



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 310284

DfES Number:

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	20/10/2004
Inspector Name	Susan, Helen Spencer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	St. Martins Pre-School Centre
Setting Address	Bowerham Road Lancaster Lancashire LA1 3JD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Smart Start Catterall Ltd 4152117
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Smart Start Catterall Ltd
Address	2 Higher Moorfield Catterall Preston Lancashire PR3 0LG

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

St Martins Pre School Centre has been registered since 1990. It is situated within St Martins College campus near to the centre of Lancaster. Local amenities include use of the sports centre, function hall and library, all on site.

Facilities for children comprise of two separate but adjacent buildings. There is a baby unit which has one large room with two smaller rooms off it, one is an art room and the other a soft play area. There is also an integral kitchen area. The nursery unit has two classrooms and a role-play room. There is a secure outdoor area next to the nursery.

The provision is available for children of students who attend the college and also children living in the wider community.

There is a fully qualified staff team of 17 members with the exception of two part time workers. They are led by a qualified and experienced manager. There is also a nursery teacher within the team. The centre is open for 48 weeks of the year Monday to Friday from 08:30 - 17:30 hours.

Registration is for a total of 56 children aged from 0 to 5 years.

The provision is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association. It received the 'Investors in People' award in August 2003 and is currently undertaking the National Day Nurseries Association 'Quality Counts' assurance scheme which has Investors in Children Accreditation.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

St. Martins Pre-School provides a very high standard of nursery education which enables all children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals. All areas of learning are promoted very effectively by a stimulating well-planned programme of activities and children make very good progress in them. Personal, social and emotional development is given high priority and is a strength of the pre-school.

Teaching is very good. Staff manage the children very well and have a close relationship with them. Staff give individual children an appropriate level of support and are most kind and caring towards them. Children are very well behaved and are developing their independence skills. They encourage all children to participate in the activities. Staff skilfully develop children's language by maintaining a dialogue with them and by asking questions which encourage them to think and talk about what they are doing. Group activities for the children are presented in an enthusiastic and lively manner and they are extended and challenged appropriately. Whilst the pre-school is very well-resourced in all areas of learning, children do not have a comfortable area in which to enjoy their books. Staff assess children's learning against the stepping stones and early learning goals and use this information to plan what children should do next.

The leadership and management at the pre-school is very good. The caring manager and committed teacher, together with a capable staff team who have a collaborative approach to all aspects of their work ensure that high standards are maintained for the children.

A very good relationship with parents and carers is formed as they are encouraged to share in their children's learnings. Staff keep careful records which provide a clear picture of children's progress and share this information with the parents.

What is being done well?

- Children benefit from very effective teaching, a well planned programme of interesting activities which takes into consideration the varying stages of development in all areas of learning and ensures children's individual needs are met.
- The pre-school centre benefits from both strong management and leadership, and they are very committed to the children and staff. The quality of teaching is outstandingly good as all staff are confident in their own understanding of the early learning goals.
- The programme for personal, social and emotional development is given high priority and it is very good. Children are developing a clear understanding of their own culture and those of other countries.

- Staff use very good strategies to promote good behaviour and consideration for others. They give children clear and consistent boundaries and help them understand the impact of unacceptable behaviour on others. They are calm and caring towards the children and are very good role models for them.
- The programme of learning in language and literacy is given high priority as children develop extremely well their language, reading and writing skills.
- Parents and carers are kept very well informed of their children's progress. There is an extensive range of books, and language and mathematical games, which they can borrow to help their child learn at home.

What needs to be improved?

- the book-corner to enable all children to comfortably enjoy the wide range of books which are already available to them.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in addressing the points for consideration. Staff ensure that the children enjoy a wide range of musical instruments and have regular access to them. A music specialist from the college visits the pre-school regularly and children benefit from the musical experiences that are provided.

Children are now given many good opportunities to develop their early writing skills and to use letters and familiar words in communicating ideas. They enjoy creating books about recent events, as for example the younger children are encouraged by staff to write their name and make marks about a walk around the college grounds to collect 'autumn leaves'. Older children create a wonderful book 'Brilliant Beans', which records their observations of germinating beans and some children confidently write several familiar words.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's development in this area is given high priority and is very good. Children enjoy coming to pre-school and are interested and motivated to learn. Their confidence and self-esteem are built up by staff who are very sensitive to their needs. Children behave very well. They are taught to share and take turns and to be polite and considerate to others. They choose between activities, select resources for themselves and take care of their personal needs, such as washing their hands.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from a well-planned programme which enables them to develop their skills in this area of learning. Children are keen to communicate with staff. They listen to well-read stories and enjoy sharing books with staff. They enthusiastically participate and recall the story of 'The Gruffalo'. Although children benefit from a wide range of books and use them appropriately the book-corner is not very comfortable. They are beginning to write their names and are encouraged to write words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from good individual support to help them count to 10 and to recognise shapes, colours and size. They enjoy a wide range of counting songs which encourage them to solve simple problems and to explore numbers as they increase and decrease, as they participate in and sing 'Five Little Monkeys'. Children use mathematical language with understanding which staff reinforce well as they participate in physical activities. Children create a chart and record their favourite fruit.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children notice the changes that occur, for example, when flour and water are mixed together as they enjoy a sensory experience. Children carefully make models from recycled tubes and boxes joined with glue and tape. They are taken for walks into the college grounds and collect autumn leaves and feed the goldfish in the pond. Children are developing very well their confidence in the use of information technology as they use a mouse with skill. They celebrate Christmas and Eid.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Outdoors children are set challenges to develop their physical skills. They balance along planks and climb with confidence on to a suspension bridge. Imaginative dance is enjoyed as children develop an awareness of space and others. Staff are on hand to give support and encourage new skills, such as helping children to enjoy parachute play. Children are taught to handle and control small objects, for example as they use pencil, paintbrush and glue sticks. They use cutlery with increasing skill.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children participate enthusiastically in music sessions as they use percussion instruments and sing tunefully 'Five Little Monkeys'. They have a wide range of opportunities to explore colour, texture and form using all their senses, as they enjoy creating 'autumn' pictures and mix paint to make the colours orange and brown. Sand and playdough are enjoyed. Children's creative development is outstandingly good, as staff provide a stimulating programme of activities which are linked to the topic.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improve the following:
- develop the book-corner to enable all children to comfortably enjoy the books.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.