

# Hemsley House Baby Unit

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY260069  
**Inspection date** 09/10/2009  
**Inspector** Stacey Sangster

**Setting address** 7 Terrace Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8HU

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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*.

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## Description of the setting

Hemsley House Baby Unit is an established nursery first registered in 1984 and re-registered under new ownership in 2003.

The nursery provides full day care, five days a week all year round for children up to two years old. It operates from a large Victorian house, located near Maidstone town centre. There is a self-contained flat on the top floor that is presently unoccupied.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 30 children on roll, in the early years age range; all are under two years old.

Two floors of the house are used to care for children. Generally the younger children are looked after upstairs, and when they become more mobile they are cared for downstairs. One room upstairs is used solely for sleeping children, and another for nappy changing. There are rooms available on both floors for messy activities and carpeted, comfortable playrooms. There are designated dining areas, well equipped with high chairs and nursery sized furniture.

All children use the garden regularly. The garden is fully enclosed with a paved and grassed area.

Most children attend on a full-time basis. Some children attend on a part-time basis but for full days. When children become two they usually transfer to the toddler unit located in a separate building a short walk from the baby unit.

Five staff are employed to work in the setting. Four of these staff hold NVQ Level 3 qualifications and the one unqualified member of staff is studying to gain an NVQ Level 2. One of the qualified staff is also part way through training to increase her qualification. Line management for the setting is shared with the Day Nursery and comprises of the nursery co-ordinator and a nursery manager who previously managed the Baby Unit. These staff and a core of regularly used bank staff are available to provide cover when needed.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in this setting, receive high levels of warm and affectionate care organised to meet and reflect their individual needs. The uniqueness of each child is valued and respected by well qualified staff who are dedicated to meeting the welfare and educational needs of all who attend. Children make good progress in their learning and development through the varied, age-appropriate and interesting activities that their key worker plans for them. Staff work very closely with parents to ensure the children's welfare needs are met. There is less of a partnership with parents established which focuses on their educational progress. The setting reviews and reflects on their practices and makes changes where they identify ways to improve. They remain alert to

identifying new ways of working and have prioritised future plans for improvement in areas which they feel will most enhance children's experiences.

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

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- monitor the progress that children make from their starting points to explore the success of the delivery of the six areas of learning and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the educational provision
- include the information parents share informally with regard to reaching developmental milestones and early learning goals more frequently in the record of observations and assessment
- consider appointing a designated child protection officer and Special Educational Needs Coordinator specifically for the Baby Unit

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

The leadership and management of the setting is strong. Led by the nursery co-ordinator and her deputy who are employed to oversee the running of the baby unit and their sister nursery Hemsley House Day Nursery, located a few roads away. The two settings work closely together, they share common policies, procedures and systems for documenting information and recording arrangements. This works well as most children who attend the baby unit move onto the day care nursery. Staffing arrangements include shared personnel such as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SenCo) and the designated child protection officer. These members of staff are predominately based on the other site, the systems in place are, however, adequate to ensure that staff can always access them and ask for their advice and input.

The setting recruits staff who value and focus on every child; children's safety is a key priority and the systems in place to safeguard children are firmly embedded. Staff recruitment and cover arrangements are robust, with all staff demonstrating a good awareness of their responsibility for managing risks, monitoring the environment and closely supervising visitors or newly appointed staff who are undergoing the vetting procedure.

The safeguarding procedures are discussed at induction, are written, regularly reviewed and available for staff to consult at any time. Parents are made aware of their content via their access to the setting's policy documents. The organisation of staff ensures that new staff or staff who are providing cover are paired with a more experienced or permanent member of the team to ensure that practices are consistent. Staff deployment is organised to prioritise the needs of the children. Staff work full days and the setting do not employ a shift system. As a result, the child's key worker is with them from drop off to collection, maximising the continuity of care for the child.

The management and staff team are confident in the quality of the service that they provide. They have made changes and reviewed the way the setting is laid out and the use of the rooms by the different ages striving to find the best use of the environment. Although not complacent, they are currently satisfied that the arrangements in place within the building, fully meet the needs of the children that they care for. Future plans for change, now focus around the redevelopment of the outside area.

Resources are deployed effectively, ensuring that babies access a wide range of suitable and interesting toys and activities, which keep them engrossed in purposeful play throughout their time in the setting. The range is of good quality, well maintained and suitable for the ages and stages of the children who play with them. They include toys and resources providing positive images that promote equality and diversity.

The setting has developed positive partnerships with the local authority support agencies who help to develop day care practices and provide guidance to settings in meeting the EYFS. They are regularly visited by support workers and effectively use their input to try new ways of working and enhance the services that they provide. The setting makes parents aware within their written information that they are happy to work with child care professionals such as Special Needs Teachers, Children and Families Officers and Health Visitors in order to support the individual needs of children and their families and will undertake specific training where necessary to ensure that they can meet all children's needs equally.

The partnership with parents is strong in relation to meeting children's care needs, and is developing in relation to the partnership in relation to education. The systems in place to exchange information about children's educational development, the arrangements for supporting them to progress to the next learning goal and observations of significant milestones achieved are emerging, but are not as well established as the systems in place to share details of children's general care needs.

Currently the setting observes, assesses and plans for the children and shares the records of these arrangements periodically with parents, who then make contributions to the record. The informal information that parents share more regularly about their children's development, although valued and taken into account by key workers, is not included in the record of observations or assessment and as such limits the effectiveness of these records as a true and current picture of all that children can do. There is currently no system in place to reflect on the progress of children from their starting points and make comparisons of their progress in relation to the six areas of learning. As such it is not yet easy for them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the setting's delivery of the EYFS.

A good and very effective two way flow of communication is in place in relation to sharing details of what children have eaten, nappy changing information, their mood, level of tiredness and anything which has occurred which would impact on this. These details are almost always shared automatically as a matter of routine

and on a daily basis. This results in a true partnership which enhances the care that parents and the nursery are able to provide.

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

Helping babies to feel at home and settled is given high priority. Parents are invited to stay and spend time with their children in the nursery, giving staff time to ask questions and get to know the children's likes, dislikes and specific routines and care needs and helping the children to feel safe and secure.

The children gain confidence from the support and close relationships that they develop with their key workers, initially showing some reluctance to respond to and engage with new faces, they look to their key workers and on receiving encouragement and reassurance they blossom and begin to gain confidence in their interactions. They readily seek comfort from adults if they become upset and quickly settle with a cuddle and some calming words.

Children's meals are provided by parents and reheated and served by their key worker. Staff provide guidance to parents about avoiding foods which other children may have allergies to, such as peanuts, and will feed back sensitively to parents if children do not appear to enjoy what is being sent or if they had a concern about the content of the diet offered. Children bring breakfast, lunch and dinner and these are suitably stored and refrigerated where appropriate, which supports their health and the safety of the food that children eat. Children are fed according to their individual needs and follow home routines in relation to their sleep, diet and feeding times. When children express needs such as hunger or being tired, these are recognised and responded to promptly by staff. As a result, children are gaining control of when they are fed and understand that their actions create a response in others.

Younger babies are taken into the garden on a daily basis and staff are exploring ways to enable more mobile babies to have free flow into the garden. Staff understand that the physical development of young babies progresses with considerable speed at this age, and are alert to the risks that trying new experiences bring. They encourage babies to be active, by providing music to move and bounce to, encouragement to stand with support and later engaging in play and games that encourage the children to have to move, roll and stretch to reach items. Children receive good levels of support to develop their physical skills, while also having opportunities to begin to manage very low level risk for themselves.

Staff understand the limitations of children's understanding in relation to accepted codes of behaviour and set goals at appropriate levels. Children receive gentle reminders to share toys or be gentle with each other, which also supports the creation of an environment where children feel safe. Kind behaviour such as passing another child a toy is highly praised and can sometimes turn into a game itself, for the pleasure that the enthusiastic response receives. A child, for example, who gave another a toy received lots of positive, verbal praise for the act

of kindness, and clapping from the member of staff watching. The child who took the toy then passed it back and repeated the cheer and clapping which was joined in with by the member of staff. The children then proceeded to pass the toy and clap each other's 'kind act'.

Staff understand that some behaviours such as biting are stages that are normal for some children to go through, they organise care to enable such children to integrate fully but with a level of supervision that protects the other children. Staff provide information, guidance and plan consistent strategies with parents to ensure that children receive the same messages about any unwanted behaviour patterns that emerge and at all times deal with the children sensitively, calmly and with kindness.

Babies are given plenty of time and opportunities to practise what they are learning in an un-hurried and calm atmosphere. Staff get to know which toys certain children gravitate towards and ensure that these are available to them, which as well as helping them to engage quickly and settle, gives them confidence as they usually have a clear idea what they want the toy to do and can make this happen. Children enjoy repeating their actions to consolidate what they know and staff introduce new activities, games and experiences gradually and at a pace that suits each individual child's personality and stage of learning. They have opportunities to experience early technology, with toys which make noises or cause changes through the pushing of buttons, are encouraged to develop early independence skills such as feeding themselves and, through the experiences that staff plan and provide for them, become inquisitive and eager to explore their environment.

## 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>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### 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>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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