

Inspection of Sancton Wood School, Baby Unicorns Nursery

Sancton Wood School, 17 Station Road, Cambridge CB1 2JB

Inspection date: 15 October 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff understand the importance of building close relationships with the children in their care. They are nurturing in their approach. They take the time to get to know the children and their families well through a thorough induction to the nursery. Leaders ensure that there is an effective key-person system. This helps children to settle quickly. Care routines, such as sleep and feeding patterns, are closely followed from home. Children demonstrate that they have developed reassuring bonds with key staff. They enjoy spending time sharing books and snuggling in for a cuddle. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of each child's care needs, and support their emotional well-being superbly.

Children enjoy being active. Their physical development is very well supported. Staff provide encouragement as children learn to master their early walking skills. Children enjoy the indoor climbing frame and are well supported as they practise going up the steps and down the slope safely. Children beam with delight as staff give them meaningful praise for their efforts and achievements. Sensory play experiences are plentiful, allowing children to explore a variety of textures that promote their creativity and curiosity. For example, they wash dolls and thoroughly enjoy exploring gloop with their hands.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders have established a clear vision and curriculum and know what it is they would like children to achieve during their time at the nursery. Staff understand this and thoughtfully plan for children's learning and development, continuously observing and assessing them during play interactions. They use their understanding of each child's abilities and child development to respond effectively in the moment, while also identifying what children need to learn next. This approach allows them to create opportunities that celebrate children's interests and extend their learning effectively.
- Partnerships with parents are a strong aspect of the nursery. Parents receive constant information about their child's time in the nursery. Staff work closely with them on key aspects of children's development, such as potty training and when it is time to move to the next room. Leaders have plans to build on this further. They intend to provide activity bags and a book lending scheme to help parents to encourage and support children's learning at home.
- Staff know the importance of supporting young children's speech and language skills. They talk to children and provide a running commentary as they play and use simple sign language to aid children's communication. Staff ensure that children have many opportunities to hear, and join in with, action songs and rhymes. They spontaneously use songs to help to calm children if they are upset.

- Children's special dietary needs and allergies are well managed. Staff are fully aware of individual children's requirements and ensure that they serve food safely. Healthy eating is promoted well. Children experience sociable mealtimes and have opportunities to try new foods.
- Staff promote children's independence well. They are led by what children want to do, and support children to make decisions about what they would like to do next. Staff closely monitor what children are doing, join in with their play and offer support when needed. However, at times, staff prioritise daily routines over children's learning and miss rich opportunities to engage with children. This means that children do not consistently receive high-quality interactions from staff.
- Staff are good role models and have high expectations for children's behaviour. They support children to take turns, and reinforce desired behaviours to help children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff remind children to walk when indoors and not to climb the climbing frame while holding toys.
- Leaders prioritise staff well-being. Staff say that they 'love' coming to work, many of whom have been there for a number of years. They are fully aware of their roles and say that they support each other. Staff receive appropriate training and coaching that help them to improve and develop their practice further. They are confident with safeguarding procedures and know what to do should they have concerns about children's welfare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- support all staff to consistently engage in high-quality interactions with the children to promote their learning at every opportunity.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY536962
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10367156
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 1
Total number of places	18
Number of children on roll	17
Name of registered person	Sancton Wood School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP905902
Telephone number	01223 471703
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Sancton Wood School, Baby Unicorns Nursery registered in 2016. It is located within Sancton Wood Nursery and Pre-Prep school in Cambridge. Children under the age of two years are covered by this Ofsted registration and children over two years form part of the school's registration, which is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). As the provision is registered within an association independent school, subsequent inspections will be carried out by ISI on Ofsted's behalf. Seven members of childcare staff work with the children under two years of age. Four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with qualified teacher status. The nursery opens all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery offers government funded places.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Karen Harris

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed how they organise their early years provision, including aims and rationale for their early years foundation stage curriculum.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Children engaged with the inspector during the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The leadership team spoke with the inspector about the management of the nursery.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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