

Little Stars

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY271568
Inspection date	30/06/2009
Inspector	Janet Maria Moutter

Setting address	The Swindon College Nursery, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 1DY
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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 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

Little Stars Nursery opened in 2003 and operates from premises on the site of North Star College, Swindon and is a privately owned nursery. It is on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children use an open plan area for children under two years includes two play areas. The areas for children between two and three years include a main play room, separate creative room, nappy changing room, sensory/soft play room and shared toilet facilities with pre-school. There is a large outside area with grass, patio and several growing and digging areas. There is a separate outdoor play area for the youngest children. The nursery serves the students and staff of the college and the surrounding community.

A maximum of 65 children under eight years may attend the nursery on a sessional and full-time basis at any one time. There are currently 89 children on roll within the early years age group. Of these, 43 children receive funding for nursery education. There are currently no children attending within the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is open each week day for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from Monday to Thursday from 08.00 to 17.30, and on Friday from 08.00 to 17.00. The Nursery support children with English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 15 staff and the manager. All staff including the manager hold early years qualifications. Regular support is received from the local authority. The nursery is an accredited setting to use 'Tinytalk UK', baby sign language.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. Each child thrives in this nursery, whatever their individual needs, because of high expectations for promoting all aspects of children's welfare and learning with success. The entire staff team takes responsibility for this through implementing their highly effective systems of inclusive practice that recognises that each child in their care is unique. Parents enjoy excellent partnerships with staff which contribute significantly to ensuring the individual needs of each child are effectively identified and met. Staff build first-rate links with local and professional services and early years practitioners, to make sure that all children, and where appropriate families, are fully supported to enable positive progress. The staff team regularly evaluate their practice and are skilled at identifying areas for future improvement in order to promote very positive outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to develop the outside play area to offer children freedom to explore and experience activities across all six areas of learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery's success in implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) so effectively results from excellent leadership. The nursery temporary manager draws all available resources to improve outcomes for children, including those with additional needs. Resources include the experienced and qualified staff along with support from the college and the local children's centre. The wider partnerships, along with an proactive partnership with parents, contribute substantially to improving children's care and progress in all aspects of learning. Partnerships with approximately 15 schools are fully effective and this supports the smooth transition from nursery to school for each child.

Comprehensive systems for review and self evaluation highlight areas for development accurately. Monitoring systems are highly effective and include monthly updates from each room on the children's ongoing progress and staff appraisals to ensure staff are accessing learning in both child development and the latest legislation from government departments. This extremely enthusiastic approach by the staff team enables them to keep the nursery abreast of their current requirements. Robust systems ensure children are cared for by people who are suitable to work with children. Children are safeguarded exceedingly well.

The senior management team has a clear vision for the future of the nursery and all staff are invited to contribute their views and parents' suggestions for improvement are listened to and often acted on. The involvement of staff in such processes contributes to them feeling valued. They speak enthusiastically of their enjoyment at working in this nursery and of the encouragement they receive to gain further qualifications. Mentoring systems, such as with students and work experience pupils, are highly effective in raising the quality of adult interaction with children throughout the nursery, so contributing to higher standards.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children blossom in the excellent care of the sensitive adults who clearly enjoy their relationships with children and their families. There are robust procedures in place to ensure children's continuing safety. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Children are encouraged to learn about keeping themselves safe. Children are reminded about personal safety and hygiene. They have made a 'Keeping Safe' pictorial book of their environment, containing their own words and picture prompts of what they have identified as being unsafe and how they can prevent accidents. Hats and wet weather items of clothing are stored at child height for ease of access so there are increased opportunities for children to enjoy and achieve outside in all weathers. Children's health is effectively promoted, as they learn the basics of healthy living through regular routines and adult-led activities, such as at lunch time. They tuck into freshly cooked and nutritious food and all, including babies, enjoy worthwhile periods outside in the fresh air.

Staff promote a positive approach consistently, to which children respond well. They know just what staff expect of them; are keen to join in and quickly become immersed in their experiences, behaving extremely well. Any minor disagreements are immediately nipped in the bud. The nursery is a busy hive of industrious play.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development in relation to their starting points and subsequent achievements. The key person system means that children's progress is regularly and methodically observed and noted in their individual folders; therefore, planning is responsive to individual children's interests and identified next steps in learning needs. Staff are able to plan an exciting environment which is stimulating and challenging to all children inside the nursery. However, the enclosed outside area play does not offer all six areas of learning, for each child, throughout the nursery day.

Children confidently select resources and use them to explore shape, size, position and quantity when the older children serve themselves lunch. Children regularly count in every day activities and can easily recognise written numerals, such as laying the table, estimating how many pieces of cutlery are needed or tidying up and matching coloured dishes to the same coloured tiny animals. Staff are deployed very well, maximising the support given to children and thereby helping them to be confident while allowing them the chance to try things out. For example, role play in home corners covers all aspects of learning, the children measure and estimate what they will need such as the different sized rollers, brushes, in the extremely well stocked hairdresser's salon. Staff are on hand to act as clients and extend the children's learning. Each room has their own very worthwhile activities to promote aspects of learning and for the children to start to understand about themselves and how they fit into this environment.

Children's hand to eye co-ordination is well developed as they explore the 'practical life' tasks available. Toddlers use a story time line, sticky familiar pictures of everyday objects, to talk about what they see and know, while others are content to write with both hands on the mark making board. All the children have plenty of opportunities each day to extend their physical development and enjoy climbing and balancing on large apparatus in their outdoor play area. They also enjoy planting and growing vegetables and herbs, the children predict what the seeds will grow into. They have the chance to see what they have grown as they excitedly unearth the potatoes and lots of different suggestions are made, by the children, of what they will do with them when they take them home, 'I'm going to cook and mash mine and eat it all up'.

Children enjoy using their imaginations to explore creative play, frequently using paint and other media to create interesting and individual artwork. Children are encouraged to initiate activities and freely explore and express themselves with an abundant range of materials and resources. For example, a child talks about swimming, this progresses to a small group of children developing the swimming/water theme. They help a staff member to 'lay the sea', as they busily discuss the sounds they make as they walk bare foot across the make believe water. Children are able to feel the texture and talk about the rustle of the tissue paper, matched with the crackle of cellophane paper as they explore this

simulation, the children are encouraged to talk about colours, depths of water and so on until they are ready to move on to another purposeful play opportunity. Across the nursery children enjoy warm and meaningful interactions with staff who clearly enjoy their time with children. Children show great pleasure in their sense of belonging, their contributions are highly valued and all are fully included in activities throughout the nursery.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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