



Little Stars Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY219327
Inspection date	22 May 2006
Inspector	Dinah Round
Setting Address	39 Penn Hill Avenue, Poole, Dorset, BH14 9LU
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Registered person	Catharine Kenyon
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Stars Day Nursery registered in 2002. It is situated in a residential area of Lower Parkstone, close to Poole town centre. The nursery is privately owned and operates from a large detached house that has been adapted to accommodate the nursery. This consists of four playrooms, set on two levels, with easy access to kitchen and toilet facilities. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area fitted with a safety surface. The nursery serves the local community and

welcomes children from a range of different backgrounds.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08.00 until 18.00 all year round, except for bank holidays and a week at Christmas. There are currently 99 children on roll between the ages of three months and eight years. This includes 32 children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children aged four to eight years attend after school and during school holidays. The nursery caters for children with special educational needs.

There are 10 staff who work directly with the children. The nursery manager has an NVQ level 3 in child care and education. The owner provides cover for the manager. Of the staff team, 7 members hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 2 or 3. A French teacher visits the nursery on a weekly basis. The nursery works in liaison with the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being provided with a healthy diet which includes a hot meal at lunch time. For example, children enjoy spaghetti bolognese, followed by jam roly poly and custard for lunch. Parents are able to provide a packed lunch if they prefer. Children are provided with snacks of fruit and biscuits, and have access to drinks throughout the day which ensures they do not get thirsty. Although, current systems are not sufficiently effective to ensure that babies individual food, and toddler's cups are clearly identifiable.

Children learn good hygiene practice through the daily routines. They wash their hands independently after using the toilet and before eating lunch. Staff have clear procedures such as, wearing protective gloves for nappy changing and regular use of anti-bacterial hand-gel. This minimises the risk of cross infection. Parents are made aware of the policy regarding the exclusion of children with infectious illnesses, which helps to reduce the spread of infection. Staff are clear of the importance to keep accident and medication records, although, some medication forms are not accurately maintained. This compromises children's health.

Children engage in physical activities on a daily basis, which helps to promote their physical development. They have regular access to outdoor play opportunities, which makes sure they get plenty of fresh air and exercise. Children have access to a range of outdoor equipment to practise skills to climb, slide and balance, with a separate area cordoned off for the older children. Planned activities involve children negotiating an obstacle course and dancing to music and movement games. Children enjoy using the parachute, and have fun as they shake it slowly, lift it up high and take turns to go underneath. Children use a range of tools with good control, for instance, pencils and paint brushes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment due to the effective security arrangements and procedures in place. For example, the front door is fitted with a security code and two high handles. This makes sure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. Sleeping babies are regularly checked by staff, however, the sleep arrangements in the toddler room are not sufficiently supervised to protect children. Safety equipment is securely in place and helps to reduce potential risks to children. This includes stair gates at different levels to prevent access to the stairs, and safety surface in the outside play area. Risk assessment procedures consist of daily visual checks by staff, and a pre-visit to proposed venues for any outings and trips.

Children take care when moving around the room. The furniture and resources are sufficiently well positioned to enable children to independently access them. For example, toilets and hand basins are fitted at levels so children can safely reach them. Resources are clean, and include a varied range of both indoor and outdoor age appropriate equipment.

Most staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and their responsibilities, which supports them in their role of keeping children safe. They are generally clear of the procedure to inform senior staff of any concerns, however, some are less secure of the possible signs and symptoms of child abuse. A child protection policy is made available to parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy coming to the nursery. They are involved in a suitable range of activities and experiences to help promote their development. Weekly planning systems are in place for the younger children, which include a range of sensory activities. The babies enjoy hearing familiar rhymes such as, 'wind a bobbin up' and begin to join in clapping. They benefit from the regular interaction by staff, and respond with giggles when playing 'peek-a-boo'.

The toddlers have some opportunities to develop their independence through the activities they are offered. Children enjoy using their senses to explore the different textures in the interesting collage activity, and carefully use the brushes to spread their own glue. Staff introduce different language to help the children think about the 'soft' and 'hard' textures. However, children are not always sufficiently occupied by the play experiences offered. For instance, they find the waffle shape activity too difficult and lose interest, and during the group story some children are talking and not listening. Children join in with enthusiasm as they sing and do the actions of 'The wheels on the bus' rhyme.

Preschool and school aged children have developed firm relationships with their peers and staff. They enjoy a varied range of activities and play experiences,

including regular outdoor play opportunities. The school age children have involvement in making decisions about their play, although there is no separate planning of activities for the after-school and holiday sessions. Children co-operate well together and happily take turns within their play such as, waiting patiently to use the silver paint.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage curriculum. The planning is linked to different topics and themes, and includes opportunities for free play, structured activities and daily outdoor play. Staff make sure all areas of learning are incorporated to offer children a wide range of experiences. However, planning does not clearly show how activities will be extended for older or more able children. Children's progress is sufficiently followed through the stepping stones in the 'All about me' books. However, on-going assessments are not regularly maintained to help identify how to move children onto the next step.

Staff plan an interesting range of activities through different topics which provide children with stimulating play opportunities. This includes regular outdoor play experiences to extend their learning and development. Relationships between staff and children are good, they encourage children to develop their independence well. Staff make effective use of stories to question children and encourage their thinking. For example, children enjoy talking about the 'spots' and 'stripes' on the pictures in the group story. During the current topic about 'Homes', staff explore different activities to help children think and talk about their own homes. However, staff do not always exploit opportunities to develop children's understanding of mathematical language, and problem solving in everyday situations. For example, during the parachute game, children are not encouraged to develop their number skills by counting how many balls have fallen out, how many are left in.

Children are confident and keen to get involved in activities. They are developing independence as they wash their hands and pour their own drinks at snack time. Children show consideration for others, and co-operate well as they take their turn to go underneath in the parachute game. Most children willingly speak out in the group discussion about the weather. They delight in passing round 'Marlon the monkey' as they share their news with others. Children listen carefully to stories, and happily join in with the actions during the 'bouncing book'. They have some opportunities to develop their mark making and emergent writing, and enjoy using paint brushes and water to draw their own houses outside.

Children are learning to count through planned activities such as, 'What time is it Mr Wolf'. Some children are able to count up to nineteen such as, when counting the numbers of ants they can see in the ant farm. However, children do not use counting, number and problem solving in practical activities and everyday routines. For example, during snack time children are not encouraged to count the number of chairs, cups, and pieces of fruit. Children have access to a range of resources to help them match and sort into shape and size.

Children are learning about changes and living things through interesting topics such

as, the lifecycle of the frog and growing sunflowers. They show great excitement as they look for the ants in the ant farm, and talk about what will happen if they escape. Children are developing their skills well in using the computer, and gain a sense of achievement as their pictures are printed out and displayed. They are gaining an understanding of the wider world through planned topics and activities. For instance, during a topic about 'All around the world', they made pizzas and practised carnival dancing. Children use their senses to explore the wide range of materials provided such as, playdough, jelly, paint, sand, gloop. They have regular opportunities to use their imagination in moving to music, and through art and craft activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. They develop a strong sense of belonging to the group as they see their artwork displayed around the room. Babies' individual routines are fully discussed with parents and respected. For example, staff follow their sleep routines and organise their meals when they wake up. This helps to ensure children feel secure and settled. Children's independence is fostered well which helps to build their confidence and self-esteem. Staff support children with additional needs and liaise closely with parents and outside agencies, which contributes towards the child's needs being met. Children are gaining a good awareness of the wider world through the planned topics and resources provided. For example, they learn about Chinese New Year and enjoy tasting rice & noodles, and some children are involved in weekly French lessons. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the staff's clear behaviour expectations and co-operate well during tidy up time. For example, staff encourage the toddlers to help put away the waffle shapes and reward them with praise and stickers. Pre-school children listen carefully to instructions and happily wait to take their turn during the parachute game. Staff provide good role models and encourage children to say 'please' and 'thank you' to others such as, at snack time.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive clear, detailed information about the provision, through the nursery prospectus, regular newsletters, notice boards. This makes sure they are kept well informed and up to date of any changes. There are good systems in place to ensure information is exchanged with parents about their child. This includes informal discussions with staff at the beginning and end of the day with all age groups. Staff working with the younger children complete daily sheets or individual communication books, which detail nappy changes, food eaten and activities children take part in. This ensures information about a child's welfare is successfully shared. Children's progress through the different areas of learning is shared with parents through the 'All about me' booklets during parents evenings.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the welcoming and friendly environment. The premises are well maintained to ensure children's safety, and have recently been re-decorated. The safe outdoor play area is incorporated in the planning daily and provides children with greater learning experiences. Key worker staff contribute towards meeting children's needs, however, organisation of sleeping arrangements is not effective in the toddler room. Rooms are sufficiently well organised to allow children to make their own choices, although, resources are not generally as accessible in the toddler room. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Detailed policies and procedures are in place to support the running of the nursery. This includes clear recruitment and vetting procedures to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff are sufficiently clear of the nursery's procedures and practices due to an induction programme which is followed for new staff. Documentation is kept secure, and is regularly reviewed and updated, however, some medication records are not accurately maintained.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and have regular opportunities to develop their skills through training. The pre-school supervisor has a positive attitude to continued development of the play provision, and supports the staff in developing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff work together well and on-going communication contributes towards the children's care and well being. Observations and assessments on the pre-school children are not regularly maintained. This impacts on the effectiveness of identifying how to help the children move on and reach their full potential. Staff are currently developing a system where the children's key worker will track children's progress on a regular basis.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were raised to; ensure the organisation of space and staffing met the needs of children aged two to five years; implement appropriate nappy changing and toilet facilities for two to three year olds; and to maintain good hygiene practices to ensure that cross-infection is limited.

The provider has developed a clear action plan to address the issues. Children are grouped according to their age, and the outdoor area is now used daily to provide greater space and play opportunities. A new toilet, hand basin and changing area has been provided for two to three year olds, and provides a clean and easily accessible facility for the children. Staff clearly follow the nursery hygiene procedures which is effective in minimising the risk of cross-infection to children. A new hand-dryer and soap dispenser provide better facilities for children in the pre-school room.

At the last nursery education inspection issues were raised to extend opportunities to access all areas of the curriculum on a regular basis, and provide independent access to books, mark making materials and creative resources to initiate their own art and design. Also to provide regular opportunities to develop and extend children's

learning of counting and solving simple number problems.

The rooms have been re-arranged and low storage units purchased to provide children with greater access to the resources. The writing materials and books are now freely accessible to children. Further mathematical resources have been purchased and more number games are included in the planning. However, opportunities to encourage children to use number and use problem solving in practical situations are not fully explored.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since the last inspection. In April 2005 concerns were raised in relation to National Standard 2; Organisation, regarding staffing ratios and National Standard 4; Physical environment, that space requirements were not being met.

Ofsted wrote to the provider and asked them to investigate. The provider's response did not clearly show how the National Standards were being met. Ofsted made an unannounced visit to the nursery in May 2005, observations were made of the day to day running of the nursery and documentation checked. An action was raised under National Standard 14, to keep Ofsted informed of significant changes. Ofsted is satisfied that the National Standards are being maintained, and the provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may include complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- develop further staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures

- review organisation of sleeping arrangements for children in the toddler room
- make sure that medication records are accurately maintained

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):

- increase opportunities for children to count, use number and engage in simple problem solving during everyday routines and practical situations
- improve systems in place to monitor children's progress, and use these to inform planning and provide sufficient challenges to help children move on to the next step.

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