

Sandmartins Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	400072
Inspection date	28/10/2008
Inspector	Elizabeth Patricia Edmond
Setting address	Central Science Laboratory, DEFRA, Sand Hutton, York, North Yorkshire, YO41 1LZ
Telephone number	01904 462238
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Sandmartins Day Nursery opened in 1996 and is managed by Childcare Enterprises Ltd, a national chain of nurseries. The nursery building is on the site of the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) at Sand Hutton just off the A64 to the north of York. The main purpose of the nursery is to provide day care for staff employed at the laboratory, although places are offered to other parents for children over two years old.

The nursery operates from a two storey purpose built nursery building. Children are mainly accommodated on the ground floor which is easily accessible from the adjacent car park. Children are helped to access the first floor according to their needs. The ground floor areas used by the children have adjacent outdoor areas for play and learning. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round with the exception of bank holidays.

A maximum of 47 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 63 children in the early years age group on roll. The group is registered to provide funded nursery education to those children of eligible age and has the support of the local authority. The nursery is also included on the compulsory part of the childcare register, although at the time of inspection there were no children attending in relation to that registration.

The nursery employs 13 staff to work with the children, the majority of whom are qualified. Additional staff are employed to provide cover and perform other duties such as cooking and cleaning.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Sandmartins Day Nursery provides a very pleasant environment for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are well cared for by capable staff and they make good progress. Children enjoy the broad range of activities which they access confidently and with enthusiasm. There is a stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment which children can access freely for most of the day. However, nursery routines do not fully recognise children's individual needs and limit access to some opportunities at times. The strong management structure, on the whole, correctly identifies areas for improvement. Staff are professional in their approach to developing effective strategies to remedy matters.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- increase children's access to the outdoors and further promote their individual needs and learning styles by revising routines for rest and for using the upstairs room
- continue to develop the use of observation to inform individual learning plans across all areas of learning and involve parents in this where appropriate

- further promote children's creative development and their mark making skills by encouraging and displaying their own work

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for by a strong and stable staff team who continually upgrade their knowledge and skills. The company's robust recruitment, appraisal and staff supervision procedures promote children's safety and security. All records are professionally maintained and kept up to date. Systems to assess and manage risk to the children and to safeguard their welfare are thorough and understood by all staff. The management team have a highly professional approach to continued development and improvement of the service. Staff are effectively deployed and the key worker system used well to support children's care and learning; babies gurgle happily with their key worker as they have their nappies changed. There is a welcoming environment where children are motivated to investigate and explore for most of the day. Children's photographs, pictures and posters help them to feel at home and the accessibly presented equipment invites their interest. For example, babies crawl confidently into their sand tray as they explore the equipment and older children freely mix the media such as beans and play dough for their creative work.

Children are confident in the nursery routines, some of which are necessary or useful. For example, children are safely grouped together for rest to facilitate staff breaks and older children know how to lay the table ready for lunch. Also children learn to find their own coats and put them on when they wish to go outside; toddlers have great fun with the hats and gloves from the interest table as they prepare to go out. However, some routines do not fully recognise children's uniqueness and address their individual learning styles. For example, although not all children are asleep during the quiet rest period after lunch, their access to the outdoors at that time is limited. The use of the upstairs room further limits older children's access to the garden; this does not fully address the needs of children who favour more physical learning styles.

Partnerships with parents are good; children benefit from the warm, trusting three-way relationships that they enjoy with their key-worker and their parents. There is a good two way flow of information between staff and parents about daily care routines and nursery business. Whilst there are systems in place to include parents in the assessment of their children's continued progress, some parents are not yet fully involved in this process. Effective links with other agencies benefit the children's care and learning. Due to the successful self evaluation process, relationships with other early year's providers are also developing well.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The arrangement of the environment and equipment enables children to access all areas of learning freely for much of the day; children are motivated and they concentrate well at their play. The close relationships that the youngest children have with their key person give them the confidence to enjoy their investigative

play. They are fascinated as the sand trickles through their fingers and they develop pleasant social skills playing peek-a-boo through the window of the outdoor play house. The caring, supportive nature of the staff and the calm learning environment that they provide mean that children's excellent behaviour contributes considerably to their welfare and their learning. Children are used to asking questions and to heeding what is said to them; they are relaxed, confident and develop respect for each other. Key staff engage the children in the opportunities provided and are often skilled in knowing when to leave children to their own contemplation. For example, staff use conversational questioning sensitively to encourage children to talk about previous activities; children confidently use the new words they learnt about the caterpillar's life cycle. At the same time, staff patiently stand back as younger children persevere with their gloves. Staff are using the new system for observing children efficiently to establish children's level of development; this is beginning to influence individual plans for children's continued progress, although, it is not yet consistent across all areas of learning in some cases. The previous system for planning and assessments confirms that children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas.

Children learn various art and craft techniques to promote their creative development and they use the related tools well. The babies have great fun using crayons and finger paints and toddlers practice using brushes and rollers as they pretend to paint the outside walls and windows. Older children sometimes use the range of art and craft materials freely to express themselves. They enjoy exploring how the colours blend when they decide to fold their painting and some are inspired by the provision of butter beans and lentils at the play dough table. However, because art is often used as a vehicle for other areas of learning children's creativity is sometimes sidelined. For example, displays show topics about children's families, fire safety or the weather; the associated pictorial recording in is often overly adult led which results in pictures of the same colour and in the same adult-chosen materials. Whilst the topics undoubtedly facilitate some very good learning opportunities, this does not fully celebrate what children have to offer.

Children become very confident communicators. They speak and listen very well and are very interested in books and stories. Children persevere in their interactions with staff because they know that what they say will be valued. Older children demonstrate very good language skills. Younger children snuggle comfortably with an adult for a book; older children listen to stories with interest, joining in enthusiastically when appropriate. Children develop the necessary manipulative skills to aid their mark making. Older children have a clear understanding about print carrying meaning and they recognise familiar letters. However, children rarely use these skills for a purpose, for example, to label their work; this is usually done by adults.

Independence is encouraged throughout the nursery. Children enjoy the meals, which are freshly cooked on the premises and their health benefits from the ample portions of fresh fruit and vegetables that they serve themselves every day. They learn to enjoy a healthy lifestyle, children can explain why they are washing their hands and they have great fun developing their physical skills and strength as they play in the garden. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, younger children develop the necessary physical skills such as pulling themselves up

and climbing onto the sofa; this helps them to keep themselves safe both in nursery and at home. Toddlers develop these skills further on the climbing frame or scooters outside. Older children learn to follow sensible procedures for going up and down the stairs and for using knives to prepare afternoon tea.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.