

# Little Stars

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY360354
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 June 2008
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<b>Registered person</b>	Little Stars Day Nursery Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Little Stars Day Nursery Kingston was acquired and opened in August 2007. It operates from a residential house in Gloucester Road, Kingston-upon-Thames. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 23 children aged three months to five years at any one time and there are currently 36 children on roll. Of these seven children receive the nursery education grant. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 - 18:30 for 51 weeks of the year and is closed on all bank holidays.

The nursery employs seven full time staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications; this includes the manager.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The majority of staff hold first aid qualifications and this, together with a well stocked first aid box and written permission to take children to hospital in an emergency, supports the health of the children attending. Staff record any accidents children may have whilst in their care and most entries have been signed by parents to show they were informed on the day. An oversight on two recent entries where children had accidents, found they were not signed on the day. However, the parents of the children both confirmed staff had informed them verbally.

Children benefit from healthy food that is freshly prepared on site by a cook. Each day children enjoy healthy and nutritious meals and sit together within their rooms to eat, making it a sociable time for all. Older children in the pre-school room develop independent skills as they serve themselves portions and pour out their own drinks of water. A four week rota of menus, divided into summer and winter seasons, are sent to parents twice a year so they are aware of what foods their children will be eating.

Children's health is important to staff who make sure children learn about good personal hygiene through daily routines of washing hands after using the toilet, before eating and after playing in the garden. If children require medication parents are asked to complete a form giving their written consent and staff record details of when they gave the child the medicine, asking parents to acknowledge the record when they collect the child at the end of the session. This supports children's health.

Children have daily opportunities to practise their physical skills in a well equipped outdoor play area. They clamber on giant tyres, use slides and the attached climbing apparatus and run around the grassed area. Children have a ball pond and babies sit in this and throw balls onto the grass where they are collected by older children and used for catching, kicking and throwing. Staff are on hand to ensure the area remains safe for the younger children. Children's fine motor skills are encouraged from a young age with children enjoying textured painting, playing with water and sand and growing vegetables in the garden.

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

The provision is good.

Children's welfare is guarded because three key staff have had training in child protection issues and an in-house child protection awareness day has been arranged for all staff to attend this month. The local safeguarding children board's guideline is to hand and staff demonstrate they will act in accordance with this if they have a concern about a child in their care. The nursery has a child protection statement, but this does not have a procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against staff.

Staff have taken steps to minimise risks to children within their rooms and procedures are in place to prevent children leaving the premises unsupervised. For example, door handles in rooms are above child height and high fencing surrounds the garden with the back gate padlocked and securely fastened. Visitors are monitored within the setting as they sign a record book showing why they are on site; they are never left alone with children. The deputy manager undertakes risk assessments on the premises each week noting any hazards and bringing them to the attention of the manager.

All areas of the nursery are clean and well maintained and children play in rooms that are spacious, in good repair, well lit and ventilated. Children are encouraged to use toys and equipment safely by following staff examples of being careful when they play with equipment and toys, and by being encouraged to help tidy away toys before moving onto other activities. There are plenty of toys to create a stimulating environment in both rooms of the nursery and most toys are kept at child height to enable children to make a choice in their play.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and settle into the routine of the nursery well. Children smile as they enter the rooms, pleased to see staff who welcome them warmly. Children are interested in the activities and make their own selection about what they want to play with, as equipment and resources are freely available. Activities are extended to the outside area, some of which are under cover and this is where children play with sand, a ball pond, climbing apparatus and art and craft materials. Indoors children involve themselves in shaping and rolling play dough, clambering on wooden frames and playing with musical instruments.

Staff have positive relationships with the children and a key worker system helps to secure these relationships. Good communication with parents ensures staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of each child's individual needs.

Staff currently implement the Birth to three matters framework into their practice by planning activities around the four components within the framework. Staff make written observations on children's progress, but some of these are not meaningful and do not show how staff will take children to their next step of development; this has been recognised by the manager and will be addressed. Staff have realistic expectations of what children are able to achieve and babies and younger children are developing good communication skills as staff use repetitive language which children find easy to understand and copy.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff understand how the three and four-year-old children learn and have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals. The written planning is divided into focussed activities and this shows the areas of learning to be explored, the objective, key language and resources to be used, an evaluation of the activity and the next follow up step of the activity. Staff undertake written observations on children's progress that show what their next step of development is, but these notes are not always used to inform planning.

The nursery currently has children aged two to three years playing alongside the pre-school children. Consequently, staff have to be vigilant about extending the learning of the older and more able children so that they are provided with challenge and stimulation.

The indoor and outdoor spaces are used well to create an interesting learning environment, where children develop personal independence. For example, children are encouraged to serve themselves meals, pour their own drinks and put on their own outdoor clothing. Staff effectively interact in children's play and are skilled at ensuring they are appropriately challenged. Children are becoming competent learners as they self-select activities such as painting and building using construction resources, which is helping to increase their skills. There are good opportunities for children to explore their imaginations through role play. For example, children

are learning about Peter Pan and have been writing letters to Tinkerbelle, who leaves replies on their windows overnight. Children are excited to hear from her and astounded to find they frightened her off when they were being noisy at the lunch table.

Children show good concentration during group discussions and story telling. Children have the confidence to 'read' to their peers, holding up the book to show other children the pictures and showing a real talent for story telling. Children independently access the computer and can confidently load CD's. Each child has their own screen saver, where they have created an image using the painting programme.

The children care for two African snails who have laid eggs and the children are waiting for them to hatch. Each week the children clean the snails out, renewing the compost and giving the snails fresh cuttlefish, water and lettuce. Children have planted spring onions, peas, radishes and a pumpkin, and take time to look after them by watering and weeding them. During the watering of the plants children explore volume and gauge whether their vessels are full, half full or empty.

Children are learning to count and recognise numbers through a wider range of practical experiences. For example, number rhyming and songs. Children measure themselves and items in the nursery and compare sizes using mathematical language such as bigger and smaller. They are beginning to recognise basic shapes and find things in the nursery they can relate to such as square windows and rectangle doors. Children do not go on any outings or have many visitors coming to the nursery, so are not becoming aware of the local community and wider society.

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

The provision is good.

Children are helped to settle into the nursery as parents are encouraged to bring them along a month before they are due to start so they get used to the surroundings, the staff and the other children. Warm and friendly relationships exist between staff and parents with both taking time at the beginning and end of the day to chat about the children, sharing information that encourages continuity of care. Children under two years of age have a contact book that shows details of the children's food intake, sleep times and how their personal needs are met. No details of activities are listed as the management prefer staff to talk to parents about this; notes are also on a white board for parents to see how their child's day has been spent.

Children are well behaved and occupied, and staff talk to children at eye level to help them understand right from wrong. For example, a child takes a cushion from another child, who becomes upset. Staff ask the child with the cushion if she has taken it from the other child. She ponders for a moment and then says 'yes'. She is asked to give it back and to say sorry, which she does, touching the other child on the shoulder showing she is sorry. Staff praise her and she is given another cushion.

All staff endeavour to meet children's individual needs; although there are no children attending with learning or physical difficulties the nursery have staff on site who would be able to meet children's needs and liaise with outside agencies if necessary. The nursery setting has resources that enable children to develop a positive awareness of other races, cultures, abilities and genders. These are used as an integral part of every day play with books, dolls showing characters from various ethnic backgrounds, dressing up clothes, toy wheelchairs and crutches, all at child level for them to select. Older children have completed projects on different countries around the world.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. For example, children are confident and have high self esteem. They learn about other cultures and respond, express and communicate ideas to staff and each other. They show wonder as they observe African snails in their rooms who have laid eggs. Children are well behaved, are learning to share and take turns and they enjoy socialising together, vying with each other to impart news about their weekends and holidays.

The partnership with parents whose children receive the nursery education grant is good. Information about the six areas of learning are given to each parent prior to their children receiving funding. Parents are asked for information about children's starting points, so staff can build on what children already know. Children's profile sheets are kept, showing their progress; the first parents meeting relating to children's progress was held in April 2008 and will be conducted every six months thereafter. Parents spoken to at the inspection have high regard for the management and staff of the nursery, stating they are kept informed of events within the nursery and find staff approachable and professional.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Staff feel supported by the manager who has a strong commitment to continually improving the service offered and they are encouraged to embrace training opportunities to improve their practice. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. All staff are involved in the planning activities which are interesting, challenging and capture children's imaginations and the manager oversees this to ensure all areas of learning are being covered. However, there are few opportunities for children to learn about their local community and wider society. The manager regularly looks at staff's written observations and notes on children's next steps, but she has not noticed that many do not link to the planning of activities.

Children are cared for by a mature, qualified and experienced bank of consistent staff who have a strong commitment to continually improving the service offered to children. They have clear defined roles and responsibilities within the nursery, which is a pleasant working environment where children are thriving. All documentation required for the operation of the nursery is in place and stored on site enabling the nursery to promote the welfare, care and learning of all the children. However, the policy relating to child protection does not contain the necessary detail required under the National standards and some of the accident records lack parents acknowledgment signatures. Individual children's records are kept confidential and shared with parents on request, which ensures continuity of care. The manager and the owner have clear and appropriate aims for children's care and education although there is a lack of meaningful observations being undertaken on some of the younger children. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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**

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 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 staff request all parents to acknowledge accidents records with their signatures
- devise a procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against staff
- make sure written observations of children's achievements are consistently meaningful and use any next steps notes for the planning of activities.

#### **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 observation notes made on children's achievements are linked to the planning of future activities
- increase children's opportunities to learn about their local community and the wider society

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