

Smartys Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 218486
Inspection date 13 August 2007
Inspector Julie Mary Preston

Setting Address 2 and 4 Taverners Drive, Little Stoke, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 8QF

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Registered person Janet Skelton

Type of inspection Childcare

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

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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Smarty's Toddlers Play House is one of three nurseries run by Smarty's. It opened in 2001 and operates from two converted houses, near to Stone town centre. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children aged from one to five years on roll. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel in to work.

The nursery employs seven full-time and three part-time staff. Seven of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Five staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy as the nursery and its staff promote their good health by taking positive steps to stop the spread of infection. For example, by having a range of policies and procedures that they adhere to, such as, their no smoking policy, pets policy, hygiene policy and their food handling policy. The nursery also has an identified health and safety officer who oversees the nursery and shares new information with the staff team to keep them well informed. Children are encouraged through daily routine to implement good personal hygiene practices, for example, maintaining good hand washing practices and having individual flannels to wash faces after meals and snacks. The nursery environment, toys and equipment are clean and well maintained. A number of staff are first aid trained and appropriate written records and procedures are in place, such as, accident records, medication records, emergency treatment consent and a sick children policy.

Children's dietary needs are well met and children are not hungry or thirsty. Food is hygienically stored, prepared, cooked and served to children by the cook who has attended relevant food hygiene training and uses this knowledge to ensure appropriate procedures are implemented. Staff encourage children to have a healthy balanced diet, working with parents to achieve this and meeting their individual dietary needs well. This provides children with a healthy range of meals, drinks and snacks, for example, by providing a four weekly menu and allowing children free access to water and a range of fresh and dried fruit. Children have daily opportunities to be active both inside and outside, for example, children enjoy using the outside areas, participating in music and movement sessions and playing in the physical room with the soft play. Opportunities for rest and sleep are provided according to individual children's needs. For example, children have individual sleep mats or travel cots with their own comforters. This ensures children have opportunities to be active and have time for rest within normal daily routine.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming, secure and mostly safe environment that is well organised, maintained and provides adequate space in a variety of different rooms. For example, children have access to a variety of rooms that include areas for messy play, eating, physical activities and sleeping, as well as having access to appropriate toileting and nappy changing facilities and outdoor play areas. Suitable provision is provided for hygienic storage, preparation, cooking and serving of food within the kitchen area and appropriate laundry facilities to ensure sufficient flannels, bedding and spare clothes are available. Risk assessments are completed and updated regularly and most safety precautions implemented. Staff have a good awareness of health and safety regulations for the area they work in because it is part of staff inductions and individual performance reviews; and regular information is provided during staff meetings and through memos to ensure staff have up-to-date knowledge and understanding. Safety procedures identified aim to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted, for example, undertaking safety checks, by having identified persons for collecting children, undertaking regular fire drills, providing appropriate fire safety equipment and maintaining security of the premises. However, children's safety, when using the outside area, is compromised as safety precautions have not been implemented to prevent children having access to potential hazards. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussions undertaken with staff, explanations

given as to why they should and should not do certain things, by practising fire evacuations and through topic work completed.

Children have access to a wide range of good quality age-appropriate toys and equipment that meet relevant safety standards and promote development. The nursery staff ensure these are well maintained, with a variety provided at child level to allow children independent access and choices within their play and learning, rotating them regularly to provide a variety of opportunities daily. The person in charge and her staff team have a good understanding of child protection gained by attending training and having an identified child protection person who keeps staff up-to-date with any new information and procedures within staff meetings. A range of written policies and procedures are shared with staff who are confident to report concerns that arise when identified. This aims to ensure children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery, they are happy, settled and make themselves at home. For example, children enjoy close relationships with their key workers and other staff in their base rooms. They play happily together using the wide range of toys and equipment available, such as, art and craft, jigsaws, role play, construction toys, outdoor play equipment and electronic learning toys. Children are interested in what they do and their natural curiosity as learners is developed well by staff who extend their skills in language, maths, imagination and socialisation. For example, within role play, story and rhyme sessions and counting activities undertaken. Children relate well to each other as staff encourage them to take turns and share their toys and to play nicely together. Children make choices and are involved in decision making, for example, as they self-select free choice activities and through discussions undertaken with staff about what they would like to do next. Opportunities to explore and investigate are provided, for example, children enjoy participating in growing activities, cooking activities, sand play, water play and dough and goop activities.

Staff take time to listen and value what children say, listening and responding to their vocalisations and sharing discussions within the different base rooms. Activities and experiences are extended well via staff questioning and responding to children's interests. For example, at lunchtime staff ask older children what vegetables they think have been used to make their soup and ask them to choose what sticker they would like when they have eaten all their dinner. A balanced range of activities is provided that includes opportunities for active play and relaxing activities. For example, children enjoy outdoor play, music and movement, story and rhyme times and sleep time. Staff encourage children to be confident, independent and to develop individual self-esteem by encouraging them to feed themselves, self-select activities, encouraging older children to be helpers for the day and to undertake activities independently.

Staff provide a wide range of activities and experiences for children within free choice and planned activities based around the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Plans provided reflect the four components of the framework, covering a strong child, a skilful communicator, a competent learner and a healthy child. Activities provided relate to this, such as, making sponge cakes, collage, teddy bears picnic and water play. In addition to this they undertake regular observations of children to inform individual assessments and monitor children's individual learning and development. This enables them to plan for children's next steps and identify any areas of weakness for them to focus on in the future.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues that are reflected well within the group's policies, procedures, activities and experiences. For example, a written equal opportunities policy is provided, resources reflect positive images of diversity and activities include celebrations of festivals for a variety of different cultures. Children become aware of the wider society through activities they participate in, reading stories and by having visitors in to the group. For example, the children had a visit from a fireman and his fire engine. Children enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. They are valued and respected as individuals, who are provided with opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and the wider society. For example, the nursery has a written special needs statement and a designated member of staff to enable them to identify and offer appropriate support and inclusion within activities for any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in partnership with parents and other agencies.

Children are well behaved as staff implement consistent boundaries, offering children lots of praise and encouragement in order to promote this. A designated member of staff is identified to provide guidance on any behaviour issues and a written behaviour policy is provided that is shared with parents to enable them to work together to manage behaviour issues appropriately. Children benefit from positive relationships that staff have developed with parents. Discussions are held with them when they initially join the nursery to make parents aware of settling in procedures and a welcome pack is provided detailing the group's policies and procedures. However, the group's complaints policy does not include the address and telephone number of the regulator. This means potential delays for parents wishing to report any concerns about the provision. Information is provided for parents in a variety of ways to keep them well informed about their individual child's care and learning. For example, a parents notice board is provided, regular newsletters, parents open evenings, daily information sheets, daily verbal discussions and information about topics children will be focusing on.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The registered person ensures a continually suitable staff team is in place by implementing her rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures prior to employment, undertaking induction procedures and continually monitoring staff through ongoing appraisals and observations. High levels of suitably qualified and experienced staff are in post that ensure adult:child ratios are maintained, many of these staff have been with the setting for a number of years. Good support is given to children by them and the key worker system is used well to monitor children's progress and to liaise with parents. Staff are caring and attentive to children, offering comfort and support when required. They are keen to continually enhance their current learning and development by attending additional training. For example, advanced child protection and first aid training. The management and staff team are committed to providing quality care for children who attend, working well together as part of a team in order to achieve this aim. Attendance logs for staff, children and visitors are in place and suitably maintained.

The nursery is well-organised to meet the needs of children. Staff support them appropriately and liaise with parents daily. Consequently, children are happy, settled and enjoy their time in the group. A wide range of written and verbal policies and procedures are provided within the groups operational plan, these are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children, such as, a written health and safety policy, a safeguarding statement and a lost

child procedure. Policies and procedures are shared with parents to keep them well informed about the service and their child's activities and well-being. This contributes to continuity of care. All required documentation is in place, maintained, stored securely and available for inspection. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to address recommendations to: ensure effective deployment of staff allows senior staff to deputise in absence of manager; ensure prior written permission is obtained from parents to administer medication, and to review and amend the child protection policy. Appropriate action has been taken as senior staff covering for management are now provided with time to undertake managerial tasks, written permission from parents is sought to allow staff to administer medication and the child protection policy has been reviewed and updated.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection 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 children's safety is maintained at all times in the outside play area
- update the complaints procedure to include the address and telephone number of the regulator.

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