accommodate working families. Events are planned to invite families to join in national celebrations such as the 'Royal Wedding Garden Party April 29th 2011' and an annual 'day at Harpers' evening which offers parents the chance to see videos of daily activities. Newsletters and frequent questionnaires involve parents in ongoing development. The provision offers highly successful parents evenings to promote an awareness of the relevance of specific areas of care. For example, an outdoor workshop highlights the value of outdoor play. Home visits, where required, give a broader understanding of the uniqueness of the child and their family leading to the development of a trusting relationship to support children. Consequently, the outcome in children's achievement and the wellbeing for all children is exceptionally high.

The provision emphasises the promotion of equality of opportunity throughout all areas of work with children and families. Staff are instrumental in implementing the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) to enhance support for all children. This includes clear objectives and reflective systems for all staff to consider the impact of inclusion for all and is extremely effective in reviewing supportive practice. They are highly committed to working in partnership with others and play a proactive role in establishing effective working relationships. Information is passed between the provisions. Link books, invitations to new schools to visit with ongoing correspondence, shared observations, and reports to which parents contribute all add to the consistency of care. The provision works closely with several other professional agencies where support for children is required. Within the provision they incorporate visual timetables and symbols to help all children to be fully involved. The managers and staff make the most of events and festivals to broaden children's awareness of each other's home culture. For instance, key words in other languages such as Russian are learnt and shared, and they celebrate events and festivals to stimulate children's interest. Parents and families share their culture including celebrations for American Thanksgiving, reading stories in French or Italian, or demonstrating the braiding of hair that takes place in the African and Caribbean culture. This helps children to appreciate the local and wider society around them.

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

Children are offered well-planned activities that help them to make rapid progress in their learning and development. Assessment through intricate recorded observation is clear and the information gained is used proactively to identify next steps and goals. Progression is fully detailed and closely monitored. Staff develop excellent learning and care plans which form a part of children's personal profiles. These are further supported by the written observations that take place by parents and families in the home, by other care settings, and during stay-and-play sessions

in the nursery when families are present. Children's current interests and observed development feed the daily planning which continues to adapt. Consequently, children make significant gains in their learning. All children are physically active. They have innovative opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical activities and gain a good understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. All children explore the natural world through free digging, planting herbs and vegetables, exploring containers of natural materials such as catkins on branches, and exploring the adjacent paddock or visiting the river. Older children learn their own limitations when they take risks and build with planks, crates and guttering. Woodwork provides scope for supervised risk-taking with children using skill to estimate size and shape, plan and build using tools, and work safely. Children enthusiastically link their developing knowledge across all areas of play. For example, they are seen to direct role play outdoors re-telling familiar stories and acting different parts. Staff are skilled in capitalising on children's emerging interest. For instance, children show an interest in tents prompting the staff group to help them to construct a tent indoors which later extends to thinking about the different sounds that they might hear when it is dark and night time.

Children demonstrate significant levels of understanding of personal safety. They explain to others that the gates are closed with bolts to keep them safe and take part in tidying toys away sweeping the floors with small brooms. Staff take advantage of learning situations by offering 'warning triangles' to show children which areas are unsafe to enter where works are being completed. Children eagerly take this further by identifying 'unsafe areas' and placing their own warning signs. They show a mature response to taking responsibility for their own and other's safety. Children are extremely competent in communicating their thoughts. They describe works that they have completed such as adding a caterpillar to a painting after they find one in the garden, explaining how they have painted a crocodile coming out of the sea, and choosing to read stories to each other. All children, including babies, show an extremely strong sense of security and belonging within the nursery. Babies and younger children explore their surroundings, seek attention from staff, and show delight as they laugh and giggle together. Children recognise that others have feelings and respect each other. They talk about why characters in stories may be sad asking if they have no friends to play with. They give way to others at the painting easel allowing them a turn, and offer materials for others to use. Care for others is a theme that runs throughout the nursery and extends into the community. Children take part in fundraising for Comic Relief and Children In Need. They also gather and prepare gifts to be passed to a local day centre for people who are homeless. Children's behaviour is exemplary and they show an excellent awareness of responsibility both in the nursery and as part of their community.

All children have ample opportunities to begin mark-making in a variety of forms. Younger children explore an excellent range of heuristic play where they explore textures and materials, develop concentration skills and dexterity. Babies and younger children use malleable materials such as cornflour and making dough, or mixing flour and margarine together to see what happens. Older children extend mark making, an awareness of number and size, and counting across all areas, reading signs for snacks, attendance and counting the stairs as they climb them.

Activities to support the development of letters and sounds are adapted to meet every child's level of interest. Children are extremely competent in using modern technology. Babies and younger children explore high quality mechanical toys. Children competently use cameras to take photographs of their own creative works, reviewing the picture in digital viewfinders. Interesting activities inspire children to explore early science. For instance, they make jelly from blocks, mix paints to make new colours, and carry out food tasting projects. The provision undertakes the Healthy Eating Under 5's Award and has achieved this for eight years running. Children are very well nourished enjoying meals prepared by skilled professionals offered on a seasonal menu. The menu demonstrates the diverse society in which children live including a wide range of planned meals that adapt to any specific need or requirement according to dietary, religious or cultural need. Children show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration in this dynamic setting. They respond to challenges with great enthusiasm, showing the attitudes necessary to support them through future learning situations.



## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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