

Little Smarties

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY319325
Inspection date	19/02/2009
Inspector	Rachel Wyatt
Setting address	Two Cedars, Fairmount Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 7AQ
Telephone number	01242 577581
Email	
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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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 Smarties is privately owned and registered in 2005. The nursery operates from a large detached property in a residential area close to Cheltenham town centre. Children are looked after on the ground and first floors. There are a few steps to the main entrance and within the ground floor areas and stairs to the first floor. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round except for bank holidays and a week over the Christmas period. The nursery has pet pigs, pygmy goats, guinea pigs and tropical fish.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 42 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 67 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is also registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are no children on roll in the older age group.

There are 16 members of staff who work with the children, of whom 15 hold or are working towards an appropriate early years qualification to at least National Vocational Qualification Level 2. The owner and a member of staff are working towards Early Years Professional Status. The nursery also employs a cook, a maintenance person and a cleaner. The setting offers funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. All aspects of children's welfare, learning and development are very successfully promoted because staff have an excellent knowledge of each child's individual needs. A strong partnership with parents is a key strength and ensures children are safe, secure and fully included. High priority is given to everyone working together to ensure each child is valued, their views and ideas are encouraged and their achievements celebrated. The provider, manager and staff team are all highly motivated and committed to the ongoing development of the setting. They confidently use the results of their robust monitoring and evaluation to identify and promptly address priorities for improvement as well as initiating clear plans for the future, resulting in a service that is very responsive to the needs of all the children and families who attend.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further opportunities for older and more able children to use more

challenging balancing and climbing equipment.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Babies and children thrive in the welcoming, child-orientated setting where their needs are fully supported by a caring, capable and skilful team of adults. From the outset strong partnerships with parents are encouraged so that they and staff, including each child's key person, consistently work together to very effectively promote all aspects of children's care and learning. Parents are very well informed about how the setting operates and they receive regular newsletters updating them on matters affecting the nursery plus information about activities, topics and ideas to follow up at home. Parents' and carers' views are sought regularly and promptly acted upon resulting, for example, in changes to menus to focus on organic meals, redecoration of the setting and alterations to back-up staffing arrangements. Should parents have any concerns, a clearly expressed complaints policy outlines their rights and the process, including how to contact Ofsted. Children all benefit from the close links established with other settings, such as local schools, and with other agencies such as speech and language therapists who are involved in their care.

Children are fully safeguarded. Adults working with children clearly understand their responsibility to protect them from harm and to implement the setting's robust safeguarding procedures. As a result, staff confidently and ably monitor children's behaviour and physical well-being and know how to take prompt appropriate action should they have any concerns. Comprehensive well-organised documentation ensures all required information is exchanged and recorded in order to promote each child's welfare, health and safety, including details about their family circumstances, who may collect them and to ensure they have swift, appropriate medical attention in an emergency. Thorough recruitment and staff development procedures also promote children's welfare and ensure all adults are suitable, experienced and have access to regular relevant training.

Children's health and safety are given high priority. Detailed information is obtained and understood regarding each child's medical history, individual health, dietary and care needs. Thorough medication, accident and ill-health procedures ensure children are very well looked after and have prompt appropriate treatment. Well-managed relaxed sleep and hygiene routines ensure babies and children are rested and comfortable. Meals are very varied, nutritious and much enjoyed. Food is safely stored and freshly prepared. Babies and children safely explore their surroundings in very comfortable, clean and secure surroundings. All aspects of safety are carefully monitored, and hazards promptly identified and addressed, through comprehensive risk assessments and a range of regular safety checks.

Children and their families benefit from the setting's commitment to reviewing its practice and to making improvements. Parents' and children's views are very much taken into account, resulting for instance, in children of all ages consistently enjoying child-initiated play and experiences. All those working in the setting are actively involved in monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness and are highly

motivated to implement changes such as introducing home visits with new children and their families, extending the range of outdoor activities to cover all areas of the curriculum, and increasing babies' opportunities to take part in messy play.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children thrive in a most welcoming learning environment. Rooms are inviting and indoor and outdoor areas are very well resourced with stimulating toys, equipment and books which children can help themselves to. Children are active learners. They are busy, purposeful and creative, with many rewarding opportunities for exploratory and creative play when they can fully investigate a range of textures, creative media and natural resources.

Children's very good progress is supported by excellent assessment and planning systems. In addition to staff's competent and consistent observations, parents make valuable contributions to their child's learning and development. Information obtained from parents really helps staff to establish a child's developmental starting points. Thereafter, each child's key person and parents work closely to regularly review his/her achievements and to agree learning priorities. Throughout the nursery sharing of children's achievements is reflected in many ways, including displaying parents' comments about their child's 'wow' moments.

Children's choices, interests and needs are central to the planning and organisation of activities. Staff actively engage with all children to ensure their ideas and interests, plus information from assessments are adeptly incorporated into planning. For example, toddlers' interest in different emergency vehicles has prompted their current topic, whilst older children suggested a 'Big cook, Little cook' topic because they enjoyed food tasting whilst celebrating Chinese New Year. Spontaneous learning opportunities initiated by children are skilfully facilitated by staff, enhancing children's self-esteem and their confidence to direct their own learning. For example, a group of children decide to be pirates. Staff help them to create a backdrop of sand and sea (blue paper) on which they can sail in their 'pirate's ship' made from a large box complete with the children's selection of 'flags', whilst seeking treasure (real coins, shells and glitter). Sustained, much enjoyed, and at times dramatic, play ensues, and children competently demonstrate a wide range of abilities. They confidently express and follow up their ideas; think critically and imaginatively as they work collaboratively to create a vivid scene, and extend their knowledge of features of the natural world and about the use and value of money.

The nursery very successfully promotes children's life skills. Babies and children are fully supported to be confident in their communications and relationships with each other. Babies delight in seeing pictures of themselves and their friends in their 'family' books which are much appreciated in all areas of the nursery. Children behave well, thriving in an environment of mutual affection and respect, where friendship, playing together and being caring are promoted. Children respond readily to the staff's realistic, calmly expressed, expectations and adults are receptive and reassuring, recognising the importance of children knowing what is happening next and being praised for their efforts. Children also understand the

importance of behaving in ways that are safe for themselves and others such as handling equipment safely, learning about road safety and having opportunities to sensitively explore different situations relating to their personal welfare. Children develop a sound awareness of aspects of a healthy lifestyle. They are energetic and physically competent, although more able and older children lack opportunities to consistently use more challenging equipment. Babies and children make healthy choices about what they eat and drink and become increasingly knowledgeable about the importance of good personal hygiene.

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

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