

Little Swans Day Nursery

330 Yardley Road, Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8LT

Inspection date	22/04/2013
Previous inspection date	03/06/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children are at the heart of everything that happens and staff value each child as a unique individual, ensuring their needs are met exceptionally well.
- Children show high levels of energy and are fascinated in everything around them. As a result, they are motivated to play, persevere with tasks, learn and explore.
- Staff place considerable emphasis on settling children into the nursery and ensure transitions from home are smooth. This ensures that children are comfortable, relaxed and get off to the very best of starts. Transitional arrangements between rooms and to other settings are exceptionally well fostered, so that children readily adapt to change and new experiences.
- The high quality of teaching is instrumental in fully developing children's confidence and ability to play and work together happily. As a result, they make excellent progress in all areas of their learning and development.
- Communication with parents is a key strength. Staff go to considerable lengths to ensure they are engaged so that they feel valued and welcome in the nursery.
- All staff play an active part in reviewing what they do and planning for improvement. They are highly motivated and committed to providing the very best outcomes for all children.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke with the owner, manager and staff.
- The inspector observed activities and mealtimes.
- The inspector had a tour of the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to a representative from the parents group (Cygnetts).
- The inspector spoke to parents and children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the nursery owner.
- The inspector looked at policies and procedures, children's assessment records and the register.

Inspector

Sally Smith

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Swans Day Nursery registered in 2001. It is on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is privately owned and operates from converted premises in Yardley, Birmingham. There is an enclosed area for outdoor play. There is level access to all the ground floor areas. There are stairs to the first floor. The nursery serves the local area.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 114 children on roll. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 2 and 3. One member of staff has a degree in Early Childhood Studies. Two members of staff have degrees in Psychology. Two members of staff have foundation degrees in Early Childhood Studies and are working towards their honours classification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- continue to develop the exciting and stimulating outdoor area so that there are more printed words, for example, on signs, simple directions and information boards, and there are a greater range of displays to reflect numbers to stimulate children's excellent learning further.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The nursery is a hive of activity and children busily go about their play. Children are very confident and engage well with staff, peers and visitors. Several older children introduce themselves and ask the inspector who she is and why she is there. Younger children toddle over with their toys and engage her in their play, for example, throwing and rolling a ball. Staff work exceptionally hard to successfully meet the needs of every child, recognising their unique qualities and characteristics. Staff are very secure in their understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They work well as a cohesive and motivated team, all fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. This makes for a seamless, yet flexible routine.

Spontaneous and focused observations are used most effectively to inform planning and

enable staff to ably assist children in reaching their full potential. Thorough initial and ongoing assessment identifies what children can do, what they enjoy doing and what they need to do, to make progress in all areas of their learning and development. Staff use this information most effectively, along with their excellent understanding of child development, to plan challenges and stretch children's learning. Staff promote an atmosphere within the nursery that encourages all children to do their utmost. Staff build on their enthusiasm when developing the learning environments, ensuring that all resources are easily accessible. This means children can move things around to extend their ideas and combine resources in different ways.

The quality of teaching is excellent. Skilful adult involvement and appropriate questioning, such as how, why, what and where, helps children to work out solutions to their own problems. For example, children know and calculate how many children can play in a specific area. They use sand timers to work out how much time they have left on the computer before allowing another child to take their place. This is often done without prompting from staff. This helps children learn to think and understand for themselves. Children participate in all that they do with great enthusiasm, enjoying an excellent balance of individually planned activities. They have plenty of opportunities to make their own choices and decisions. They display high levels of confidence and independence as a direct result of the staff's excellent understanding of how children learn. Children are willing to 'try' and 'have a go' and, as a result, persevere with tasks, even if there is no end product. For example, older children make rockets out of recyclable materials. They study books and an example of a rocket that staff have made, as a starting point for their ideas. They discuss their ideas collectively and are eager to get on with the task. They try different ways to attach materials together using sticky tape. Many children are competent in using scissors to cut varying lengths. They use appropriate mathematical language to describe what they are doing, such as longer, bigger and a 'bit more'. A 'holding bay' enables children to return to their rockets at a later stage, as and when they choose, to develop, enjoy and expand on.

Consistent, positive interactions with children are fundamental in promoting their very effective communication and language skills. As a result, they thrive in their learning. Picture books and stories provide valuable opportunities for children to copy and repeat words. They develop confidence in constructing simple sentences so that their vocabulary increases and their speech and language develops splendidly. They regularly talk about what they are doing and act out well loved stories, for example, going on a bear hunt when playing outside. This helps to develop their physical skills as they learn to negotiate going over, under and round various equipment. Children enjoy being outdoors in all weathers, helping to develop their senses. They learn about plant life and growth as they tend to their flowers, vegetables and fruit. A soil pit enables children to look for worms and bugs, therefore, developing an awareness of living things. They use magnifiers to explore these in greater detail. Children learn about giving each other enough space to play safely, therefore, developing their understanding about positional language. For example, they are advised not to ride their wheeled toys too close to one another. However, while these activities provide extremely well for children's physical learning, consideration could be given to more visual aids. For example, pictures, words, number lines, signs or simple directions to stimulate their highly developed thinking, to the same degree as found inside. Babies and younger children squeal with delight as staff say 'one,

two, three, we're coming to get you'. They toddle off as quickly as their legs allow, giggling with delight when staff scoop them up in their arms. They develop confidence in using different equipment and moving in different ways. Staff sit at either end of a tunnel and encourage children to crawl through. At first, children are unsure but with gentle coaxing and persuasion from staff they complete the challenge. When accomplished, staff clap, cheer and say well done and children excitedly join in. This helps children develop a sense of pride in their achievements and the confidence to try again.

Resources, displays and photographs reflect people's differences and children develop an awareness of words, phrases and numbers to reflect the cultural diversity of children attending the nursery. Staff regularly use various forms of non-verbal communication to assist children who may require additional support, such as a pictorial time-line, symbols and pictures. Children enjoy regular outings into their community. They visit shops, parks and libraries and sing songs to the elderly residents of a local home. Visits from the police, fire service and other professions help children to understand about people who help them and develop an understanding of the world around them.

Parents are encouraged to be involved with their own child's learning and development at home, and staff provide a wide range of advice, help and resources to enable them to do this. For example, children take story sacks home to help with their communication and language skills. An innovative variety of formats is used to ensure that parents receive regular information about their child's care, learning and development.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The nursery promotes an ethos where all children are warmly welcomed by friendly and attentive staff. Children are greeted individually and staff take genuine interest in what they have to say and any news they wish to share. This helps children feel valued and they gain confidence, self-assurance and a sense of belonging. As a result, children participate in all activities with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. The individual needs of each child are securely met by a highly effective key person system. Staff go to considerable lengths to ensure that children settle into the nursery routine and this starts with a visit to the child's home. This is seen as crucial in being able to spend time getting to know each child's family well, and building up a relationship of trust with them. The partnerships with parents are a key strength and are significant in ensuring that all children are nurtured and fully supported, enabling them to develop to their full potential. Through regular discussions, staff learn as much as possible about each child in his or her key group, their individual interests, behaviours and preferences. Investing time listening to what parents have to say means that staff can successfully use this information to help each child have the best possible day while in their care. Feedback is obtained from parents as to how this difficult period of adjustment for children can be managed successfully. This ensures that transitions between home and the nursery are as stress-free as possible, for both children and parents alike.

Staff are quick to challenge discrimination and there is a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities within the nursery. Festivals and celebrations are included in planning

and children discuss people's differences sensitively. Home languages and cultural backgrounds are highly valued and respected, with some parents becoming involved actively in this. For example, they share their traditions and customs with children as well as supporting other parents and children with translation. This helps to ensure that everyone feels included in the life of the nursery.

An exceptionally stimulating environment is provided in all areas of the nursery, where children make excellent progress in their learning and development. Children happily go off and explore the wide range of resources and activities available. Staff make optimum use of the indoor environment, using space creatively and harmoniously to support children's learning. They have carefully thought out where to site different activities so that children get the utmost benefit from the learning potential they provide. For example, they recognise that placing the computer, which requires concentration, is not best placed next to the role play, where children play imaginatively and often more exuberantly. As a result, they have carried out an audit of all rooms and now ensure that children can engage in quiet and more active pursuits to their best advantage. A wide range of children's work, photographs and posters help to create an extremely welcoming environment and sense of belonging.

Children's safety is effectively promoted through everyday routines and activities. Staff remind children in the pre-school room how to negotiate the stairs, advising them to go down slowly and hold on to the handrail. When out and about, children wear high visibility vests and know that this is so that they can easily be seen by traffic. Children are encouraged to say 'no' when another child is hurting them or regarding something else they do not like. This enables children to become familiar with the word, when it is used and why. Staff gently and sensitively include discussions about stranger danger and other inappropriate behaviour. This helps children learn to take responsibility for their own safety.

Children regularly play outside and join in various dance and exercise activities inside. A healthy ethos is promoted at all times and children eat exceptionally nutritious and balanced meals. These are prepared by the nursery cook who has embraced a range of training to enhance her skills. She produces a menu that is varied and takes into account parent's suggestions, along with specific dietary requirements for individual children. Halal meat and vegetarian meals are regular options. Older children serve their food, pour their drinks and make their own sandwiches, helping to promote their independence. Staff plan activities for children that encourage healthy food choices and the role food plays in growth and development. For example, children thoroughly enjoy growing their own fruit and vegetables. Once ripe, they pick or dig these up and then prepare them to eat. Posters and displays ensure that the healthy eating message is continually conveyed.

Clear boundaries and expectations are established within the nursery. Display boards relay pictorially how children are expected to behave. Language and symbols are used to demonstrate, 'good listening', 'good sitting', 'kind hands and feet'. Photographs of children performing these actions and using children as positive role models, helps to reinforce these messages. A 'Framework for Intervention' is also used, whereby staff assess the impact the environment and routine has on children's behaviour. They look at any changes that can be made to encourage positive behaviour. Children share, take turns and readily

help each other. Music prompts children to put their toys away and they do this willingly. As a result, children's behaviour is exemplary.

Staff plan for children's transitions between one room and another most diligently. This is done gradually to familiarise children with new faces and routines. Parents are invited to view the room and meet their child's new key person and address any issues they may have. This ensures that children ease into their new surroundings with minimum anxiety and settle quickly into the new routine.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

There is an extremely strong emphasis on safeguarding which underpins all staff's practice. It is at the heart of the nursery ethos and seen as a priority for all staff. It is always a focus for discussion at staff meetings, staff supervision and appraisals. This ensures that staff are vigilant in being alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and highly confident in knowing how to respond to any child protection concerns. The nursery's arrangements for safeguarding children are shared with parents, which helps to reassure them that their children are kept safe. Risk assessments are thorough and comprehensively executed by staff. Daily checks record any hazards that staff need to be aware of for each of the rooms and outdoor play area. An audit is undertaken every three months to ensure that the risk assessment is up-to-date and effective. Safe recruitment practices are followed; rigorous vetting procedures ensure that all staff working with the children are suitable to do so, and effective steps are taken to ensure that their ongoing suitability is assessed regularly.

The manager and owner are highly motivated and excellent communicators, which enables them to get the very best from staff. They recognise staff as being a valuable asset and welcome their ideas and opinions. They have a clear sense of purpose of what they want to achieve. As a result, accountability arrangements are fully understood and consistently applied. They ensure that all staff are rigorously vetted through the interview process. In addition, their skills and ability to work with children are assessed through a comprehensive induction and probationary period. Once appointed, appraisals and staff monitoring ensures that staff continue to be suitable to work with children. This helps to keep children safe.

The manager ensures that all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effectively implemented. In consultation with staff, she ensures that the educational programmes provide a wide range of activities to support children's ongoing development. Rigorous monitoring of staff practice ensures that they can fulfil their roles with the utmost competence and children's learning is extended and challenged.

Staff willingly attend any support and training available to refine and improve their practice. This motivates staff to make changes in what they do and enhance the quality of care, learning and development for all children. The management team recognise the

constraints placed on local authorities with regards to their training budgets. Rather than seeing this as a barrier to staff accessing relevant courses, they deliver in-house training each month to compensate for this shortfall. All staff are issued with a certificate of attendance to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to personal development. Where possible, staff endeavour to access the few external courses available and cascade the information to their colleagues. Staff strengths and expertise in specific areas is also shared. This helps to promote a strong staff team, whose skills are used most effectively to support children's well-being.

Various tools are used to encourage reflective practice. For example, the Effective Early Learning Programme (EELP) places particular emphasis upon evaluation, development and improvement of quality and effectiveness. Staff, parents and children contribute to the evaluation process so that collectively, the nursery can accurately analyse strengths and identify clear targets for development. Staff gather evidence to show how these targets are achieved and most importantly look at the impact any changes have in supporting children to make progress.

The nursery establishes excellent partnerships with parents and works exceedingly hard to ensure they are engaged in all aspects of nursery life. A parent steering group (Cygnet) is used to gather their views, raise funds and look at how the monies can be used for the benefit of all children. Currently, the focus is on a large piece of outdoor equipment to benefit children's physical development. Every conceivable means of sharing information with parents is used. This ranges from the naturally occurring conversations that transpire at the beginning and end of each day, to newsletters, emails, twitter and an extremely informative website. This ensures parents are kept up-to-date with the latest developments.

Excellent links are established with local schools to aid children's transition. Numerous visits ensure children become familiar with all aspects of their new surroundings. This helps to develop children's confidence and make them feel more secure about the changes ahead. Good links are established with other early years' settings within the area to share ideas and utilise the services they have to offer. For example, children regularly visit another local nursery to access their sensory room. Staff also visit settings and benefit hugely from their observations, making positive changes to the learning experiences for children at the nursery. The staff work equally well with other partners, such as health professionals and the local authority personnel. They proactively seek guidance in order to ensure children receive all the additional help they require. This means children are fully supported to make the best possible progress they can.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY103338
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	909497
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	78
Number of children on roll	114
Name of provider	Elaine Sheila Boulton
Date of previous inspection	03/06/2010
Telephone number	0121 706 8889

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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