

Smart Start

Oberlin Cottage, Oberlin Street, Greenacres, Oldham, Lancashire, OL4 3HS

Inspection date	27/06/2013
Previous inspection date	21/02/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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

- All staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of how children learn. They skilfully move children forward in their learning by allowing them to take the lead in their play and ask open-ended questions to extend their thinking skills. As a result, they make strides in their learning.
- Children are happy, motivated and eager to learn. They show consistently high levels of independence, curiosity and imagination and demonstrate extremely positive behaviour and strong self-assurance.
- Assessment of children's development is meticulous. As a result, staff have an excellent knowledge of the progress of individual children and different groups of children so any gaps in learning are quickly identified.
- Children settle quickly into school because transition arrangements are extremely well prepared in advance and staff support children's literacy and mathematics skills exceptionally well so they are ready for school.
- Children develop excellent healthy lifestyles because of the outstanding variety of activities and knowledge about healthy eating and exercise provided by staff.
- The highly successful implementation of the key person system ensures children are nurtured and feel emotionally secure.
- Monitoring and performance management systems, to ensure the quality of observation, assessment and teaching, are at a consistently high level, leading to exceptional practice across the nursery.

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 observed activities in all of the rooms and in the outside areas.
The inspector checked evidence of suitability of staff working with the children and
- looked at induction and staff training procedures. The inspector also looked at policies and children's records.
- The inspector spoke to the manager and staff in the nursery.
- The inspector looked through children's assessment records and planning documentation and discussed these with staff.
- The inspector took account of the views of children and two parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Emily Wheeldon

Full Report

Information about the setting

Smart Start Nursery was registered in 2001 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a residential area in the Greenacres area of Oldham, and is privately owned. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from nine rooms on two floors in three converted domestic premises. There are three enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 23 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one with Early Years Professional Status and one who has Qualified Teacher Status. One member of staff has an Early Years Leadership BA (Hons) Degree.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions, including the out of school provision. There are currently 114 children attending who are in the early years age group. There are eight children in the early years age group attending the out of school provision. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider organising the excellent indoor environment even more flexibly to ensure there is enough space between areas for babies to move, roll, stretch and explore and provide a quiet place to be calm so babies can hear staff more clearly and not be interrupted by other babies.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff interactions with children and the vast range of activities on offer, such as messy play, are superb. Children are extremely motivated and clearly enjoy experimenting with different media and materials, using all of their senses as appropriate. Staff are heavily involved and ask children questions about the different textures they can feel with their fingers. Arrangements to clean tables and other areas are carried out in order to maintain the existing high standards in hygiene. Cleaning is carried out at different times of the day

and does not detract staff's attention away from children's learning. This is because staff are deployed very well.

Staff have high expectations and children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. This is because assessment is extremely precise and planning is sharply focused to meet the individual needs of children. Teaching is superb and staff are particularly expert at following the children's lead and supporting them to think critically. For example, staff plan a focused activity around a recent trip to the zoo. Pre-school children enthusiastically talk about their personal experiences of the animals they saw and design a zoo. They take turns to place plastic animals on wooden bricks and then decide to turn the zoo into a supermarket for animals. Staff support where necessary and do not take over children's learning, but gently guide them through the thinking process. For example, children say they want to design an escalator for an elephant and try and figure out how to make a ramp. Staff ask open-ended questions to stimulate children's minds and say, 'how can you make it balance and stay there?'. Children then say, 'let's make a monkey den. I know let's use play dough'. This shows that children are critical thinkers and are extremely independent in their learning, using a vast range of resources across the areas of learning.

The acquisition of communication and language skills and literacy skills are extremely well supported by staff at an early age. For example, a love of books is superbly fostered through regular sharing of a vast range of books. Excellent examples include books with flaps, feely books and number and nursery rhymes. As a result, babies quickly learn how to turn pages independently and point to pictures of interest. They vigorously rub washing-up brushes in soapy mixture and watch in wonder as they squeeze water from sponges. This demonstrates babies are playing and exploring, which are characteristics of effective learning. Excellent role modelling of language from staff allows babies to gain an understanding of the sound and meaning of words. For example, staff emphasise the 'ee' sound in the word 'squeeze' and babies have a go at saying 'ee'. In activities that involve experimenting with different materials to make marks, babies marvel at the patterns they make. Pre-school children demonstrate excellent pre-writing skills. They are given a vast range of opportunities to write for different purposes, such as shopping lists and labels for displays. Highly trained staff carry out letters and sounds activities every week and pre-school children are encouraged to share books from home. Toddlers learn to recognise their names and the sounds different letters make on a daily basis. As a result, all children make rapid progress in developing literacy skills.

Pre-school children are extremely well prepared for school as they take on responsibilities, such as fetching coats from pegs and tidying up. A vast number of different discussions and activities around getting ready for school are organised. For example, children from the out of school provision talk about their experiences of being in Reception class. Pre-school children look at school uniform items, books about starting school and pre-visits to the school are organised. The Early Years Professional has started to make up a book to share with pre-school children. The book contains photographs of classrooms and new teachers and general information about the school. As a result, pre-school children are extremely excited about starting school and demonstrate an excellent attitude to learning.

High quality learning indoors is reflected outside and children play out in all weathers. This

shows that staff have an excellent understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the importance of outdoor play. Children are given exciting and challenging learning opportunities across the seven areas of learning and make excellent progress. Physical skills are high on the agenda and children are involved in rigorous activity. Excellent examples include riding bikes, climbing up steps, kicking balls and digging holes in the garden area to find worms. Water play is encouraged outside as well. Children happily fill and empty containers and pour water down drainpipes so they can collect water in buckets. Children, therefore, have an excellent knowledge about mathematical concepts, such as capacity and size. Further ways to support children in mathematics, is through singing number rhymes about currant buns and learning to take away numbers from a set of five objects. Problem-solving skills are expertly supported when toddlers try and work out how to fit different sized screws into holes. Staff say, for example, 'where do you think that one might go?'. This means that children learn to solve problems themselves by working through the problem practically.

Children are confident and are excellent communicators. In role-play situations, such as a hospital, staff are highly engaged with children. They encourage communication skills well by saying, 'what are these used for?' and children reply, 'for your ears'. Provision and support for children who speak English as an additional language is outstanding. For example, staff work closely with parents to find out key words in different languages. Staff repeat key vocabulary so children have an excellent sense of belonging and staff speak in simple sentences to support their language skills. Superb support is given to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, staff liaise very closely with outside agencies and parents to meet children's needs. Parents are particularly complimentary about the outstanding progress children make in relation to their starting points. They say, 'staff have done wonders with my child. They have given him one-to-one attention and supported him through interactions with other children. He used to stand on his own, now he is talking with other children and gives eye contact'.

Children are given excellent opportunities to sing, dance and experiment with different media and materials. For example, children sing a vast range of number and nursery rhymes, dance to music of different genres and engage in free painting. Children learn about simple programs on computers and programmable toys from a very early age. For example, pre-school children take photographs using digital cameras and have an excellent knowledge about how to operate buttons. Extensive learning experiences about the natural world are incorporated into activities across the age range. The nursery has a forest area, digging areas and growing tubs in the outdoor areas for children to dig for small insects. They are captivated when they find a worm and know that the worm must be returned back to his own home. This demonstrates an excellent awareness of showing respect for living things.

Partnerships with parents are superb. Parents are heavily involved in children's learning from the start. They are asked to make comments and identify next steps in their child's learning and contribute to assessments. Highly effective ways to share knowledge about the Early Years Foundation Stage and how staff support children's needs are implemented. For example, parents are invited to attend play and stay sessions and home link sheets are used to capture observations at home. There is a 'special mentions' board in each room so parents can write a quick post about their child's achievements. Excellent

methods to extend children's learning at home include a parents' section next to displays, such as activities about mini-beasts. Parents receive regular summary reports, such as the 'progress check at age two' and assessments every term. Such examples of excellent practice with parents mean that children make strides in their learning and receive the best continuity of care.

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

Children are cared for in a highly nurturing and welcoming environment and, as a result, feel exceptionally safe and secure. This is because of the highly successful implementation of the key person system and inclusive ethos of the nursery. Dedicated and highly qualified staff greet children and parents with warm smiles and children come running in. They are extremely keen to get involved in the exciting activities on offer and welcome staff with huge hugs and smiles. Excellent partnerships with parents ensure all children settle in quickly from the beginning. For instance, staff work with parents to find out their child's likes and dislikes and home routines. Children feel at home in the nursery environment because staff mirror their home routines, such as sleeping in cots.

Very high regard is given to supporting children to become independent and to take responsibility for their own belongings and learning from a very early age. Particularly noteworthy is the way staff plan meal times for children. Babies and young toddlers eat in their base room so they feel very secure in their own surroundings. Older toddlers and pre-school children eat in the dining room and sit in small groups to encourage social interaction to develop their communication skills. Staff give children responsibilities and select different children to be monitors. Their role is to hand out plates and cutlery, hence, developing excellent skills in leadership and responsibility. Pre-school children expertly pour their own drinks and serve their own food, such as pouring soup from ladles into bowls. Toddlers are also encouraged to be independent and have a go. They develop excellent self-help skills with gentle encouragement from staff close by and by observing pre-school children, who model how to serve themselves. Staff are extremely flexible and go the extra mile to meet the individual needs of children. For example, they respect parents' wishes for younger children to join in with the older children in the dining room at a later sitting. High levels of respect are given to children for speak English as an additional language. For example, staff follow parents' requests for their child to go home for a 'siesta', which is customary in the Spanish culture.

Children have exceptional knowledge about healthy lifestyles because of the vast range of activities provided in the nursery. Inspirational ideas to instil healthy eating habits include providing children with an appetising variety of fruit and vegetables from around the world. Every day children look forward to taking off the lids of platters at lunch times to reveal different coloured fruits and vegetables. These dishes are referred to as 'rainbow dishes'. This is so each child has the exciting challenge of tasting different fruits or vegetables in different colours. Staff talk to children about where the food comes from and children share their own experiences of sampling food. Pre-school children recently went on a trip to a restaurant and really enjoyed speaking to the chef about where food comes from. Upon return to the nursery, the children had a go at creating their own role-play area, which looked like a kitchen. Such highly positive real-life experiences stimulate

children's interests and, as a result, children gain an excellent understanding about healthy eating. Rigorous physical activity is promoted extremely well in the nursery. There is a qualified teacher who visits the children on a weekly basis who organises games and activities. Children develop excellent physical skills and learn to work as a team, such as taking turns, and listening to instructions. Staff also give children a vast range of physical opportunities, which are incorporated into the daily routine. All staff follow stringent procedures to keep children healthy. For example, they wear plastic aprons and gloves during meal times when preparing snacks and when changing nappies. Care routines are considered important times for staff to bond with children and for learning to be extended. For example, key workers chat to babies during nappy changing times and sing nursery rhymes.

Behaviour is exemplary across the nursery. Children support one another to build structures out of bricks and play harmoniously as a group. This is because skilful staff foster positive attitudes to learning by praising children for their efforts. Staff also plan challenging and imaginative experiences for children which are in line with their interests. Sticker charts and golden rules, such as taking turns, also support children so they are fully aware of boundaries. Children are excellent communicators and demonstrate an exceptional knowledge of keeping themselves safe. For example, pre-school children talk about why they wear slippers inside to keep floors clean and what to do in the event of a fire. They say, 'we have to go outside because the fire comes. If we don't get outside we might get burnt and the fire might burn our slippers'.

Children play in a highly stimulating environment inside and outdoors. Areas of learning are clearly defined and resources are rich and age and stage appropriate. Staff have very successfully arranged resources since their last inspection, so children can make their own choices and be independent in their learning. Babies are highly engaged and clearly enjoy exploring their environment both inside and outdoors. Staff are looking at ways to prevent areas of learning, such as the physical soft play area, from over spilling on to quieter activities on offer. This is so that there is even more space for babies to move and for staff to take small groups to other areas to conduct quieter activities.

Transitions within the nursery are seamless and carefully planned well in advance so information, such as assessment records, are passed on to the next key person. Parents are fully involved in all transitional periods, when children first start within the nursery, and when children start school. Excellent links between the Early Years Professional, who is based in pre-school, and local teachers mean that information sharing is superb. Parents speak highly of the level of care and lengths staff take to support children getting ready for school. For example, they say, 'the staff have really helped my daughter to get ready for school. Staff helped her recognise numbers and letters of the alphabet. They have sent activities home for me to do with my daughter'.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children within the nursery are extremely robust. Risk assessments are stringent and staff conduct rigorous safety checks of the premises,

indoors and outside on a daily basis. Children are allowed to explore their surroundings and are kept extremely safe. A safeguarding policy is in place and staff are clear who to report concerns to so that children's safety is promoted very effectively.

Superb systems are in place to monitor observations, planning and assessment in this nursery. The Early Years Professional and manager work closely together to go through children's files to check observations are of high quality. Staff complete an observation tracker sheet to ensure all the areas of learning are very well covered and in great depth. Time is very well organised to release the Early Years Professional and manager to observe the quality of interactions and teaching in all base rooms. Highly effective ways to support staff and to identify any training needs are meticulous. For example, staff evaluate their own practice and expert support is given to them about ways to improve their practice. Excellent support and monitoring of staff, ensures provision across the nursery is of exceptionally high quality. Assessment is first rate and very sharply focused so staff have an excellent knowledge of precisely where each child is in terms of their development. Managers gather assessment information from all the age groups, which feed into a tracker sheet for the whole of the nursery. Managers analyse the data received from within the nursery and in the local area extremely well to inform future planning. For example, staff are looking at ways to tackle the issue of children with low starting points in communication and language skills. They, therefore, ensure that children are extremely well supported in developing their communication and language skills. They do this by modelling language and providing literacy games from a very early age. This is highly effective in narrowing the gap and ensuring children make excellent progress.

The manager has a highly accurate view of the nursery and she supports staff extremely well. As a result, staff feel valued and morale is high. The support given to all staff to continue further with their professional development is outstanding and has led to the staff team being very highly qualified and skilled. Self-evaluation is rigorous and takes into account the views of staff, parents, children and outside agencies. Views from parents are gathered through daily discussions, questionnaires and through the parent forum. As a result, priorities for future development are well targeted and ongoing in a desire to maintain the highest standards. The nursery has swiftly met previous recommendations raised in the last inspection about ensuring children's next steps are being reflected in records. Staff now write children's next steps in their observations and on assessments. As a result, the observation, planning and assessment process flows more easily.

Partnerships with parents are excellent. They are kept fully informed about their child's progress on a daily basis via discussions, in diaries and during parents' evenings. Outstanding care is taken to provide parents with a wealth of information about the Early Years Foundation Stage and specialist subjects, such as communication and language. Consequently, parents have a superb understanding about what the Early Years Foundation Stage is all about. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are expertly cared for by highly experienced staff who work very closely with parents and outside agencies. Links with local schools are also outstanding and, as a result, all children have their needs exceptionally well met.

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	503883
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	901282
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	124
Number of children on roll	114
Name of provider	Cheryl Maria Connell
Date of previous inspection	21/02/2012
Telephone number	0161 785 0945

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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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