

Little Stars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127343
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspector	Lesley Anne Cannon
Setting Address	c/o Southborough School, Stagshaw Close, Postley Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6TL
Telephone number	01622 203438
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Registered person	Little Stars Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Little Stars Pre School opened in 1997 and operates from a mobile unit in the grounds of Southborough Primary School. It is situated in the town of Maidstone.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre school at any one time. The pre school is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:30 and on a Tuesday from 12:30 until 15:00 for 37 weeks of the year. Children have access to a secure outside play area.

Children come mostly from the local area. They support children with learning difficulties.

The pre school employs four members of staff, of which three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Children learn about healthy eating and personal hygiene through good daily routines and topics, such as looking after their teeth and going to the doctors. At snack time children select from a variety of fruit, such as grapes, apples or bananas. This is a social time for the children where they sit with friends and chat whilst eating. Children clearly understand hygiene procedures and are knowledgeable about germs, they understand germs live on their hands but can not be seen. Younger children are supported by staff to wash their hands encouraging them to develop good routines.

A clear policy is in place for children who are unwell that is shared with parents in the prospectus. Children do not attend when they are unwell. Staff also help prevent the spread of infection by making tissues available with a bin close by for children to use, and reminding children to cover their mouths when coughing. These routines help reduce the spread of germs and help children remain healthy.

Accident and medication records are well maintained and shared with parents to help provide children with continuity of care.

Children are offered a variety of physical activities, both inside and out. Inside they use climbing frame, balancing beams, music and movement or hop scotch. Outside they use resources such as, soft balls, bikes and hoops. This range of equipment and activities ensure children are encouraged to take part in regular exercise and extend their physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well organised environment. Staff carry out daily risk assessments of the premises including the outside area. Staff are aware that safety is on-going and talk to children during the session about keeping the environment safe, for example, pushing chairs under the tables or when using the climbing frame they explain to children safe areas to jump. Children also see outside visitors to the group who reinforce how they can learn to keep themselves safe, such as the Lollypop Lady and Fire Fighters.

The room is prepared for children with all the furniture being child sized. The resources are displayed in a variety of ways, on low tables, on the floor or in storage boxes so they can help themselves safely. This gives children the opportunity to learn how to use the space safely and how to take risks and face new challenges in safe surroundings. Resources are checked regularly to ensure they are safe for the children to use.

There are clear procedures in place for the safe evacuation of the premises in the event of an emergency. The group have taken measures to ensure the wellbeing of the children who attend and have policies in place for uncollected or lost children.

Parents are made aware of the groups responsibilities to safeguard children. Staff have up to date training in this area and have clear policies and procedures in place to safeguard children. This enables staff to safeguard children's welfare within the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They make choices in their play, they can sit quietly and look at a book or be involved in the busy role play area, enabling them to initiate and express their own ideas. They are happy to approach staff and are familiar with routines. They work along side their peers and staff alike helping them to settle into the environment. Younger children also settle well into the group. Staff are trained and use Birth to three matters to enable them to provide differing activities to inspire their curiosity and promote their awareness of their environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide a programme that is well balanced and meets the needs of all the children. Staff monitor children's achievements enabling them to understand individual needs. Staff acknowledge plans are flexible and make time for ideas that children bring, for example staff make time to ensure each child has their showing item looked at and they can talk about it as well. This allows children opportunity to build their self esteem. The children's behaviour is generally good and staff work hard praising positive behaviour, encouraging children to try things for themselves and to practise developing their own skills.

Children are confident when counting, they are able to see and express numbers as part of day to day language, such as when they discuss the date. Children participate in activities where they learn about shape, size, and sequencing. This gives children opportunity to extend their vocabulary as children talk enthusiastically with their peers and staff alike. They enjoy books and use the pictures to help them share and tell the story with friends. There is a variety of mark making equipment available for children to experiment with. They practise writing when using a note pad and pencil in the home corner as part of their imaginary play, and they are able to write their names on their pictures.

Children are developing their fine motor skills when using tools such as scissors and assorted sized paint brushes. Children have regular exercise outside using a range of resources. They can practise their coordination and physical skills when using the climbing frame or participating in group games outside. This helps build children's awareness of their environment, however the outside space doesn't enhance children's learning.

Children have a good understanding of the world around them. They learn about the seasons and how they look and feel, children can explain what happens when you plant seeds and give them sunshine and water. Children frequently talk about their extended family, past and present events in their own lives and learn about the lives of others around the world. This encourages stimulation of the children's thought process helping to develop their knowledge.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children attending are valued and respected as individuals. They are encouraged to bring small items from home that relates to the letter of the week. Children are encouraged to make decisions about which activities they participate in helping children develop a sense of belonging. Resources are available in a variety of activities that reflect diversity in society. This helps

children to begin to understand their own and others needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good and they are familiar with routines. They respond well to praise and understand what is expected of them, sharing, working together, and being polite to others, this builds their self confidence.

There are good procedures in place to work with children with special needs, offering one to one work when necessary. Staff have relevant training, they understand the need to monitor children and they liaise well with other agencies, enabling all children to progress.

Partnership with parents is good. There is a parent notice board that is kept up to date and provides a good selection of information such as, the letter of the week, the current topic and policies and procedures. Parents are encouraged to help with the group so enabling them to be fully involved in their child's learning and encourage children's progress. There are systems in place for staff and parents to share children's individual progress and development, including an end of term report and regular news letters.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a welcoming and focused environment where resources are displayed in a variety of ways to motivate them. They are cared for in a lively environment where they chat with friends and staff, involving themselves in resources that interest them.

There are four members of staff, three hold relevant child care qualification, and the fourth has completed many short courses. They are encouraged to keep their childcare knowledge up to date by attending short courses. All relevant documentation is in place, such as register, accident book and medication records, however, the contact number for Ofsted in the group policy and procedures needs up dating. Staff are aware of confidentiality and all records are stored securely. This contributes to the safety and well being of the children.

Leadership and management is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the foundation stage, National standards, and Birth to three matters. Staff's knowledge and experience is reflected in their commitment to provide a stimulating and balanced programme of activities for the children. Parents provide a profile when children start enabling staff to plan effectively. Children's progress is monitored and information is shared with parents through their reports.

Staff work well as a team, planning, monitoring and evaluating activities in order to maintain and improve the outcomes for children. The group have a clear understanding of the employment of new staff ensuring relevant checks are carried out.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was asked to improve the operational plan and the child protection policy. They have now combined information to make one operational plan, and have up dated the child protection policy helping to maintain continuity of care for the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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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 policies available to parents and staff have correct contact details for Ofsted.

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):

- ensure appropriate resources are available outside to enhance the children's learning

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