

# Smarties Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	141007
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Brenda Joan Flewitt

<b>Setting Address</b>	Dorchester Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 5DB
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<b>Registered person</b>	Angela Lesley Morris
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care
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## 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?

Smarties Pre-school was registered in 1998. It is privately owned and operates from an open plan hall adjacent to Dorchester Methodist church, in the Broadway area of Weymouth, Dorset. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00 and 13.00 until 15.30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with a lunch club facility from 12.00 until 13.00. The group also offers full day sessions for children over three for those who require it. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 63 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 50 receive funding for early education. The group support children who have learning difficulties and disabilities. There are 11 staff employed to work with the children. Of these, nine hold early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. They are cared for in clean premises where they learn good procedures for their personal hygiene, which includes washing their hands after using the toilet and messy play, and before handling food. They are protected from the spread of infection through staff's routine procedures and there is a clear sickness policy which ensure that parents know that children must not attend if they have an infectious illness. Children's medication and accidents are managed well. All members of staff have up-to-date training in first aid, resources are easily accessible both indoors and when on outings, and the relevant records are completed clearly.

Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They take part in a good variety of activities that promote their physical development. In fine weather, they have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise as they play outside. For example, children develop large muscle skills as they manoeuvre wheeled vehicles, stopping and starting and avoiding each other. Some children pedal tricycles competently up and down a slope. When practising sports day tasks, children run, hop and throw items as instructed, offering encouragement as they cheer each other on. Children enjoy using various tools and equipment to transfer gravel, watching it slide down tubes and pipes.

Children learn to make choices from healthy options at snack time when they develop independence in managing their own food and drink. For instance, they spoon raisins from a bowl to their individual plates, and practise skills in pouring milk or water into their own cups. There is a water dispenser available at all times for children to help themselves to a drink if they are thirsty at other times.

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

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in safe and secure premises where hazards and risks are identified and minimised. Regular risk assessments are carried out and methods put in place to help prevent accidents. The effective security arrangements mean that children are protected from uninvited visitors and cannot leave the building unsupervised. The space available is organised well, which means that children move around freely and in safety as they choose activities and within their play. The rooms are arranged in to various areas and children's art work and posters decorate the walls. This provides a welcoming environment for both children and parents. Children use equipment and resources that are kept in good condition and well organised. All this means that children's safety is well promoted.

Children learn what is expected if they must leave the building in an emergency. They take part in frequent fire drills, which are recorded and evaluated. Staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities and fire exits are clearly marked. This all contributes towards children's safety in a real situation. Children are kept safe on outings through staff's routine procedures which includes carrying out a risk assessment of the venue, staff wearing high-visibility jackets and making sure that a phone and contact numbers are readily available. The children learn about their own safety as they are involved in looking for traffic and crossing roads safely.

Overall, staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding children. They know about the signs and symptoms of abuse and what procedures to follow if they have concerns. Existing injuries are

recorded as routine, and there is good information available for reference. This all helps to protect children from harm.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy their time at pre-school and make positive relationships with both staff and each other. Children are confident and keen to attend, participating in a good balance of self-chosen and adult led activities which help them learn in all areas of development. Most children concentrate well on completing tasks to their own satisfaction. However, there are occasions when the environment becomes noisy. For example, when children have free-play with musical instruments, and at tidy-up time. Children develop independence in practical tasks and are confident to make their needs known, as they can be sure of a friendly response. Children choose from a very good range of play provision which is organised so that they can access resources appropriately for themselves and extend their own play.

Staff use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to record the younger children's progress and plan for their start in the Foundation Stage.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall, staff have a good working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn through play. They use this to plan a broad range of activities, both inside and out, covering all areas of learning over a period of time. There is an effective key worker system which means that staff know children well as individuals. They make on-going observations and record children's achievements in 'diary notes'. These are used to complete assessment records and plan for children's progress. Children are making good progress in their learning. However, staff are not consistent in making the most of everyday opportunities to extend children's knowledge and skills during everyday activities, particularly with regard to maths.

Children use language well to communicate. They initiate conversations with adults and each other, and organise their play. Children take turns to take soft toys 'Butch and Buster' home to look after for a weekend, then enjoy telling the other children what they have been doing, on their return. Children start to recognise their written names through daily activities including self-registration. They practise writing skills through tasks such as drawing, painting and using one-handed tools. Many draw recognisable figures and some are writing their own names. They are encouraged to write for a purpose through play and by naming their own work. Children regularly use their imagination as they take part in role play games and use small world toys, when they act out real life and imaginary situations. They like to dress up as characters from stories, or cook meals and care for babies in the home corner, using technology such as a toy washing machine and toaster. Children develop a sense of number and shape through planned activities, and have access to a maths area on a daily basis, but are not always encouraged to use these skills as part of their play, or during everyday activities like snack time. They look at shapes within the environment such as windows and wheels, as they go for walks. Children develop a good awareness of their local environment as they go on outings and when visitors come into pre-school. For example, children enjoy a visit to 'Monkey World' where they observe nature and wild life, and then re-create their experience in art work to display. They sometimes go to a farm where they use their senses to explore smells and sounds, using their voices and

imagination as they sing 'We're going on a bear hunt' on the way. This all promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Children explore and investigate a wide range of materials and objects through messy play, art and craft and construction. For example, children love to mix paints on large sheets of paper covering tables. They see the change in colours as they use their hands and a variety of tools, to make patterns and shapes. Another favourite activity is exploring a large varied collection of objects such as cones, corks, cardboard tubes, chains, rings, bubble-wrap and CDs. They concentrate well as they collect, transfer, sort items and construct models.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals. Staff know each child well through the positive support of their activities and the effective assessment system. Children with additional needs are supported well. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator liaises with parents, staff and connected professionals to ensure that all children are fully included. Children develop a good sense of belonging and being part of community. They find their individual name labels on arrival, and enjoy seeing pictures of themselves taking part in previous activities, displayed in the pre-school. They are made to feel special on their birthday as their friends sing 'happy birthday' to them and they blow out candles. Children develop an awareness of the wider world as they use a wide range of resources that reflect diversity and through planned themes such as 'Chinese New Year' and 'Harvest'. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Overall, children behave well. They know what is expected through familiar routine. Generally staff use effective strategies to gain children's attention. For example, they ring a 'triangle' and children stop what they are doing to listen to what happens next. However, there are occasions when they hear staff raise their voices to make themselves heard when the environment is noisy. Children receive much praise and encouragement for efforts and achievements which helps boost their self-esteem.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting by way of a prospectus, which includes details about the curriculum, notice boards and regular newsletters. Staff actively seek information from parents about their child on admission and there are daily opportunities for exchanging information verbally to help meet children's individual needs. There are various opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning including helping at sessions, helping to find items for the 'interest table' and relaying information about 'Butch and Buster' in the diary. Parent questionnaires invite parents' opinions on various aspects of their child's care and education. Parents can discuss their child's progress records with key workers both formally at parents' afternoons, and informally through the group's 'open door policy'.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by well qualified and experienced staff who work well together as a team to provide smoothly run sessions, where children know what to expect and therefore settle well. There are clear staff recruitment and induction procedures which ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and know the policies and procedures that promote children's safety and welfare.

The generally effective organisation of the premises, resources and structure of the day means that children play and learn in a safe and secure environment and take part in a broad range of experiences, both inside and outside. All the required documentation and records are in place, stored confidentially and completed clearly. However, there is no clear system to record if a child arrives late. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and managements is good. There are good systems in place for monitoring the provision for nursery education. These include completing an on-going self-assessment document, and meeting with other providers to share good practice. Staff maintain positive links with schools which enhances the children's transition as they start in various reception classes. Staff are developing photo albums of various aspects of starting a new school to help children become familiar with the buildings and routine. Annual staff appraisals help to identify training and staff development. However, there is not always consistency in how staff promote maths in children's play, and gaining children's attention. Staff attend many courses and workshops to increase their knowledge of various aspects of caring for children.

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

The last care inspection recommended: that a risk assessment of the premises was conducted to identify any action to be taken to minimize risks; to keep a detailed record of all fire practises; and to provide separate toilet facilities for adults.

The registered person conducts a weekly risk assessment of the premises and addresses any requirements to maintain the safety of the children. A record of fire drills is completed which includes an evaluation; and there is a separate toilet available for adults to use. Therefore, children's health and safety is promoted.

The last nursery education inspection recommended: that the quality of teaching was monitored to ensure staff effectively assess and plan to challenge the more able children, and provide resources for these children to use tools safely and develop independence; and to improve the partnership with parents by ensuring all parents have regular opportunities to share information and comment on what they know about their child's development.

Staff make regular observations of children's achievements and use the range of stepping stones to assess and plan children's progress. Children use a range of tools and equipment independently, including resources in an 'office and maths area'. They also learn to use real carpentry tools safely during woodwork sessions. Parents are offered opportunities to discuss their child's progress both informally on a daily basis, and by attending specific parent afternoons, therefore, promoting working in partnership with parents towards the children's development.

### **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.

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- review the organisation of some activities, and consistency in staff role modelling, to create a quieter learning environment (also applies to nursery education)
- develop the system for recording children's attendance, to include if children arrive late.

#### 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):

- create more opportunities for children to extend their existing skills in every day situations, particularly in maths
- make improvements as indicated in the care section above.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)