

Smartys

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218485
Inspection date	22 October 2007
Inspector	Lynne Milligan
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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?

Smartys Day Nursery opened in 1999 and operates from four interlinking rooms in a ground floor building near to Stone town centre. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged from birth to under two years on roll. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel in to work in the surrounding area.

The nursery employs 10 staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are supported well in developing a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy regular meals and snacks which are healthy, nutritious and provide a balanced diet. In between meals, children

have the opportunity to have additional drinks of cooled boiled water or baby juice in order to maintain their levels of hydration. Children with special dietary requirements are cared for effectively because there are clear procedures in place to gather and record relevant information and they are offered appropriate alternatives when necessary.

Children are well cared for in the event of an emergency as all staff hold current first aid qualifications and the first aid kit is checked regularly to ensure that it is well stocked. Children's continuity of care is supported well as parents give consent for staff to administer medication or to seek emergency medical advice, and staff record and share information about accidents that occur in the nursery. Children are protected from the risk of infection as the setting has a concise sickness policy that is clear in the exclusion periods. Staff are vigilant and keep infectious children away from the nursery.

Children are beginning to learn to protect themselves from the risk of cross infection as they are familiar with hand washing routines. However, they do not always have their hands wiped after they have had their nappy changed but they are sufficiently protected as staff use disposable gloves and aprons to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Children of all ages enjoy regular opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air and to exercise their physical skills. They use a good range of equipment such as balls and sit on cars to develop specific skills. Children also visit the local park where they begin to toddle about in wide open spaces and engage in gentle physical play.

Children's emotional well-being is supported effectively as staff develop close relationships with them and there are many opportunities for them to have the individual attention of a familiar adult, for example, when feeding, looking at books or exploring toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure within the nursery. There are clear procedures in place to monitor visitors to the premises and to ensure that children are only collected by authorised persons. The indoor and outdoor environments are checked regularly to ensure that resources and play areas are safe and suitable for children of different ages and stages of development. Resources are well organised and stored carefully so that children can safely access them independently.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff are proactive in their approach. For example, placing cushions behind them as they play happily on the floor and sensitively taking time to talk to them about any hazards. Children also regularly practise fire drills to ensure they can evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. Children are kept safe when on outings as staff assess any potential hazards and take steps to minimise risks. For example, ensuring children are strapped into pushchairs and toddlers are wearing wrist straps.

Children's welfare is given good priority as staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues. There are clear policies and procedures in place to support staff in responding appropriately in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and babies are happy and settled. They benefit from sensitive interactions from staff to promote their care and development. Very warm caring relationships enable children to feel safe and secure. Their care is enhanced by effective organisation. Knowledgeable staff provide stimulating experiences to ensure children enjoy what is on offer at the nursery. They work well to ensure children reach their full potential through very enjoyable play opportunities. Space and resources are organised successfully and spontaneous and inspired activities provide young children with interesting and exciting experiences to broaden their overall development. Children are stimulated and play effectively and independently and with others.

Children enjoy their time in the vibrant environment where they make active choices about their play to enhance their own progress and personal development. Children are motivated and show age appropriate levels of interest in an good range of indoor and outdoor activities. Effective play opportunities are utilised by staff to provoke children's thoughts as they begin to steer their own play. They engage in interesting tactile play during messy play and experience different textures as they explore with baked beans and paint. They develop their skills as they look at the paint on their fingers, expressing joy and delight as they rub it into the paper. Staff support their learning as they use age-appropriate language to describe the paint such as wet and sticky and colours such as orange. They further develop a wide ongoing vocabulary because staff talk to them all the time, introducing new words as they experience interesting and appealing activities and stories.

Opportunity is given to encourage children's confidence and independence on a regular basis. Children make progress as they develop skills in hand-eye coordination with an excellent range of hand held toys. They are visually stimulated with bright wall displays and ceiling mobiles and are highly motivated in their early physical development as they progress through sitting, crawling and walking. Toys and resources are attractively set out to encourage children to experiment and explore. They listen to music including soft music in the sleep room and recognise familiar voices as staff return from other rooms. A very young child eagerly puts her arms up to welcome a returning staff member and giggles delightfully as she is cuddled. Staff talk to her about how much she was missed whilst she was on holiday with her parents.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to plan activities for children. They are knowledgeable about the objectives and record them in children's files. Records are maintained through clear observations, however, this are not filled in regularly and therefore does not clearly show how some children are progressing through early milestones. Nevertheless staff know children well and ensure that planning takes account of their next steps so as to impact positively on their growth and development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing a positive attitude to their peers and adults and have equal access to the resources and activities provided. Children are starting to develop their understanding of the wider world through planned activities around cultural festivals, for example, Diwali and Chinese New Year. Children play with figures that reflect ethnicity and disability. Pictures and posters that reflect positive images of other cultures are displayed, and this ensures that all children are being valued.

The setting has effective arrangements in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) continues to attend training courses and workshops and works alongside parents and outside professionals to ensure children's individual needs are met. Children demonstrate good levels of behaviour. The staff team use sensitive methods such as getting down to the child's level to explain things in a language they understand when they do something that is not acceptable, for example, throwing toys. Distraction is often used to prevent un-wanted behaviour and the clear rules and boundaries are implemented effectively. This helps children to develop their self-esteem and independence in a positive way.

Good relationships are formed with parents as staff ensure they are provided with detailed information about the setting's aims and objectives. Information is shared via newsletters and the notice board in the entrance way. There are good settling in procedures for the children where the parents can stay with their children until they feel happy they can be left. Effective informal communication takes place at handover and collection time as parents are encouraged to come into the group and collect the children's creations and discuss any issues with the staff. Children's records are readily available for parents to view at any time and appointments can be made for one to one sessions with the staff if the parents request this.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The children settle well and choose what to do, play well together and create bonds easily. They spend their day in clean and spacious surroundings, which are safe and suitable for their needs. Staff address most aspects of health and safety effectively, but some of the hand washing procedures are inconsistent in order to eliminate all risks. Policies and paperwork are extremely well organised and reflect recent changes such as new contact details for Ofsted, and Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The provider has robust recruitment and appraisal systems in place to ensure staff are well suited to do their job, and the staff team works very well together. Staff are deployed effectively so that the individual needs of the children are met at all times. All staff are dedicated to raising standards and regularly contribute ideas on how to improve. Ongoing monitoring is consistent for all aspects of the setting, in order to identify and address areas of weakness. Current weaknesses in monitoring daily practice results in inconsistent procedures for hand washing and recording of children's progress through the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were made to improve the deployment of staff so that senior staff are able to deputise in absence of manager. The setting has been proactive in its approach to ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and staff are deployed effectively so that children's individual needs are met at all times. The setting was also required to ensure prior written permission was obtained from parents to administer medication. Signed consent from all parents is now in place, including effective procedures should medication change.

The final recommendation was to review and amend the child protection policy. A clear and concise policy is now in place and staff are very aware of the procedure. This ensures that children's welfare is promoted at all times.

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

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 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):

- develop further hand washing procedures so that all children have the opportunity to have their hands washed so as to prevent the spread of infection
- implement further the systems for recording children's achievements in relation to the 'Birth to three matters' framework so as to clearly identify children's progress.

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