



Little Stars Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY331503
Inspection date	19 September 2006
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Setting Address	2a Devonshire Road, GRAVESEND, Kent, DA12 5AA
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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

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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Stars Nursery opened in 2006 and operates from four rooms in a house. It is situated in the town of Gravesend, Kent. A maximum of 18 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 15 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these three children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide/local catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff. Of these five staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from effective hygiene practices where they learn about good health routines, such as hand washing. They are encouraged to wash their hands after going to the toilet, before and after snacks and after messy play. Staff encourage them with appropriate language reminding them to dry their hands properly after washing them. Children are provided with experiences, which help to promote their knowledge and understanding of good health issues. Staff wash their hands regularly and anti-bacterial spray is used for cleaning surfaces. Babies and very young children benefit from effective hygiene routines, parents provide their own food and bottles for the babies, staff use disposable gloves when changing nappies, anti-bacterial spray is used for cleaning surfaces such as high chairs, potties are cleaned after every use and babies each have their own bedding for their cots. Staff use feed, nappy and sleep charts which record the children's routines; the children's individual needs are recognised. Children's good health is promoted because the provider keeps records, which log accidents and any medication given to the children, parents sign all entries. Written permission is obtained from the parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. Children benefit from appropriate procedures when they are ill because the nursery has a written sick child policy which states that they will not take children who have an infectious or contagious disease. If a child is taken ill while at the nursery parents are contacted and asked to collect them as soon as possible, appropriate care is given until they arrive. Children are protected from the spread of infection because the staff clean surfaces with anti-bacterial sprays and the manager does a thorough clean of the whole nursery at the end of each day.

Children enjoy lots of physical activity which helps promote their large motor skills. They have access to an outdoor play area with age appropriate toys such as bikes, cars, a slide, hoops, water and sand. The younger children are able to keep to their own routines, as discussed with parents, and know when they need to sleep or rest. Babies and young children enjoy opportunities which promote their motor skills and development; they have floor toys and baby gyms which encourage them to move and crawl, to improve their manipulative skills and encourage their hand/eye co-ordination.

The children are provided with fresh drinking water throughout the day, the older children do not however pour these drinks for themselves. There are clear agreements with parents regarding food, which ensures that the children's dietary/religious requirements are respected. Any special dietary requirements are recorded so that all staff are aware. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices regarding the food they eat; the nursery provides food which is cooked daily from fresh. Parents are given a menu advising them of what is available on a daily basis. Some children bring their own lunch boxes and the manager has discussed healthy foods options with parents.

Children are encouraged to learn about healthy lifestyles through planned curriculum activities and the daily routines. They have plenty of room to run and jump, to use ride on toys and bikes and play on the large apparatus in a well supervised outdoor area which is in use every day. Indoor activities include music and movement. Children show bodily awareness and begin to

understand the effects exercise has on their bodies, when running around outside they recognise that they got hot and out of breath. Fine motor skills are developing because children have many opportunities to use appropriate equipment and tools, such as pens, pencils, crayons, paint brushes, construction and they are encouraged to use a knife and fork at meal times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to access learning and play opportunities within safe boundaries because the staff ensure that the premises are suitable for the children's use. The babies are cared for downstairs with the nappy changing facilities and cots in a separate room. The older children are cared for upstairs in two rooms which are quite limited for space. The children are not able to move freely between the two rooms, one room is for the two to three years olds and the other for the pre-school children, although they do meet up together for play and stories. Children find the setting welcoming because the necessary facilities are in place to promote their enjoyment and safe development; most toys are accessible or are stored in the rooms where they can ask staff for them.

The children play with toys which are checked regularly for hygiene and safety, any broken equipment is thrown away. Toys are cleaned regularly on a weekly basis and all conform to safety standards. Toys in the baby room are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray every other day. The furniture and equipment used helps to promote an enjoyable environment. The rooms are bright and the walls are covered with lots of cheerful posters, but there is very little of the children's own work displayed.

Staff take positive steps to develop the children's awareness of how to help keep themselves and others safe. The children understand the house rules such as walking down the stairs carefully, the older ones let the younger ones go first and wait for them to get to the bottom before they come down. Even young children demonstrate an awareness of how to help keep themselves safe; a young child who is being put into the high chair to eat her lunch automatically holds her arms up so that the staff member can put on her reigns. The emergency evacuation procedures are in place to help promote the children's welfare and safety, but these are only carried out approximately every four months which is not often enough to ensure that all the children are aware of the procedures. There have been no outings since the nursery opened at it's new premises but when they do go on visits the staff will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out before the outing takes place and written permission will be obtained from the parents before the children can go. Children's safety is promoted because the appropriate equipment such as a fire blanket and smoke alarms are in place to help reduce the risk of serious accidents. A weekly written risk assessment of the premises is carried out and staff check the outdoor area before the children are able to go out to play. Hazardous equipment and materials are kept in a cupboard in the kitchen to which the children do not have access.

The children's welfare is promoted through the written child protection policy which complies with local safeguarding children board (LSCB) procedures. The provider ensures that all staff working with children know how to put procedures in place by recording existing injuries and concerns, knowing how to make referrals, having access to the contact numbers needed and the procedure to be followed in event of allegations against staff, students or volunteers. Staff

know that they must report any concerns to the manager who has responsibility for child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs and welfare are promoted through the use of the Foundation Stage, stepping stones and Birth to three matters observations and records. Children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities are promoted as they enjoy a range of activities set out by the staff. This is promoted through the planning which provides children with opportunities to use most of the toys, resources and have experiences which cover the different areas of development. Children show a high level of wellbeing and involvement as they play together outside and share the toys and equipment, playing catch and taking turns on the slide. Children enjoy social opportunities, the two upstairs rooms often mix together to play and socialise. They enjoy themselves but the lack of discipline displayed by some children does not provide an even playing field. Children who do as they are asked are often having their activities disturbed by other children who will not. Babies and young children are able to make themselves understood, they smile and laugh when they are happy and cry when distressed. They enjoy watching the older children playing outside, watching each other and interacting with the staff. They are starting to make connections; one child is putting the shapes into the shape sorter which she discovers is easier if she removes the lid, she then looks at pictures of a baby in a book and repeats the word 'baby, baby, baby' several times, which is encouraged by a member of staff. Young children and babies show a sense of belonging as they are acknowledged and affirmed, staff know what the children like and are able to meet their needs; one child is unhappy on waking up from her sleep, she likes to go for a walk in the afternoon in her buggy so the staff take her for a walk around the garden, she quickly calms down.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress towards the stepping stones and early learning goals in relation to their individual starting points. The practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. They know how to identify the individual needs of the children and aim to meet the needs and interests of children present. However the children are not always focussed, they are not all able to resist distractions and have a limited concentration span. All children have access to the varied resources and experiences, but some are not effectively challenged with new ideas or skills. The children work well within their own limits but progress is lacking in some areas, especially in behaviour management which has an affect on their ability to learn. Assessment is varied, it usually identifies the next steps but staff occasionally fail to record them; which means that the next steps do not always inform future planning which can hamper the children's progress towards the early learning goals. The children are constantly praised by staff when they get something right or do something well, which raises their confidence and self-esteem. Evaluation of activities is carried out but this tends to be more descriptive than evaluative.

Children enjoy their time at the setting, and most show interest in their activities and are eager to learn but other children's behaviour can cause them to be easily distracted. Children do not always appear to understand between right and wrong or to consider the consequences of

actions on others. Children are becoming independent and manage their own personal hygiene; they visit the toilet and wash their hands, dry their hands on paper towels and attempt to put their own shoes on when they go outside to play. Children are beginning to understand moral codes of their own and other cultures; they form relationships, share and take turns. Children communicate well. They take turns when speaking in small groups. They are encouraged to 'listen with their ears' although for some this is difficult. They are able to answer questions from staff and have good recall and a sense of time; one child tells how he went on a visit yesterday, informing everyone that 'she is my cousin and my best friend'. Most children show an appreciation of books and stories which are freely accessible. They will sit and listen when a story is being read but can be distracted by those who find listening difficult. Children can hold a pencil correctly and write recognisable letters, attempting to write their own names. Some can recognise simple familiar words, such as their own names and that of others in the group. They show an interest in linking sounds and letters; when they talk to the inspector about their names they want to find the letters on her computer. Children are being introduced to new vocabulary; they are doing a project on vegetables and are introduced to new words such as 'crunchy', 'juicy' and 'crinkly'. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations; one child uses his fingers to reinforce 'how many' when he is talking about the play-park. Children show that they understand size and shape through practical activities such as construction, working together to build a birthday cake with candles. Opportunities to explore capacity through water play are not fully extended by staff; there is no mention of capacity or use of mathematical language when playing in the water with the children. Staff do not always ask open ended questions which encourages children to problem solve and think for themselves.

Children learn about living things through outdoor play; they are able to identify growing things in the garden such as berries and the effect the rain has on their play activities such as having to dry the slide before they can use it after a rain shower. Children learn about themselves and one another, their similarities and differences, through the multi-cultural make up of the staff and the children who attend the nursery. They look at different festivals and celebrations throughout the year. Children explore the concept of communication. They have a shop which sells vegetables and groceries. They take it in turns to be either the shopkeeper using the till or the customer. They also have supervised access to a laptop computer. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They have access to pens, pencils, crayons, scissors, Lego, paints and all are encouraged to use their knife and fork correctly at meals times. Children demonstrate a good awareness of space and move confidently, imaginatively and safely during physical activities such as when they are riding the bikes or cars. Children are provided with and use a range of larger equipment such as the slide and they are proficient at climbing the steps and know to wait until the child in front of them has safely moved away from the bottom of the slide. They enjoy jumping and running in the garden and dancing to the music from the tape recorder. Children know their colours and explore a range of texture, shape and form in different dimensions, such as when building with construction or painting and drawing their pictures, they express themselves freely with colour and texture. The children's creative development is promoted through the use of their imagination when using the role play resources. They enjoy participating in singing sessions have a good repertoire of songs and action rhymes and have fun exploring sound.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery welcomes all children and they are treated according to their individual needs. The group is in a multi cultural area and children are from a diverse selection of society. The staff who are employed also represent several different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Children's individual needs are checked with the parents when they first arrive at the nursery and are recorded. Children learn about different festivals and celebrations throughout the year especially ones which are most relevant to them and the staff. Children learn about themselves and the wider world from a range of resources promoting positive images of diversity; in books, the bright posters adorning the walls, the music, the dolls and the dressing up clothes as well as the children and staff themselves.

Children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) would be welcomed wherever possible and appropriate action taken to meet their individual needs. The manager has undertaken the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator training and is the person with responsibility for this throughout the nursery. The nursery would work closely with parents, getting all the relevant information when the child first starts and would work in co-ordination with outside agencies if this were required.

Children understand the expected behavioural boundaries set by the staff. The staff re-enforce these with the children by reminding them of the house rules; when tidying up they are reminded that they are 'being very helpful', that they need to 'remember to work as a team', that they are doing 'good tidying'. However some of the older children do find it difficult to sit still at group time and listen for any period of time. The staff are good role models and always remember to use please and thank you, they never raise their voices and manage children's behaviour in a way that promotes their welfare and development. Although they occasionally contradict each other when dealing with unacceptable behaviour; which can be very confusing for the children. The children are praised and encouraged at all times.

Parents are provided with a contact book which informs them of all the relevant details of their day, food, sleep and nappy changes. Children benefit from consistency of care. A contact book is also offered to the parents of the older children if they wish to use one. Parents are invited to look at the children's observations and progress records termly. The staff use both Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage. A newsletter is sent out termly to advise the parents of forthcoming topics and any significant information. Children's welfare is promoted by effective child information records; there is a complete historic record of all children attending the nursery. Parents are asked to keep staff updated with any changes in the information. There is a written complaints policy in place. The record of complaints is available to be shared with parents.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children's developmental needs are promoted because staff ensure parents receive written information about the curriculum, the Foundation Stage, early learning goals and stepping stones when the children first start at the nursery. They have termly access to their children's progress records and observations, which they discuss with the staff, but they are able to see them at any time they wish. The close partnership staff have

with parents enables the staff to provide the children with continuity of care; and discussion with parents helps when providing the nursery education which is right for their child.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery has addressed safety issues identified during the registration visit. Staff continually risk assess and supervise children at all times. There are vetting procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitably qualified or experienced to provide the children with the necessary care and support. Children's safety, welfare care and learning are promoted by the policies and procedures in place. Staff implement these rules to provide the children with a secure and comfortable place to be.

Children benefit from space to move around and can access the toys and resources on offer, which are developmentally appropriate and meet the needs of the children attending. The record of attendance is up to date and shows clear arrival and departure times and also why and when a child is not present. Staff looking after children are also recorded on the daily register. The staff ratios although maintained throughout the nursery do not always ensure the best deployment of staff. Contingency plans for emergency staff cover are to be reviewed.

All the required documentation is readily available for inspection. All information is confidentially kept and is safely stored in a locking cabinet. The provider has a clear understanding of the records and procedures required to provide a safe secure and enjoyable environment for the children and to provide parents and carers with information about the care provided. The registration certificate is clearly displayed in the entrance hall for parents to see.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager sets direction in ensuring improvements towards the outcomes for children by monitoring and evaluating the activities and records kept by the staff. The evaluation of activities and the curriculum is often descriptive and does not provide any detailed information for improving. The curriculum is fairly evenly delivered, the manager and the pre-school room leader work together on the curriculum planning. The assessment system is not totally efficient, the long and medium term plans work well and staff understand what is required of them but the short term plans do not always clearly include the next steps for children. There is a key worker system in place so children are provided with consistency of care. The staff attend regular fortnightly staff meetings where they can discuss issues or concerns. New staff have a three month probation period. Appraisals are carried out every six months then yearly, staff use these to identify training needs. The nursery receives support from the local authority early years team.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since registration the owner has completed all the necessary building work. The outside area is now safe and secure for the children to play. She has also employed more staff, some of whom have the relevant childcare qualifications.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- provide strategies which encourage the children to sit and listen and do as they are asked and ensure that staff are consistent in their behaviour management at all times
- ensure that emergency evacuation procedures are carried out more frequently so that all children know how to protect themselves in an emergency
- ensure that staffing ratios are maintained at all times to provide the children with the correct support and to protect staff from being left in a vulnerable position

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):

- increase the use of mathematical language in practical situations and encourage staff to ask open ended questions to provide children with opportunities to problem solve and think for themselves
- ensure that activities are clearly evaluated using evaluative not descriptive language
- use children's next steps to inform the future planning

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