



## Little Stars

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY332042
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 September 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Kay Bateson
<b>Setting Address</b>	Little Stars Children's Nursery, 84 Martins Road, Shortlands BR2 0EF
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<b>Registered person</b>	Casterbridge Nurseries Ltd
<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 good. 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 Stars Nursery was previously known as Saplings Nursery, is now one of 17 nurseries owned by Casterbridge Nurseries Limited and registered in 2006. The nursery is housed in a converted chapel situated in a residential area of the London borough of Bromley. It is currently undergoing refurbishment of the building and outside play space. It is made up of four main play rooms, separate sleeping areas for younger children, a kitchen, office and staff room. There are two fully secure

outdoor play areas. The group serves a wide area of the community and is within walking distance from the main line station, local transport links, shops, schools and parks.

A maximum of 65 children may attend at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday throughout the year from 08:00 until 18:30 closing for one week in the spring and at Christmas. There are currently 68 children aged from three months to five years on roll, of these there are only nine babies under one year on roll. There are currently 13 children on roll that receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions during a week. The nursery currently support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 21 staff members who directly care for the children. Of these, 18 hold a relevant childcare qualification equivalent to NVQ level 2 or 3. All room leaders hold NVQ level 3 qualification in child care. There are currently three staff members training towards a childcare qualification. The group employs a qualified cook and housekeeper. The principles of the High Scope approach to learning underpin the nursery's curriculum and the preschool has gained the High Scope Quality Assurance Scheme.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children and babies play in clean rooms, where staff pay good attention to the cleanliness of rooms, surfaces, toys and equipment at all times. Staff consistently follow the effective procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection. They ensure babies and young children stay safe due to the thorough routines at nappy changing, whilst feeding, using dummies and when children become sick. They monitor hand washing after toileting, playing outside, and before eating. Due to staff's positive role models and explanations, children are developing independent hygiene skills and a firm understanding of keeping safe from infection. This is apparent when children independently wash their hands after they have been sticking, painting and before eating their snack. The children receive appropriate treatment when they have an accident or become unwell as staff are trained in first aid, follow correct procedures and keep detailed records.

Children and babies are well nourished and benefit from a healthy diet. They receive nutritious snacks and meals; daily prepared from fresh ingredients by the nursery's trained staff. These include a high percentage of healthy options which meet the individual dietary needs of all the children, especially the babies. Children learn about the importance of eating a healthy diet as they sit together talking with staff during snack times and meals, as well as staff planning appropriate activities to reinforce their learning and understanding. Parents provide milk for very young babies, which is correctly stored. Staff follow the child's individual daily routine for feeding, ensuring babies are well looked after according to the wishes of their parents. Children and babies thirst is well satisfied as they have frequent drinks of water and are able to

access drinks during the day themselves. This is apparent as older children pour their own drinks in the room or toddlers find their cup themselves whilst playing. This encourages children and toddlers to think about their personal needs.

Children enjoy a range of regular activities that contribute to their health and develop their physical skills. They play daily outside activities and often go on walks to the local park to play or feed the ducks. They are competent when using climbing frames or small activity equipment indoors that encourages mastering steps and slopes. Young children and babies are encouraged to master self help skills, such as feeding themselves, holding bottles and cups themselves. Babies take great delight when they are acquiring new physical skills as staff provide very good support and encouragement, with joyful celebration with them as babies balance on their wobbly legs, pull themselves up on staff, or roll over. Staff plan for physical play activities into the child's daily routine. They provide clear space for free movement, there is plenty of active floor play and children use soft play equipment to rock, jump and tumble on. They provide plenty of toys to manoeuvre around the room or outside, such as buggies, trikes and push along toys. They provide plenty of opportunities for developing ball skills as well as using tools to draw, paint, cut and stick with. Staff provide regular times for naps or quiet times during the day. They follow the individual daily routines for babies and young children; providing a calm quiet environment for them to settle quickly to sleep. These experiences ensure children and babies have a balance healthy lifestyle that supports their growing needs and development.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and babies play, sleep and eat in four well-organised rooms that cater for the different age groups. The staff ensure they make the areas welcoming, interesting and homely. Children play with a wide range of appropriate toys and equipment for their ages. Staff organise the indoor space well, allowing children and babies to move around safely, freely and independently. Children have easy and safe access to toys and resources that are stimulating and suitable for their stage of development.

Staff pay sound attention to the safety and security of the children and babies whilst in their care. They fully supervise children at all times and follow clear safety procedures throughout the day. They maintain correct safety procedures when walking children around the building to the outside play space and when going on outings. They conduct regular fire evacuation procedures, are in radio contact with the manager, have secure systems in place for monitoring arrivals, departures and collections of children, staff and visitors. Staff ensure that the children's privacy is maintained when changing nappies or clothing and have a sound understanding of what action to take if they have concerns about the welfare of a child in their care. They maintain high staffing ratios at all times and fully supervise children when maintenance personal need access to rooms. The setting ensures contractors working on the premises employ fully vetted staff and maintain a good standard of conduct at all times. This supports and safeguards the children's welfare.

Children and babies are learning about keeping themselves safe and developing a fair understanding about personal safety. Staff provide gentle reminders to help children learn about staying safe, especially when climbing, playing with large equipment, building with blocks or when walking backwards. Very young children and babies can crawl and learn to walk in a child friendly environment. Staff are quick to distract very young children when they reach out to grab others or want the same toy, also when they put toys into mouths or pick up small things off the floor. Staff conduct a suitable daily risk assessment of their room and outside area but in some cases this is not effective. They attend to those details on the list and respond immediately to address the potential hazards brought to their notice during the inspection, for example, on discovering the cracked exit waste pipe, using a fire extinguisher to prop open a door, an uncovered hole in the fence, unprotected air conditioning unit with trailing wire and open windows in the pre-school room whilst older children run under and past them. Staff's inconsistent lack of predicting potential hazards to themselves or the children increases the possible risk of accidents occurring to staff or children.

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

The provision is good.

Children under three explore and experiment through a range of well-planned activities that are appropriate for their stage of development. They are able to self select toys and materials in the room to support their individual play ideas. They become engrossed in activities that interest, stimulate and challenge their ideas with supportive staff alongside who encourage, acknowledge and value their achievements. This in turn boosts the children's self-esteem, confidence and motivation towards learning.

Babies and young children benefit from staff providing plenty of opportunities for sensory and heuristic play. They enjoy playing in the nursery sensory room with staff and responding to the stimulating bubble light or the fibre optic mat. They have great fun with handling corn flour mix, exploring puddles in the garden, tasting different food during their meal times, and handling objects from a treasure basket. They enjoy using paints and exploring colours of chalks and crayons to draw with.

Staff respond to their expressions, actions, thoughts and feelings. Young children are able to make themselves understood through language and actions. This is apparent when staff read and share books with them; join in with action songs and in their imaginary play. They ask questions that promote thinking skills as they engage in their play, chat when changing nappies or feeding them and respond to them immediately when they need reassurance. This encourages the children's use of language, understanding and communication with others.

Staff use an effective combination of High Scope key experiences and the Birth to three matters framework to plan for their overall development. They track progress by collecting observations that support the learning outcome. They also collect a selection of work and pictorial evidence to document their progress. However, children's profiles do not show clear starting points or their next step in learning. Staff are inconsistent in evaluating focus activities indicating the children's learning

outcomes, in order to inform the overall planning for groups as well as the individual child.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff organise the room into areas with surrounding storage units that promote self-selection. Children have a balance of activities that are child or adult initiated. They have uninterrupted time during their work time, where they express their plans, carry them out and review them later in small groups. This encourages children to develop a purpose and clear focus in their play, which motivates them to become clear thinkers. Staff ensure there is sufficient amount of materials so that groups of children can work harmoniously together. Staff become involved in the children's play ideas, conversations and activity. They regularly praise and value their work, which raises their self esteem and promotes a good attitude towards learning.

Children demonstrate a firm understanding and use of mathematics, as they confidently count up to 10, join in with number rhymes, recognise numerals and use words to describe distance and size. Children are confident in making marks, writing letters of their name, naming letters and their sound. Children are competent talkers and like to sit to listen to staff tell stories with or without books. Staff maintain children's interest and creative thinking as they tell stories in a very expressive and dramatic way that invites them to participate fully in the story line. This is apparent when the whole group join in with the Three Little Pigs story. They benefit from the regular visiting person who tells stories and involves the children in drama to act out sections. This greatly enhances their creative thinking, which supports their creative writing when older.

Children have many opportunities to explore materials using their senses. They enjoy making collages with a wide range of different colours and textured materials. They are learning about colours and mixing as they freely paint. They use a variety of different materials to use to represent with, as they make faces with food, build Lego houses and draw their homes and gardens. They have planned activities for movement, to explore and use musical instruments and sing songs. They are learning about how things work as they master the use of tools, take things a part and use appropriate computer games. Staff include activities that focus on the world around them, different countries and festivals throughout the year. They take them on regular outings to farms, zoo, parks, or the theatre which broadens their learning experiences.

Staff have a good understanding and working knowledge of the principles of the High Scope approach and the Foundation Stage curriculum. They plan a wide range of activities that support the early learning goals that compliment the High Scope key experiences. They plan focus activities that have clear learning outcomes for the group, but lack consistency in the evaluation and identifying learning outcomes for specific children. The staff have yet to devise written plans when organising learning in a whole class session, showing clear aims and objectives. Staff collect written observations of children's achievements and annotated examples of work to share with parents. However, individual children's assessments lack clear starting points,

indicating where the child is at and what the child's next step of learning is.

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

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents feel welcome and are very happy about the care provided. Relationships with parents are friendly and supportive. They feel suitably informed about the Foundation Stage, the nursery and their child's learning. Staff share important learning achievements with parents in both formal and informal ways. They have meetings with parents to share the child's individual record of achievement but as yet staff have not involved them fully with planning their child's next steps. Daily care reports for younger children ensure continuity of care. The staff respect parents' wishes, enabling them to meet individual needs regarding routines.

Children are developing strong bonds with the staff members and are making good relationships with each other. They enjoy coming, are happy settled and at home, as the staff offer reassuring, comforting words and actions when they need it. This is apparent when children snuggle down for their naps, are rocked before sleeping in cots or cuddle up closely to staff when listening to a story. Children and babies are developing their independence skills and becoming confident learners, as staff encourage them from an early age to do things for themselves. Young children are able to feed themselves, select toys and find their own drink cup. Older children are able to deal with their own personal care skills, put shoes on and pour drinks themselves. These experiences enable children to feel emotionally safe and secure while away from their parents.

Children feel good about themselves and learn to show respect for others. They talk happily about their home life and things that are important to them. Staff provide a good range of activities and resources that support children's understanding of diversity. Children with English as an additional language are supported well, as staff learn words in the child's home language to understand basic requests. There are good systems in place to support children who have special needs. Staff work closely with parents and outside agencies ensuring the child's individual needs are well planned for and met.

Staff treat children with respect and use lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self esteem. As a result children develop a good understanding of right or wrong, behave well and learn important social skills such as sharing and listening to each other. Staff support younger children in sharing and turn taking. They calmly distract babies when they reach out to grab others toys and provide an alternative toy to use. This helps them learn about how to play harmoniously together to later develop friendships. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children play happily in an organised setting that is welcoming, bright and interesting to them. Staff organise the indoor and outdoor space to support the play needs of all the children and babies. They provide a good balance of activities each day to support their learning and interests. Children benefit from the well deployed, motivated and a dedicated strong staff team. There are effective recruitment procedures in place and staff are able to attend further relevant childcare training. This means that suitable, experienced and qualified persons work with the children. All documentation required for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place. This contributes to the welfare of the children.

The leadership and management is good. The manager has a firm vision for the group's future development to improve the service they provide. She encourages the staff to attend training to support their professional development and completes half yearly appraisals to identify strengths or training needs. Staff are encouraged to self-evaluate their practice and to share new learning at their regular staff meetings; also ways to improve their practice and the care of children . There is a good support infrastructure for staff and management, which in turn supports the individual needs of the staff. As a result this ensures that children receive a good standard of care and learning.

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

#### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

#### **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 complaints 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 good. 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 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):

- develop staff awareness about reducing possible hazards to children; ensure that garden hazards awaiting maintenance, corridor fire extinguisher and air conditioning equipment do not pose a risk to children and staff

### **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):

- develop existing systems in place for planning, evaluating, and assessment in order to reflect children's starting points and individual progress; to inform their next step in learning and the overall planning of activities.

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)