

My Little Stars

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289189
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Inspector	Hazel Christine White
Setting Address	41 Jobs Lane, Tile Hill, Coventry, West Midlands, CV4 9DZ
Telephone number	02476 466288
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Registered person	My Little Stars Ltd - 4772422
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

My Little Stars opened in 2004 and operates from a converted two-storey detached house. It is situated in the Tile Hill area of Coventry, West Midlands. A maximum of 34 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 18:00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 31 children on roll. Of these six children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of the parents travel into work from other districts. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff. Ten of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three members of staff are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted. Staff encourage children's interest in maintaining a healthy lifestyle through discussion and by reinforcing the importance of hygiene routines to prevent the spread of germs. Children see low-level pictures in the bathroom and play rooms which remind them to wash their hands and use tissues to blow their noses. Toys, equipment and bedding are in good condition and regularly washed to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. Children can rest and relax as they need to as staff are sensitive to their needs. They are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. The majority of staff have current first aid certificates. First aid boxes are readily available and sufficiently stocked.

Children have nutritious snacks and meals that promote healthy eating. The menu is well balanced and ensures that children have lots of fresh fruit and vegetables with their meals. Children on special diets or those with allergies have their individual needs met because they are discussed thoroughly with parents. Lists of specific food requirements are displayed in all areas for easy reference. Food is well presented and plentiful. Meal and snack times are organised so children seat in small groups, therefore, they are able to socialise. Pre-school children pour their own drinks and serve their fruit with confidence. They can independently access drinking water throughout the day from a water dispenser.

Children have good opportunities to experience physical play and develop their skills. The outside area has been revamped to give children a range of experiences and an interesting learning environment for all ages. The outdoor area is included in planning to ensure that it is used daily. Children are developing their confidence on equipment that provides appropriate challenge. They are able to climb, ride wheeled toys, play with balls and balance on equipment. The garden is used in all weathers, children know that they must wear wellingtons in the rain and put hats on to protect them from the sun. Children grow tomatoes and pumpkins in the vegetable patch and have planted sunflower seeds. Babies get plenty of fresh air as they play in the garden and go for walks around the local area. They use soft play equipment, baby walkers and gyms to help them roll, crawl and stand up. Pre-school children discuss the changes in their bodies after exercise and have a positive attitude to being active. They learn that it helps to develop strong bones and muscles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure, safe indoor and outdoor environment which is suitable for the purpose. Rooms are well ventilated, brightly decorated and prepared before children arrive. Security is good, the external door and internal doors and gates on the ground floor are fitted with a 'bleep' so staff know when they have been opened. Visitors are monitored and cannot access areas used by children unless they are invited in by a member of staff. Visual daily safety checks are carried out and recorded. The premises are well maintained and written risk assessments cover all areas. They are reviewed as required, therefore, positive steps are taken to minimise potential risks and ensure children's safety.

Children are able to access the resources independently because most are stored at a low level. Pre-school children know where additional resources are stored and are confident enough to

ask for toys and activities that they cannot see. Space is well organised to enable the children to experience a wide range of play opportunities. Children are cared for according to their age and ability by key workers in specific rooms. A free-flow system operates on the first floor which gives scope for children to be creative or engage in quiet activities.

Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff give them gentle reminders of safety rules, such as not throwing toys because they could harm someone and holding on to the banister when they use the stairs. Daily safety checks are carried out and recorded to further ensure children's safety. Resources are in good condition and comply with British Safety Standards. Staff adhere to manufacturers' guidelines and they are checked regularly to make sure that they are well maintained.

Children are protected from the dangers of fire as safety procedures and equipment are in place. Emergency evacuation procedures are displayed near all exits and adults and children are aware of them because they are practised regularly. Fire Safety officer's recommendations are met and exit routes are clear, identifiable and easily opened from the inside.

Children are safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Some have attended training to enhance their awareness of the procedure to follow and recording requirements. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. This information is kept on file and staff demonstrated through discussion that robust procedures are in place. There is a named child protection co-ordinator who has a sound working knowledge of child protection and identifying concerns regarding abuse and neglect. The nursery's policies, which includes allegations of professional abuse are followed, however, they have not been updated to reflect current changes, which may compromise children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children experience a wide range of educational activities and experiences, which helps them to make progress in their development. Staff have successfully implemented the 'Birth to three matters' framework for younger children to help them to develop into competent learners. Their knowledge of its principles support children in making decisions and choices, therefore, encouraging them to become independent learners. Resources and equipment are organised to enable children to explore and become confident in their surroundings. Photographs are displayed so children can reflect on past and present experiences.

Children sing action songs and rhymes and listen to stories. They use their imagination in the role play area and get great pleasure out of pretending to make adults drinks and meals in the playhouse. Children explore using all of their senses and have regular access to sand, water, play dough and creative materials. Babies and toddlers play with treasure baskets which are made from natural materials. They gain confidence and develop their communication skills as staff respond promptly and appropriately to their babbling and gestures.

Activities meet the needs of children at their different stages of development because they are age and stage-appropriate and can be adapted according to individual children's level of ability and understanding. Children benefit from learning and play opportunities inside and outside visits and outings, they have been to the Sea Life Centre, Millennium Point, various museums, shops and restaurants. Children relate well to each other and have developed good

rapport with staff. They are shown affection, comfort and reassurance. Children are frequently praised for their efforts and achievements and as a result they are motivated to learn.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a balanced curriculum to progress children along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Children are interested in their play and are confident learners. Staff use a good range of activities to engage the children and there is a balance of adult-led and child-led. Assessments, however, are not systematic, informative or sufficiently linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals. As a result they are not used to inform future planning or children's next steps in their learning. Consequently, children may not be appropriately challenged.

Staff are learning to help children to consolidate and extend their learning by repeating activities, encouraging them to become involved and to persevere with tasks. They generally ask children open-ended questions and adapt play according to the children's ability, therefore, all children become involved in the activities. Staff manage behaviour to ensure an optimum learning environment and that they enable the children to develop their understanding of right and wrong. Children are learning rules and boundaries and how to be considerate to others because they are sensitively reminded of expected behaviour throughout the day. Children generally behave well and any challenging behaviour is managed effectively in a calm manner. Children have regular routines which they are familiar with.

Children confidently engage in a good range of planned and spontaneous activities. They make sound relationships and demonstrate satisfactory independence skills, such as putting on their coats and pouring drinks at snack time. Children are settled, keen and motivated to learn. They are increasing in confidence and often take the lead in activities, therefore, developing their self-esteem. Children choose from the activities that are set out and access most resources for themselves.

Children communicate well with adults and each other, they join in conversations and are inquisitive about what is happening around them. They sing songs and rhymes and listen intently to their favourite stories. Children are learning to link sounds to letters and more able children recognise their own name as they self-register. They freely access writing materials to draw, write and make lists. This encourages children to notice print and understand writing for different purposes.

Children develop mathematical skills as they learn to count and match shapes and colours. More able children recognise complex shapes, such as diamonds and hexagons. They construct with bricks to make three dimensional models and begin to use mathematical language, such as largest, smallest, under and over. Cooking and water play activities enhance children's knowledge of weights and volume. They talk about objects that sink and float in water.

Children investigate and explore when they play in the garden and go for local walks. They are able to use tools to dig and grow plants and vegetables in the garden and examine insects with magnifying glasses. Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. They are becoming skilful when using the computer and operate everyday technology in their play. For example, they enjoy talking to each other on the telephone in the home corner. Children use their imagination as they dress up and make up their own games. They have good opportunities to freely draw, paint and make

models because resources, such as glue, paint, crayons and collage materials are readily available in the art room.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are taken into account because key staff have a good knowledge of their background, personal care and home routines. They are cared for by a multicultural staff team and access a good range of resources which promote diversity in a positive way. Festivals and special days are celebrated to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Children are eager to share what they know about Eid and describe the baskets that they filled with chocolate muffins to take home. They can recall having lunch at a Chinese restaurant and tasting noodles and prawn crackers. Children with English as an additional language are supported well. Staff seek key words from parents and use simple gestures, for example, to show children it is snack time or time to go in the garden, which helps children feel secure. Consequently, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

A policy is in place regarding the care of children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties, which details how the service will be provided. The good levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive individual attention so that their needs are effectively met. Staff have experience of working alongside parents and with other professionals to help children reach their full potential.

Children behave generally well and are learning to show care and concern for one another. They are made aware of the rules and boundaries through gentle reminders from staff. Their self-esteem is promoted as they are frequently praised for effort and achievement. Effective use of positive behaviour management strategies helps children learn right from wrong. Staff exchange information, with parents, about methods used to manage behaviour and they work together to resolve any problems that may occur.

Parents take part in induction procedures and their requirements and wishes are valued and respected. Children's progress is communicated daily to parents through information sheets, which detail children's sleep, meals, play activities and personal information. Parents receive a prospectus before children start at the nursery. They can see photographs on display of past and present events that their children's have taken part in. Staff are friendly and approachable which means that good communication exists.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory.

They are provided with information about the Foundation Stage through good displays. Newsletters outline the number and letter of the week. Parents are sufficiently informed about their children's achievements and progress because of conversations they have with staff. Progress reports are not systematically completed and therefore, they are not available to parents to comment on. Children enjoy taking home 'chocolate or cocoa monkey' they have their own pyjamas and a suitcase. Parents write in a notebook and take photos of what they have been up to whilst in the children's care. The manager is actively looking at ways of involving parents in their children's learning and is in the process of developing a booklet which will encourage them to share information. This will be used to plan for their next steps in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in a welcoming environment. Space is used effectively to enable children to experience a wide range of different activities. Children move safely and freely around the rooms where they play because they are organised well. They have secure and balanced routines, which develop a sense of belonging and good staff ratios enable appropriate and individual care to be given. Strong team work and sound recruitment procedures ensure appropriate safeguards for children's well-being are in place.

Children's welfare is satisfactorily supported through staff's implementation of their policies and procedures. However, some records are not readily available and sufficiently organised. There is not an effective system in place to identify which are the most current. The manager is proactive in ensuring that the practice of all staff contributes positively to children's care, learning and play. She works closely with the local authority early years partnership to improve practice and raise standards. Staff enhance their knowledge and skills through training courses relevant to their roles within the nursery.

Leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. Regular team meetings are held to enable staff to discuss good practice and time for planning the curriculum has recently been introduced. Pre-school staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage and with the support of the local authority plan a programme of activities to enhance the children's learning. There is a commitment to providing quality care and education for the children. Staff have access to the early years training programme which supports their continuing professional development. However, the system for monitoring and evaluating plans and children's assessment records is less rigorous and as a result, they are not regularly completed and updated. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to continue to develop the range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and to ensure that all records relating to day care activities are well organised, reviewed and readily accessible on the premises at all times. Multicultural clothes, books, dolls, play figures and posters have been added to resources. Children occasionally experience going on visits to temples and have food tasting sessions linked to the celebration of festivals. As a result children are gaining a good knowledge of the wider world. Records and documents are generally well organised and the provider has been asked to continue to develop a system to ensure that records are updated and reviewed to reflect current practice.

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):

- review the child protection policy regarding allegations made against staff to ensure it complies with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures
- develop a system to ensure that records, policies and procedures are well organised and readily available.

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 that assessments are systematic, informative and linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals
- use staff knowledge of the children's skills and interests to plan the next steps in their learning
- develop a system for monitoring and evaluating plans and children's assessment records.

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