

Sparkling Stars Montessori & Daycare

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sheila Harrison

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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).

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.

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Description of the setting

Sparkling Stars Montessori and Daycare registered in 2010 and is one of three settings owned by the providers. It is situated in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire and is a two-storey property with a secure outside play area.

The setting operates Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm all year round. The provision is registered to care for a maximum of 53 children in the early years age range at any one time. There are currently 62 children on roll. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language

The setting employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2, five hold a level 3 and five are working towards a level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Staff support children well in their learning and development and a mostly welcoming and generally inclusive environment is provided. A committed staff team effectively carry out policies and procedures designed to protect children from harm and to support their well-being. Positive steps have been taken to improve practice and raise standards. There is an adequate commitment by the manager and the staff team to maintain continuous improvement through self-evaluation and training. A strong partnership with parents contributes positively to the setting's knowledge of individual children and ensures their needs are met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure the health and safety policy includes procedures for identifying, reporting and dealing with hazards and faulty equipment
- ensure equipment and toys are suitable for their purpose and able to sustain a successful learning environment
- promote children's linguistic diversity and provide opportunities for children to use their home language in their play and learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well safeguarded. Recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are robust and ensure adults working with children are suitable to do so. Records required for safe and efficient management of the early years provision and to meet children's needs are maintained and effective. Staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues and procedures through their recent in-house training. The procedures and arrangements for safeguarding children are regularly reviewed. Staff each receive a copy of the updated safeguarding policy following the training sessions. Children's safety is assured through staff's diligence and their strong awareness of risk. Doors are checked to ensure they are shut and visitors are reminded that doors must be securely closed. There is effective implementation of risk assessments, although there are not clear procedures to ensure general maintenance of the property is done in a timely manner. For example, problems with the internal lighting are unresolved.

The setting has established a positive vision of the service, stating on their website of their 'desire for happy learning'. The managers are motivated to seek further improvement and are effective in focusing the setting's efforts on priorities. Suitable action has been taken by the provision, bringing about improvement for the children. Observation sheets now include the planned next steps and comments from the parents. Staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are eager to improve their skills through training. Their contributions are valued and they have begun to use the Ofsted self-evaluation form to help guide their improvements for the setting.

Children's learning is adequately supported as staff plan challenging and enjoyable activities and most of resources are available for them to freely choose. A planned teddy bears' picnic will allow children to search for hidden bears and record their findings. However, at other times, children's understanding is not fully extended by the use of flash cards without appropriate props. Some pieces of Montessori equipment have pieces missing or are not suitably displayed and this results in planned goals in learning and development are not being achieved consistently enough.

There is an environment that supports inclusion, whereby staff adequately identify children's need for additional assistance and, where appropriate, they work with parents and other professionals to ensure children get the support they need. Children are encouraged to feel valued and free from discrimination as the play materials reflect diversity. Staff are beginning to bring their children's home language into their play. They have observed the positive effects on playing a compact disc of music in a child's home language. However, this is not consistently adopted, limiting opportunities for all children to fully value their first-hand experiences and cultural backgrounds.

The setting develops strong and effective relationship with the parents and there is a good two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. This ensures that the needs of all children are met. Parents are well informed about all aspects of

their own child's achievements, well-being and development. There is a diary system and parents can request to see their child's key worker and learning journey at any time. They give valuable information on their child's starting points and this enables staff to provide activities that quickly interest the children to aid the settling-in process. Parents are invited to make comments in their child's learning journey and bring in objects linked with the letter and number of the week. Older, more able children take reading books home to share with their parents. The setting is in the process of setting up a parental forum and they ask parents and carers for their views. The comments received have informed the setting's practice. Parents are keen to comment positively on the improvements in the setting and their children's progress. There are no children on roll who also attend other early years provision. However, the manager understands the importance of working closely with other providers to support children's continuity of care when the need arises.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are making secure progress. They are happy and enjoy their time in the setting. Staff plan activities linked to children's interest. They assess children's learning well and the learning journeys show children's achievements. Next steps in learning are identified for each child and inform the planning. Children and babies are secure in the setting and are beginning to display a sense of belonging. Staff warmly describe aspects of their key children's development and nature. Children feel comfortable and confident and are well prepared for transition to the next room. They behave well and the staff are good role models. Staff are sensitive and appropriately praise the children's good manners.

Children are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities. They explore their surroundings with curiosity and interest. Staff are beginning to develop the outside area, with opportunities for babies to experience the fine weather. Older children can choose to dig in the soil, play with the puzzles and experiment with early handwriting using a clipboard. Children are learning about the world about them. They celebrate the birthdays of their friends and acknowledge their festivals. Older children enjoy a theme of the planets, creating exciting displays of the planets and the Earth.

Children's emerging speech and language is well supported as young children are encouraged to use the muscles in their mouths by blowing, sticking out their tongues and experimenting with sounds. Older children greatly enjoy song and story time, joining in 'down in the jungle' singing with expression in loud and soft voices. Staff promote the children's thinking skills as she asks them to guess 'what comes next' and their knowledge with 'what is this called' during a story.

Children's health is appropriately promoted. They have suitable opportunities to exercise in the fresh air during fine weather and indoors in wet weather. Children's physical skills are encouraged as they crawl through tunnels and throw bean bags indoors. Outside they use the slide competently, taking turns and taking safe risks as they walk down the steps on the smallest slide. Older children are beginning

hold a pencil to write their own names by following the dots. Children's understanding of safety issues is demonstrated through their play. Staff support their understanding of road safety through a role play activity. They move around the premises safely, holding the hand rail when using the stairs. Photographs of the children demonstrating the setting's rules, displayed at the children's level, reminds them how to carry the scissors and move their chairs carefully. Children's self-care skills are encouraged as they are supported to dress themselves. Staff show the children an easy way to put on their own coats.

Children have useful opportunities to be aware of healthy eating. The setting offers a vegetarian diet and staff, parents and children are in the process of developing new menus. Meal times are social occasions, although staff miss opportunities to encourage children's independence as they lay the table, serve the meals and pour the drinks for the children at lunch time. The staff are vigilant to ensure that children's allergies are taken into account. Suitable hygiene routines ensure children are protected from the spread of infection.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

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