



## Little Smarties

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY319325
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Cole

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<b>Registered person</b>	G & G Partners
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Little Smarties Day Nursery opened in December 2005. It is owned by a husband and wife partnership who play an active part in the running of the nursery and live next door. The nursery operates from a large, detached property in a residential area close to Cheltenham town centre in Gloucestershire. The children use the playrooms on the ground and first floor and are grouped according to their age and stage of development. There is an enclosed, rear garden for children to use and a small

paddock with two pygmy goats and a rabbit. A maximum of 42 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. Care is offered from 07.00 by prior arrangement.

There are currently 74 children from six weeks to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education and most come from the local area. The staff have previous experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and for children learning English as an additional language.

There are 11 members of staff working directly with the children. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a further qualification. The children are provided with foods from a specially-designed, organic menu.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise. In the garden, they play with a variety of small equipment that includes slides and balls. They have a large space in which to learn to control the different wheeled toys. They dig in the sand and plant vegetables at the weekly gardening club. Younger children have free access to a ball pool. During wet weather, staff set out a choice of indoor, physical play equipment so children are active and gain coordination. Children effectively develop independence in dressing, tidying and in eating as they help to prepare meals and clean the tables.

The children are cared for in clean and newly-decorated premises. They benefit from the secure, hygienic procedures in place with regards to nappy changing. Children satisfactorily learn about hygiene and how to prevent the spread of infection by washing their hands before eating and after messy play and being with the animals. Consistent care between home and nursery is fostered by clear procedures for dealing with and recording accidents and administered medication.

Young children drink throughout the day and older ones help themselves to easily accessible drinking cups at any time. Children become used to a very healthy and balanced selection of organic foods for meals and snacks. They eat well-presented and nutritious foods on a two-week, rotating menu. Staff use colour coded place mats to remind them of special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Older children learn about some aspects of a healthy diet, for example, as they 'milk' a 'cow' and discuss how milk is good for their teeth.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe environment. Staff take highly appropriate steps to minimise

potential hazards. These include detailed assessments of risks and daily checks in each area of the nursery. Children are safe as the premises are kept secure. Staff are vigilant about their safety at all times so that, for example, children arrive and depart safely. The children use good quality equipment that is appropriate to their age and stage of development and meets safety standards. For example, babies play with one-piece toys and have access to a range of safe materials in their treasure baskets. Children independently and safely select activities from the clearly labelled toys and equipment that staff make available.

The children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Staff frequently remind them about safety aspects as they play and move around the premises. Children learn to tell each other the rules, for example, about the correct way to carry equipment. They take part in regular fire practices so they may safely leave the premises in an emergency.

Children are protected as there are always staff on duty with current first aid certificates. Adults regularly analyse the accidents records to note any patterns to prevent further accidents to children. The staff safeguard and promote children's welfare and have all the required procedures and documents in place. For example, staff have attended or are booked on relevant training to develop their understanding of how to protect children and to be familiar with local child protection procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of interesting activities that staff offer on a daily basis. Young children achieve well as staff effectively use their growing understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. In their small group with two full-time keyworkers, the babies are well stimulated and happy. Toddlers move up to the next group of Little Learners as they are developmentally ready and this effectively supports their progress. The children gradually transfer between the different learning groups so their confidence and self-esteem continue to grow. Staff routinely record their developmental progress and skilfully use this to aid future planning. Good quality adult-child interactions effectively support the children's early communication skills. Over time, young children experience a broad range of activities that supports their mathematical thinking, imagination and creativity. The children begin to make good sense of the world through topics such as 'People who help us' and they enjoy visiting the goats in their paddock.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. In communication, language and literacy, children gain competent speaking and listening skills. Staff give them time to share their ideas and support them to negotiate about their play. Children enjoy telling their own stories about a birds nest and its 'eggs' and are fascinated by rhyming stories. They confidently sound out letters of other children's names and eagerly attempt to name their work with increasingly recognisable letters. They regularly use writing for their own purposes, for example, to send messages to

family members. Children make very good progress in relation to their starting points in creative development. They enjoy predicting and exploring the results of paint mixing and bring textured materials from home to create their own sensory board. Staff well involve families in learning opportunities, for example, as children bring natural objects to explore using all their senses, including shells and cones. Children enjoy moving freely to music and join in their favourite songs with great enthusiasm.

There are no differences in learning between groups of children such as girls and boys. In mathematical development, children enjoy using large numbers in their conversations and suggest that food may be cut into 61 pieces. Staff pose meaningful problems for them to solve in activities and routines, for example, to count out the required number of cups. Children often compare numbers by adding 'another' toy and know how many animals are left in number songs. They accurately use a wide range of mathematical language for shape, position and size, for example, describing cut sandwiches as 'triangles' and asking for a 'smaller' jug. Children often grapple with new ideas and skills to gain very good knowledge and understanding of the world. The staff plan interesting activities for children to examine different objects and living things, including the pet rabbit. Children make their own designs from a variety of materials and are fascinated to notice changes for themselves such as the hardening of plaster of paris. Staff make very good use of planned and spontaneous opportunities for children to explore their own and other cultures, for example, by closely examining newly-arrived postcards to learn about different countries.

Key staff have very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. The learning environment and activities are well planned to provide a broad and balanced range of experiences across six areas of learning. Staff closely observe the children and, in practice, use regular assessment to plan for each child to make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff make skilfully use of flexible routines to develop children's sense of time. They plan sessions of sufficient length for children to become interested and focused on their chosen activities. Children enjoy exploring and playing with the plentiful resources, including stimulating, role-play equipment such as a 'rabbit' and its 'hutch'.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well through the carefully considered settling programme and the parents' cooperation. The children are known and cared for as individuals by their named keyworkers. They gain self esteem as staff create suitable opportunities for them to make their own decisions and express their opinions. Most children have free access to resources on shelving at their level. Some positive images of different people are in evidence around the nursery to support children to develop a considerate attitude to others.

The children generally behave well and respond to reminders of acceptable behaviour. They enjoy taking turns at everyday tasks that give them responsibility such as carrying the register. The staff are well mannered and calm and the children

follow this positive role model. The children receive much praise and encouragement for their efforts and helpfulness. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Suitable systems are set up so children with special needs are integrated into the nursery and receive appropriate support in liaison with their parents and other agencies.

Partnership with parents is good. The caring and approachable staff form strong relationships with families and effectively take the parents' wishes into account so children receive consistent care. Information is shared in a variety of ways, including newsletters and diaries, so children benefit from their families being well informed about their care. Staff actively encourage parents to share their children's home interests and activities and they provide regular verbal feedback about the children's progress. Families receive some information about the Foundation Stage and staff successfully engage parents' interest in what their children learn in the nursery. This provides additional support for children in their learning and encourages them to take pride in their achievements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in premises that are bright, welcoming and well maintained. Appropriate use is made of most areas of the nursery as the space available for the younger Little Learners is being developed. Staff provide a wide range of good quality and well-maintained resources that are freely accessible to children in most rooms. The children are cared for in groups according to their age and their stage of development. This ensures that supportive adults are working directly with children to foster their play and learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The nursery uses robust employment procedures and appropriate systems to ensure the continuing suitability of staff. The prepared documents are detailed and include risk assessment for all aspects of the children's safety. The group has sheets for a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. Parents receive clear written and verbal information about the children's care and some details about the Foundation Stage curriculum. The registers clearly show the hours of attendance of children and visitors, though records of staff lunch rotas are not retained to show how children are supervised over the midday period.

Leadership and management are good. In the short time since registration, many plans have been implemented with positive results for the children's care and learning. Staff follow a strong training programme and work well together to form the different teams. The key persons shows good commitment to promote an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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**

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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 that all records relating to day care activities including staff hours of attendance are readily accessible and available for inspection at all 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):

- further develop the partnership with parents by sharing information about the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)