



## **Sherfield Little Gems**

Inspection report for early years provision

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY293642   |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 22 November 2005   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Carol Patricia Willett   |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Sherfield School, Reading Road, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 0HT |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01256 884800   |
| <b>E-mail</b>                  |  |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | GEMS Ltd (Global Education Management Systems)                                 |
| <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?

Sherfield Little Gems was registered in 2004. It is a privately owned nursery and kindergarten facility of Sherfield School which is managed by Global Education Management Systems. It is set in the grounds of Sherfield School in Sherfield, Hampshire, which is a village situated on the A33 between Basingstoke and Reading.

The setting forms part of the school which takes children from 2 to 18 years. Children

in the nursery and kindergarten have access to two classrooms, soft play activity room and library/quiet area. Children in the reception class receive nursery grant funding. They have use of a classroom, role play room and learning zone art room. All children have access to the dance studio and sports hall and other facilities within the school. There are toilet and wash facilities and an outside play area. There are plans to increase provision.

Little Gems is registered for 48 children from 2 years to under 8 years. They open Monday to Friday from 07:30 until 18:00, with most children attending from 08:30 till 15:30, for 48 weeks of the year. Wrap around care is offered before and after school to children under 8 years in Little Gems. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 55 children on roll with 39 of 3 and 4 year olds being in receipt of nursery funding.

The setting makes provision for children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language, though none are currently attending.

A team of 9 members of staff work with the children, all have a recognised Early Years or teaching qualification. Children are offered additional activities including music, gym and Spanish, where specialist teachers come in to work with the children.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities to develop their physical skills and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Staff make very good use of the outside area and provide children with daily opportunities to play outside and enjoy the fresh air. Children access a variety of resources when playing outside to develop their physical skills such as balls, hoops and beanbags. Children are confident and develop their gross motor skills using a range of outdoor equipment, such as wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. Older children use the sports hall and dancing studio to further enhance their skills and confidence and develop their awareness of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy activities including dance workshops, judo and short tennis in the out of school club.

Lunch and snack times are sociable occasions and children eat healthy nutritious meals. They have plenty of choice from a varied, balanced menu. Menus are sent home weekly and staff discuss and record individual children's dietary requirements and parental preferences about food and drink. This ensures children's health and dietary needs are effectively met. Staff miss opportunities to encourage children's independence skills at snack time as they do not pour their own drinks and children sometimes wait for a long time before they get their fruit.

Children are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care and are aware of the importance of personal hygiene. Staff give gentle reminders to children about washing their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. Several staff hold first aid certificates and all of the required documentation to record accidents and for

the administration of medication is in place. Parents sign most of the completed paperwork which ensures they are fully aware of any accidents or incidents that have happened to their child. Medication records are not signed by parents when medicine has been administered. Accident records are loose leafed and are not numbered.

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

The provision is good.

The premises are bright, clean and well maintained with adequate heating and ventilation. Staff use notice boards to display children's work and photos of them at play. This develops their sense of belonging and self esteem, creating a welcoming environment for children. Children and parents are greeted warmly by staff so children arrive happily into the nursery and settle quickly to activities with their friends. Staff prepare the activities prior to the children arriving at the beginning of the day and after lunch. This creates a stimulating and child centred environment. Children develop their independence and confidence as they select the toys and resources from the low shelving and storage units. Children access a wide range of good quality toys, resources and activities, which are age and stage appropriate, to ensure they make good progress in all areas of development.

Children play and learn freely in a safe and secure environment where staff identify and minimise most risks to children through safety checks within the setting and the outside areas. There are excellent security systems and children's safety and security is promoted by locked doors to the main entrance which have coded push buttons. Daily risk assessments are not fully effective as the bands for children to wear at sand play are placed on the banister rail at the top of the stairs in the play room. This creates a potential risk to children. Children are developing an awareness of keeping themselves safe, for example talking to the staff member about holding onto the banister when going downstairs and not running in the playrooms. Children and staff practise regular evacuation procedures

Children's welfare and safety is protected. There are good recruitment and induction procedures in place to ensure they have access to well qualified, experienced, caring staff who have been vetted. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and the signs and symptoms of child abuse and are aware of the measures needed to keep children safe should they have a concern.

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

The provision is good.

Children receive good quality care. They are happy and confident in their environment as staff are warm, caring and attentive and develop good relationships with the children. Children enjoy playing with the resources and join in activities with enthusiasm. They confidently approach each other, staff and visitors to the setting and engage them in conversation, sharing their experiences. Children select the resources they wish to play with from the wide range available. Children are comfortable in their environment and play happily with each other. Older children

develop friendships with their peers. They hold hands and share resources, asking to sit with their friends. Staff have a good knowledge of the Birth to Three Matters framework and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. They plan a varied and fun curriculum for all children in their care which enables children to make good progress in all areas of development.

## Nursery Education

The quality of nursery education is good. Children take part in the range of activities and use resources enthusiastically. Staff set out the activities prior to children arriving and create a welcoming environment. Children take part in a wide range of activities to allow them to make progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals as staff plan effectively. Children develop their independence skills as they choose from the range of activities and resources available to them. Staff encourage the children to join in with conversations and to contribute their thoughts and feelings at circle times. Children enjoy books and stories and most children are able to sit and listen at large group times. Children are beginning to be aware that print carries meaning and confidently recognise their names as they enter the setting to hang up their coats and find their drawers. Children are confident in their mark making skills and practise these within the daily routines, for example at easel painting and freely chosen drawing activities. Staff annotate children's drawings with their words which develops children's understanding that print carries meaning. Older children in the reception class make very good progress in reading and writing skills. This is achieved in all areas of development and is supported by the range of well planned activities and good teaching skills. Most of the children confidently express their thoughts, feelings and ideas ,for example, about bullying . They enjoy a fun, imaginary visit to the theatre to develop number recognition. Staff provide children with a good range of opportunities and resources to develop their imaginative skills, such as role-play in the setting, although more attention to detail could further enhance children's play. Children in the nursery and kindergarten enjoy fun and lively music sessions where they develop their knowledge of music, tempo and imagination by matching actions to the sounds of the music. Children explore colour and texture through a range of planned activities where they make individual and group collages for room displays. Creative development needs further improvement in the kindergarten to enable children to use their own imagination and free creative expression in adult led craft and in the role play areas. Children need more independent access to a greater range of recycled and craft resources, tools and media.

Children are learning to take turns and show co-operation in their play as staff encourage the children to share the toys and resources and help pack away at snack time. Children receive praise and encouragement and this helps develop and build their self-esteem. Children use mathematical language as they talk about larger and smaller items. They are confident in their use of numbers in their everyday play, for example as they play number lotto and other games and count how many children are playing at the sand tray. Staff in the kindergarten miss opportunities to develop and use simple calculation skills and practical problem solving in some everyday activities, such as counting the children and cups at snack time. Children learn about the world around them through different themes and topics. They visit the local flour mill and transport museum and they are becoming aware of the traditions and

cultures of other people. They learn about their own and other cultures when they take home Kindie bear and report back what he has been doing. They develop an awareness of other languages and cultures as they learn Spanish at planned language sessions with a specialist teacher and through wall displays. Children have very good opportunities and resources to develop their large and small muscle skills. They freely access the outside and soft play area within the daily routine. Manipulative skills develop well as they access a wide range of jigsaws, construction toys and tools such as rolling pins, pencils and scissors.

Teaching and learning is good. Staff discuss the children with parents and have a good knowledge of their individual family backgrounds, needs and preferences. Planning covers all areas of learning and staff undertake regular observations of children in free play and planned activities to assess their progress to the early learning goals. Staff use these to update the children's development records which are shared with parents, both on an informal and formal basis. Focus activity planning in the kindergarten needs to be developed to show how activities can be adapted for children learning at different rates and need to be effectively evaluated to use in the planning of the children's next steps. Staff use a good range of teaching and consolidation techniques, such as reviewing the mornings activities and questioning to extend and reinforce children's learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well, grow in confidence, develop a sense of belonging and a clear sense of self as they and their parents develop strong relationships with the friendly, caring staff team. The children are warmly greeted on arrival. Most happily leave their parents and carers seeking out their friends and settle quickly into activities that interest them. Staff value the children as individuals and have a sound knowledge of their needs through daily discussions with parents and each other and through observations of the children. Children learn about their own and other cultures through a range of resources and activities such as craft, food tasting and visits to local places such as the flour mill and transport museum. Children take Kindie bear home and on holiday and share with the other children what he has done with them.

Children behave very well and are very cooperative. They learn what is right and wrong as they respond well to the consistent boundaries and gentle effective reminders from staff, for example, about not throwing toys and sharing. They understand and respond to simple rules such as putting on aprons and helping to pack away for snack time. Staff are very sensitive to the children's needs, gently supporting them when they make mistakes or behave unacceptably. They act as good role models and offer meaningful praise and encouragement for children's efforts and achievements. They talk calmly to the children, treating them with respect. Children become aware of acceptable behaviour such as putting up their hands if they want to speak at circle time and listening to others as they are sensitively supported by the staff. Older children understand when someone has the seal finger puppet they all must listen. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Staff and parents exchange information at each end of the session. They work together to ensure children settle easily into the nursery, using a flexible settling in procedure, and to enable children's individual needs to be met. Parents provide written information when their child starts at the setting. This ensures staff are fully aware of children's needs and preferences in their play. Parents receive comprehensive and accurate information about the setting through the prospectus, notice boards and regular newsletters. They receive excellent information about the Foundation Stage through the prospectus, newsletters, notices and the verbal communication that takes place each day. They are invited to information sessions and see displays of the children completing activities linked to the areas of development. Staff invite parents to regular evenings where they have further opportunities to discuss their child's progress and view their work. Parents are extremely happy with the care and education their children receive, valuing the friendly caring staff and the open door policy. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to meet with other parents, and informally with staff, in the parents' cafeteria.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children play and learn in an environment which is organised effectively to promote all areas of development and meet the children's needs. Resources and activities are freely available to all the children. Staff work well together and have a good knowledge of their individual responsibilities and roles within the setting. They are well deployed and spend their time playing and working with the children. The head of the lower school offers good support to the nursery and kindergarten staff. She regularly reviews the extensive policies and procedures and ensures the required documentation is in place. The documentation for accident and medication recording needs minor adjustments. All staff have undertaken the vetting procedure and this ensures children's safety and welfare within the nursery. Staff have a sound knowledge of the individual children through observations, discussion with parents and the developmental records that are in place. Clear policies and procedures support staff in working very successfully in partnership with parents and carers.

Leadership and management are good. Children make good progress to the early learning goals. Their wellbeing and development is promoted as staff have a good knowledge of the Birth to Three Matters framework, curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and National Standards for day care. Staff attend training both internally and externally to update their knowledge and skills. There are good induction and appraisal systems in place. Staff meet regularly to discuss individual children's progress, daily routines, planning and staff training needs and requests. They discuss issues on a daily basis at the beginning of each day. There are good systems in place to monitor most aspects of the provision, which includes staff performance, and there is a development plan in place which identifies areas for improvement. These include expansion of the facilities to use the first floor of the building and the development of activities available in the outside play area. Short term activity planning needs developing to enhance the quality of activity and to ensure activities are sufficiently challenging for all children. Children are protected by

the very good recruitment and induction procedures that are in place and have access to caring, experienced adults who support their education. This is backed up by an extensive range of relevant policies, procedures and documentation which work well in practice to keep children safe, promote their well-being and support their development. Some minor adjustments are needed to accident and medication records. 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**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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):

- improve the organisation of snack time to further develop children's independence skills and maximise learning opportunities
- further develop daily risk assessment procedures to ensure all risks are identified to ensure children's safety
- further improve recording of accident and medication records

#### **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):

- use daily routines to develop children's ability to solve practical maths problems
- improve children's creative development by providing opportunities for children to independently access a wide range of recycled materials to enable them to develop their own props and enrich their role play
- provide more opportunities for children to independently use a variety of media, tools and resources and joining materials to enable them to develop their own imagination and creativity in adult led craft
- develop focus activity planning to show how activities can be adapted for children learning at different rates and evaluate activities to show how observations are used to plan children's next steps in learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)