



Smart Start

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	503883
Inspection date	06 February 2007
Inspector	Cathleen Howarth
Setting Address	Oberlin Cottage, Oberlin Street, Greenacres, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 3HS
Telephone number	0161 785 0945
E-mail	
Registered person	Cheryl Maria Connell
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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.

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?

Smart Start Nursery registered in 2001. It is privately owned and registered to provide full day care including an out of school club. The out of school club, or Cabin Club, operates from a portacabin in the grounds of the nursery which is situated in Greenacres, Oldham. A maximum of 65 children may attend the nursery at any one time, and up to 16 children at the out of school club. The nursery is open weekdays from 07.30 to 18.00 throughout the year, and closed over Christmas. The Cabin Club is open weekdays during term time from 07.30 to 08.45 and from 15.00 to 18.00. During school holidays it is open weekdays from 07.30 to 18.00, and is closed over Christmas. Transport can be arranged. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 102 children aged from birth to under five years on roll in the nursery. Of these, 22 receive funding for nursery education. There are currently 20 children aged from

three to under eight years on roll in the out of school club. One child is over eight years. The nursery and club currently support a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The owner is a qualified teacher with additional qualifications in childcare and education. She employs 29 members of staff. Of these, 20 hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification. There are also four modern apprenticeships who are in training. The provider has attained four awards for Quality Assurance, Investors in People, Healthy Eating and Safer Food, and Better Business.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well protected from infection and are taken care of if they have an accident or become ill. Records are systematically countersigned by parents to promote children's continuing care. There are robust systems in place to manage children's health care needs, such as asthma and food allergies, as staff liaise closely with parents. Children flourish as high standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained throughout the nursery and out of school club. Children are beginning to understand simple hygiene practices and know to take their outdoor shoes off in the nursery and club. Without prompting, older children wash their hands after using the toilet, before snack and after messy play. There are effective procedures for nappy changing and toilet training to ensure the personal care needs of the very young are met. Air filters have been purposefully fitted in the baby room to ensure good ventilation.

Children are learning about healthy lifestyles. This includes visits from the oral hygienist. She encourages children to take care of their teeth by brushing them regularly and limiting sugary food, like chocolate and fizzy drinks. They are learning the importance of eating healthily. The cook successfully reinforces this by providing a balanced range of nutritional food and drink throughout the day. Children with special dietary requirements are well provided for. An excellent range of food is provided, including home made soups with lentils, split peas, carrots, parsnips, swede, leeks and potatoes. Only natural ingredients are used. Food preparation procedures are sound.

Outside play is an integral part of the provision and parents are made aware of this before they register. Children from The Cabin Club travel to various parks where they eagerly take part in team games, like cricket and football. They have been to Southport where they walked along the beach collecting shells, seaweed and stones. They had great fun making sand castles and running races.

With regard to nursery education there are various interesting, stimulating activities planned, and a wide range of quality resources used to effectively promote children's overall physical development. Movement, sense of space, health and bodily awareness, using equipment, tools and materials are successfully incorporated into children's play. Gross motor skills are clearly developed when children use pedal cars, and when they climb, slide and balance. Children know to rest and sleep according to their needs. Fine motor skills are continuously developed when

children multi-task during art sessions, for example, cutting, gluing and sticking. Children enthusiastically look forward to the music teacher's visits. She has taught them a wide repertoire of songs, and how to use various musical instruments. Children are positively encouraged to use their imagination and to effectively express themselves through movement and dance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment which is routinely risk assessed before they arrive. The nursery has a named health and safety coordinator and well-implemented safety policies and procedures. CCTV covers all exits and is closely monitored in the office. Babies are checked regularly when they are asleep, and sleeping arrangements are agreed according to parent's wishes. Staff have good understanding of the need for a balance between freedom and safe limits. They have rosters for playground duties and supervise different areas to keep children safe. Children have learnt boundaries and limits. When they go out to play they know to line up quietly and to wait for an adult to lead the way.

Children play with quality resources and equipment that are of good design and condition. Staff check items regularly for repair and replacement. Children learn to keep themselves and others safe, and to avoid accidental injury when they tidy up and practise emergency evacuation procedures. Robust fire safety precautions are effectively in place, including heat strips fixed to inner doors. The current public liability insurance certificate is available for parents to view.

Children from the Cabin Club are escorted safely into schools. They know to use appropriate seat restraints and booster seats in the minibus. Adult to child ratios are consistently maintained, and road safety is continually reinforced.

Children are professionally safeguarded. Staff fully understand their role in child protection. They know the procedures to follow should a concern arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have developed a real sense of belonging. Staff greet children warmly and attractively set out toys and equipment to welcome them to the setting. They display their artwork to promote children's self-esteem. Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. They enter confidently and quickly settle in their self-chosen activity. Children find their resources fun, interesting and challenging. This helps to keep them focused and engrossed in their play. There is continuous provision including areas for quiet, relaxing activities, like reading and listening to music. Themes and topics are successfully incorporated into children's play, and appropriately extended for children in the Cabin Club. Here they democratically vote to decide where they go in the minibus. They said the trip to Manchester airport was great. They watched the aeroplanes take off and land. They also went to a deer park to watch wild deer. For some children this was the first time they had seen live deer. Children have plenty of opportunity to develop creative skills and imagination. They design and make jewellery to take home. They

have also made lava lamps by putting salt into oil, which was appropriately linked to the Divali festival of light.

The very young are fascinated during table top activities. Beans and spaghetti are effectively used to develop their natural curiosity and extend their vocabulary. Although some children hesitated at first they soon joined in. They instinctively tasted and smelt the beans and spaghetti, feeling the different textures in their hands. Staff purposefully introduced various resources like wooden spoons and spatulas to encourage children to make patterns and develop their play. They reinforced specific words like soft spaghetti and hard beans.

Nursery education.

The setting is effectively set out and organised in clearly defined areas to support the Foundation Stage. Over time all aspects of the six areas of learning are imaginatively covered. Children make very good use of the broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which successfully support their overall learning and development. Top quality small world resources are used for the flower shop and market stall. Children sell different sized plants, and younger children use pebbles at the till in order to pay for their goods. Flash cards are positively used to reinforce shape, number, letter, and colour recognition. Various picture books with cassettes are used, and children enjoy acting out stories and songs. They mimic staff who show them what actions to make in order to match sounds, such as the letter s for snake. Children get on the floor and pretend to wriggle through the grass, making hissing noises. They proudly show self-portraits which they made out of paper plates, using different colours to show various skin tones. The science table definitely encourages children to explore their environment by using binoculars and magnifying glasses to make things look bigger. Children learn to turn the torch on and off to see in the dark, and use the walkie talkies to communicate across the room. They use props to support them during number rhymes when they learn simple addition and subtraction.

The quality of teaching and learning for nursery education is good. Staff have secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. They consistently use the stepping stones to show how children are progressing towards the early learning goals from their starting points. There is a robust key person system in operation. A designated member of staff completes observations, and evaluates children's progress and activities. This is recorded in children's development files, to keep parents informed of their children's progress. Children are making good progress, as seen in their records of achievement. The child's key person is also responsible for completing transitional documents before children go to school. Children's individual stage of development is clearly linked to short term activity plans, which successfully reflect the community they come from. Staff's questioning methods and expectations clearly challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can. As a result children are developing a positive attitude towards learning. Teaching interests children, helps them to become focussed, resist distractions and persist for some time. Children's behaviour is managed consistently well, and all children are fully included and involved.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern. The environment, including resources and activities, clearly promotes positive images of diversity, such as gender, ethnicity, culture and disability. As a result children have developed sensitivity towards human differences in the wider community. There are excellent systems in place to provide for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff work closely with parents and support agencies to effectively promote children's continuing care, learning and development.

Children in the Cabin Club have written and displayed simple rules. They know not to use bad language, and to respect each other. Children's good behaviour is encouraged through positive role modelling, meaningful praise and by valuing cooperative behaviour. Active citizenship is positively promoted when children learnt about the Tsunami disaster and donated money, and when they help to raise money for different charitable events.

Children are looked after according to parent's wishes. Written parental consent is obtained for various childcare practises, like the use of the digital camera and video, face painting, outings, and applying sun cream and plasters. Parents commend staff for the high quality of care and wide range of learning opportunities. Should the need arise they know how to raise concerns with their child's key person, and through the complaints procedure if required.

Partnership with parents and carers with regard to nursery education is good. Parents receive clear information about the setting and provision for nursery education. The welcome pack explains the Foundation Stage and six areas of learning. Parents are encouraged to provide relevant information for their child's baseline assessment, or starting points. At parents evening they discuss and sign their child's transitional document which is then sent to school. The Foundation Stage Curriculum is always available for parents to view. They are kept well informed of their child's achievements through their child's key person. Some children's development files are not fully up to date, as staff are changing the way they record. Therefore it is difficult for some parents to see how their children have recently progressed. Staff seek parents' views through questionnaires to help them evaluate the provision for nursery education. Children's learning is positively reinforced at home when they take books home to read with parents, and when parents encourage children to save items for junk modelling, like cereal boxes and washed milk bottle tops. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective team working and camaraderie between all staff at every level of the organisation is a strong feature. Staff have a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. There are robust selection, recruitment and vetting procedures in place. Children Act regulations are well met as staff have secure knowledge and understanding of the National Standards.

Children are grouped appropriately in different rooms in order to positively promote their care, learning and play. There are designated communal areas for meals, rest and play. Staff make

full use of their time and remain focused on the needs of children. Children anticipate well established daily and weekly routines. This helps them to feel secure in a stable, predictable environment.

All the required documentation is in place and mostly up to date. Policies and procedure have recently been reviewed. Staff are mindful of the need to maintain confidentiality, and share relevant information with parents and support agencies.

Leadership and management for nursery education is good. Imaginative systems are in place to provide a rich and stimulating curriculum. Management lead by example, and set clear directives, including forward planning for the inclusion of all children. There are various systems in place to routinely monitor and evaluate provision for nursery education. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last day care inspection two recommendations were raised to improve health and safety. The provider has obtained parent's written permission to obtain emergency medical assistance and advice. The first aid boxes are checked regularly, and children now self-select drinks from the water dispenser in the dining hall. These measures have been taken to enhance children's health and safety at the setting.

At the last nursery education inspection two key issues were raised to improve children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. Children now engage in a wide range of interesting activities to develop their overall capabilities.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person and National Standard 2: Organisation. Ofsted investigated these concerns by carrying out an unannounced visit to the premises. Two actions were raised. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards, and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation closed.

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education section below

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):

- continue to develop records of achievement so that parent's can see the progress their children have made.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk