



## Smarties Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	305305
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 November 2005
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<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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Smarties Day Nursery is situated in Cotton Edmunds, a rural area approximately five miles from Chester. The nursery has been in existence since 1989 and has three distinct buildings which provide nursery accommodation and an out of school provision and holiday play scheme in a new purpose built building. The nursery is surrounded by open fields, some of which belong to the provision and provide additional outdoor space. A swimming pool is available on an adjacent, secure site

and access to this is strictly controlled by qualified staff. There is a large and experienced staff group, many of whom have been with the nursery for fourteen years. All staff have appropriate childcare qualifications. There are currently 142 children on roll and 34 funded three and four year olds. There are no children with English as a second language and no children attending with Special Educational Needs.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy an outstanding range of energetic and physical activities in the outdoor play areas. They move around the environment, confidently and with good control. They show a very good awareness of space, themselves and others and manoeuvre wheeled vehicles around obstacles skilfully. During physical education sessions children learn to move in a variety of ways as they practice basket ball skills, running, jumping and skipping. Children are learning to listen to their bodies and are able to rest and be active according to their needs. They talk about the cold and warmth on a frosty, foggy morning.

They have daily access to an extensive range of physical play activities. They show excitement as they competently climb, balance, travel over, under and through and skilfully change speed and direction as they enjoy the spacious outdoor play areas. Children develop confidence when using the variety of equipment offered, staff are able to skilfully balance the supervision of children and equipment with the need to allow children to take risks and develop skills such as climbing and using balancing equipment. They are given wide and varied opportunities to freely choose from equipment to stimulate development, such as ride on toys, imaginative toys, balls and hoops. Children have daily exercise through participating in various activities, such as, nature walks within the vast grounds, ball games, sports activities and dance. Children develop competent small physical skills through access to an extensive range of equipment and activities. They competently use scissors, a computer keyboard and mouse, a variety of craft materials when being creative, writing materials and join together pieces, when using the wide variety of construction equipment.

Children within the nursery and out of school club consider healthy eating as they look at foods from around the world and what is good for them. A detailed sick child policy and procedure ensures staff are alert to children who might be feeling unwell and that any necessary arrangements are made. Effective hygiene routines and procedures are employed by care staff and the cooks when preparing meals and snacks for the children ensuring they are healthy and kept free from infection at all times.

Children's benefit from an excellent, varied, healthy and nutritious diet. Healthy eating is promoted through the availability of fresh fruit and snacks. Home made lamb stew delighted the children as they enjoyed their freshly prepared lunch. Children are also

learning about healthy foods during discussions and the benefits of healthy choices with staff who work with parents to encourage children to try new foods.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety and welfare is promoted well because they are cared for in a well planned, highly effective and organised environment which is conducive to their very good learning, development and enjoyment. Children are well cared for in rooms that are organised according to age, well set out and prepared prior to the children's arrival. Children enjoy a vast range of activities within the extensive and safe outdoor play space. This space is well used to provide the children with a range of different play experiences throughout the day. Children within the out of school club freely access activities either indoors or outdoors, when weather permits. Children are cared for in a warm, secure and safe environment which provide a welcoming atmosphere, which enhances safety and helps children settle easily and develop a strong sense of community. Children's work is displayed prominently, further helping to develop their sense of belonging. Rooms are arranged effectively to provide different areas for play, rest and snacks. Children are able to move around safely in the very well organised environment. They have access to a wide range of excellent, stimulating, high quality resources which are frequently checked for safety. Toys and equipment are of a very high standard and are suitable for different ages and abilities, meeting children's needs effectively. Children independently and confidently choose from these during their play. Resources are organised in such a way that encourages safe, independent choice and accessibility.

Children access a wide range of toys and equipment which is continually built upon by the setting. These resources are well used to support an excellent programme of themes and activities. Children are developing competent independence skills as they self select toys and equipment from those on offer. Staff use the Birth to three framework to plan suitable activities for this age range. Children are able to explore and develop specific skills because staff give appropriate support and interaction. Children access toys and equipment which is checked regularly for safety and hygiene to ensure their safety at all times.

Children are well protected through the staff having an excellent knowledge of the child protection procedures that are in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures. Children's safety is further promoted by the required parental permissions and documentation for keeping the children safe being in place. Risk of accidental injury to children is minimised because staff are extremely vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff, for example, about the importance of running only in the designated outdoor play area because of the danger of hurting themselves or others. Staff have an excellent understanding and knowledge of child abuse and the signs to look for.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school. They are extremely confident, motivated and self-assured. They achieve well because staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as Birth to three matters and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide high quality care and education. Children attending the after school club enjoy a wide variety of activities and opportunities, which encourage their enjoyment within a relaxed and friendly environment. Children across the whole provision enjoy well planned activities which are supported by high staff ratios. A wide range of resources are extremely well used to support activities covering a variety of play experiences, for example, after school children have opportunities to relax and have fun.

Staff establish positive relationships with children, helping those who are new to settle, making them feel secure and showing sensitivity to their individual needs. All children arrive happy and eager to participate. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Early communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality adult-child interactions.

Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences, for example, older children in the nursery enjoy talking about winter, comparing feelings and discussing how it feels to be cold and warm and looking at the fog. They are excited and vibrant as they engage in dressing as fire crew and preparing and making a fire engine, which they change and expand to accommodate new members in the group.

#### Nursery Education

The quality of the teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are eager and excited about learning. The activities and experiences provided are exceptionally well matched to children's needs and interests. Teaching is rooted in expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage, varied, exciting and sometimes innovative. Relationships are excellent. Teaching highly motivates children so that they are stimulated and they have high levels of concentration. They become absorbed in activities and make very rapid progress. Staff fully appreciate the importance allowing children to play at their own pace as part of the learning process. They allow activities to continue beyond the scheduled time if it is sustaining their interest.

Staff know the children well. Assessment is rigorous and the information gained is used very effectively to guide planning. The experiences for all children are rich, varied and imaginative and meet the needs of all children exceedingly well. Staff are aware of how individual children learn and adapt activities to build on children's interests. For example writing materials are positioned in different play areas to specifically encourage some children who are not interested in developing their writing skills to make their mark whilst pursuing other activities.

Children are confident and effective communicators. They use structured sentences to express their feelings, to give descriptions and to make requests. Staff encourage children to think by using open questions to challenge children's thinking and

language skills. A small group of younger children requested water play. They were shown the empty trough positioned away from the tap. The questioning engaged children in discussion and planning to organise the activity for their enjoyment. Children are animated in their play and are extremely imaginative. When playing fire fighters they use a map for directions, steering wheel and hoses. Children confidently count the chairs as they create the fire engine. When three more children become involved they calculate the additional number of chairs needed.

Children spontaneously use mathematical language and mathematical knowledge to solve problems, for example, when building a tower of blocks in the garden. The children work well together to successfully construct the tower. They make discoveries about balance and weight whilst using the different shaped and sized blocks. Children are adept at controlling the computer mouse to progress through the information technology programs. Children move with control and coordination around the different play environments. They skilfully kick and throw balls, roll hoops and balance their bodies. The older children are competent in lifting and carrying a chair safely. Activities such as writing, painting, and construction promote the children's fine physical skills.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The children's behaviour is exemplary. Children are well mannered and considerate towards adults and each other. They happily share, take turns and play cooperatively together. Practitioners are very skilled and sensitive in their management of children and their behaviour. They provide a highly stimulating and welcoming environment which fully reflects the children's backgrounds and the wider community. Out of school children are confident, motivated and independent. They enjoy helping to develop a wide variety of activities and opportunities, which encourages their enjoyment and participation within a relaxed and friendly environment. They understand the importance of rules treating others with respect.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities and outings to local places of interest. The children learn about the wider world. The nursery sponsors a child from Rwanda and regularly receives communication, including photographs, from the child which is shared with the children. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit from the very good partnership with parents and carers. Children's development and achievements are celebrated and shared with their parents and carers on a regular basis. Informal discussions upon collection of children, written records and attendance at parents evenings are used to keep parents and carers up to date with their child's progress and development. Parents and carers have access to and receive plenty of good information about the setting and what it has to offer in terms of care and education, themes, plans and information on the educational provision. Pre-school children's development and achievements are recorded and shared with parents and carers

regularly. The pre-school teacher gives detailed feedback to parents and carers on a regular basis to keep them informed of their child's progress in all areas.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. The leader has a clear vision and motivates staff through her enthusiasm and commitment for children to receive a high quality learning curriculum. Children benefit from the excellent leadership and management of the whole provision. The registered person and all staff work well together to ensure the provision of high quality care and education for all children. Senior staff undertake the regular monitoring of the provision looking at staff performance, training and development, activities and the curriculum. There are clear development plans for both staff and the provision as a whole. A clear recruitment and selection procedure is in place. Staff appointments are followed by a detailed induction which is conducted by a member of the staff team. Regular staff and yearly appraisals are conducted ensuring all staff are working in a consistent way across the provision and that training needs are met. Staff work as a vibrant, cohesive team who focus on their role and responsibilities to achieve the principles of the nursery. They consistently make excellent use of their time and resources to support children's learning. Continual and rigorous monitoring procedures enable practitioners to maintain the high standard of teaching.

Staff undertake additional training to enhance the quality of care provided. Staff training is funded by the management and this currently includes a staff member completing a masters degree. Staff are qualified and experienced in childcare, education and other areas. Staff are committed to and offered excellent opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge through various training courses. This has a positive impact on children's learning, development and welfare because staff keep abreast of new childcare initiatives.

Children enjoy a wide range of play experiences which are offered across well organised play spaces maximising their play and learning opportunities. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, is well maintained and regularly reviewed. The evaluation process is intrinsic in all aspects of the nursery which means the practitioners are able to recognise where they are successful in promoting learning and where aspects need improvement.

Overall, the needs of all children who attend are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous care and nursery education inspection recommended that the nursery work towards obtaining suitable accreditation for 'Quality Counts', and consider how staff could improve how they observe, record and plan the next steps of children's play and learning for children under three years. They were also asked to review the nursery fire evacuation procedure.

The nursery has been working for some time with the quality assurance programme towards the accreditation, they hope to complete this in the near future. The setting has also ensured that staff are trained to work effectively with the Birth to three framework and all staff carry out observations, which are appropriately recorded and plan for the next steps of young children's learning. Fire evacuation procedures are effectively carried out.

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

There are no complaints to report. 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)