

Smiths Children Montessori St Luke's Church

St Luke's Church (United Reformed with Church of England), Victoria Road, CAMBRIDGE, Cambridgeshire,
CB4 3DZ

Inspection date	13/09/2013
Previous inspection date	07/01/2013

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	2	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	4	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The nursery has strong and positive partnerships with parents, which helps to effectively promote children's wellbeing and their learning and development.
- Children are safeguarded well due to robust recruitment procedures and staff's knowledge of their role in keeping children safe.
- Strong leadership from a capable manager and a supportive staff team has enabled the nursery to effectively drive improvement and secure good outcomes for all children.
- Children develop their independence well as they choose freely from accessible resources, and take part in responsible tasks, such as, scraping their plates and washing up after meals.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Although children benefit from extended periods of outdoor play, there is capacity to enhance children's level of physical activity. For example by increasing opportunities for chasing games, action songs and ring games.
- Support for new staff, so they can improve their good practice and fully complement children's learning experiences, is occasionally inconsistent.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children at play and their interactions with staff.
The inspector spoke with the providers and the manager about the management processes, such as staff recruitment, training and how they monitor the educational programme.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents and took into account the views of others through questionnaires and testimonials.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the children's learning journals, risk assessments, accident records and policies and procedures.

Inspector

Veronica Sharpe

Full Report

Information about the setting

Smith's Children's Montessori St Luke's Church nursery was registered in 2011 and is privately owned. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and accepts children from birth to five years of age. It is located in the St Luke's Community Church close to Cambridge city centre. Children have use of a large first floor group room, with a sleep room, toilets and kitchen that is down one flight of stairs. A lift provides access to the first floor. There are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. There are currently 30 children on roll within the early years age range who attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery offers early years funding for three- and four-year-olds. There are several children attending who have English as an additional language.

Opening times are 8am until 6pm each weekday. The nursery is open all year round with the exception of one week at Christmas and all bank holidays. There are 14 staff working directly with the children. One member of staff holds a childcare qualification at level 6 and one holds an early years foundation degree. Four staff members hold qualifications at level 3, two at level 4, and two at level 2. There are two members of staff working towards higher qualifications. Two members of staff hold Montessori diplomas and six others are working towards this qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- increase children's opportunities to take part in vigorous outdoor exercise, where they practise a wide range of physical movements, have fun and feel good about themselves
- enhance further the monitoring and mentoring of new and less experienced staff to maximise learning opportunities for all children through skilful open-ended questioning and appropriate resourcing.

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, planning has been strengthened greatly and is firmly based on children's individual interests and abilities. Staff make notes on children's achievements and review these at weekly meetings to effectively monitor children's progress. Parents

are encouraged to contribute and frequently provide verbal information during daily discussions with their key person. Staff capture these useful anecdotes, such as, a visit from a grandparent or a trip to a zoo, and incorporate them into the day's planning. As a result, activities are relevant and interesting, enabling children to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff prepare regular written assessments, including the progress check at age two, to ensure parents are well informed about their children's activities and achievements. Children in all areas of the nursery benefit from enjoyable experiences that thoroughly encompass the areas of learning. For older children the broad range of freely available play opportunities are well-balanced by adult-led activities based on the Montessori principles. For example, children help to sort out counting rods to support their mathematical development. Children's independence is promoted effectively through everyday routines, such as tidying away the resources they have finished with. This prepares them well for the next stage of their learning, including school.

Children of all ages play well together and build firm friendships with their peers. Because children of all ages are housed in a single, large room they have plenty of opportunities to socialise with differing ages. This enables them to develop a respect and understanding of the needs of others. Consequently, they show caring attitudes towards each other. Staff promote this inclusive understanding further by introducing children to animals, such as the African land snails. They talk to children about differences and similarities, and link it back to the differences between themselves to extend their knowledge of the wider world.

Children's communication and language development is promoted well and children chatter confidently to staff and each other. Staff adeptly introduce younger children to new words, for example, they talk about squeezing the 'squidgy sponges' during water play. Older children show they have a well-developed interest in books as they choose their favourites to share with staff. During story times children show they are able to concentrate and listen well; supported by attentive staff, they talk about the characters, and anticipate what happens next. Many of the staff speak more than one language and use their skills to talk to children in their home languages. This helps children to feel valued and develops their confidence.

Children freely access resources, such as, scissors, pencils and play dough. This supports their physical development well as they experiment with cutting out shapes or draw using stencils and rulers. They enjoy using glue and paint with collage materials to design and make colourful models. Staff mostly support them well during these activities, sitting with them to provide help if asked, or to talk to children to extend their ideas. However, the monitoring of less experienced staff during some activities is not consistent, which means the effective support usually given to children to extend their learning is occasionally not fully embedded.

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

The nursery has a resident chef who takes a pride in producing healthy and varied meals that meet children's nutritional needs well. Food is sourced locally where possible and is

mainly organic. There are strong systems to ensure children's allergies and other dietary needs are known and met. This helps to ensure children eat safely. Children learn to serve themselves at lunchtimes, and take an active part in scraping their plates and washing up, which effectively promotes their independence. They develop their knowledge of healthy foods through conversations with staff, food related activities and growing produce in the nursery garden.

Staff involve children in assessing risks so they learn to identify safety precautions, for example, they help to check the garden gates are secure. They take part in regular fire drills, and learn to handle tools, such as, scissors, knives and forks, safely. Children develop caring behaviour and learn good manners because staff are good role models. Staff encourage children to be kind to each other and support sharing through praise and positive rewards.

Children have enjoyable experiences in the nursery garden. They spend extended times outdoors, and have good opportunities to choose resources from the storage shed. Staff encourage children to smell the sweet herbs, and help them discover wildlife in plants, or under logs. Children enjoy picnics and snuggle into tents to have story times. Resources, such as, wheeled toys, balance beams and small climbing equipment, effectively promote children's physical development and contribute to their healthy lifestyles. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to play energetically for sustained periods of time to enhance their levels of activity.

The nursery is warm and welcoming with posters, photographs and examples of children's work cheerfully displayed to promote their self-esteem. Resources are plentiful and well organised to provide children with an effective learning environment. Babies and younger children follow their home routines for sleeping, and have their own sleeping areas, which are monitored rigorously to ensure their comfort and safety. Children's entry into the nursery is handled sensitively according to children's and parents' individual needs. Staff conduct home visits where requested and collect detailed information from parents during children's settling in visits. All this helps to ensure children settle quickly and have their needs effectively met.

Recent changes of staff and a reorganisation of the children's rooms has resulted in some children having a new key person allocated. Parents spoken to at the inspection say this necessary change was handled well to minimise any impact on the children. As a result, children settled confidently and now clearly feel safe and secure. Children are suitably prepared for their transitions so they look forward to the next stage of their learning. For example, younger children have visits to pre-school so they have time to learn the new routines. Staff develop children's confidence and effectively prepare older children for school through conversations, stories about school, and introducing them to their new teachers. They help children to learn practical skills ready for school, such as, putting on their own coats and shoes for outdoor play.

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

Since the last inspection, the owners have successfully recruited a strong and committed staff team. The new manager has introduced effective monitoring of staff and the educational programme, which has helped to consolidate speedy improvements into solid good practice in all areas of the nursery. Improved systems for planning, observation and assessment, result in an accurate understanding of children's abilities and interests. The owners and the new management team have worked closely with their local authority advisors to successfully address all the actions made at the last inspection. As a result, children make consistently good progress in their learning and development.

The owners and the staff team work together to evaluate the provision and identify the areas for improvement. The views of children and parents are taken into account, resulting in clear action plans. Staff's ability to provide good quality teaching is monitored through weekly supervision meetings, appraisals and a thorough programme of staff training. Mentoring and monitoring of new and less experienced staff is mostly successful, but not entirely consistent. This occasionally results in children being not fully engaged by a few adult led activities. All staff attend mandatory training, such as, first aid and child protection, which helps to promote children's health and safety. Staff knowledge of safeguarding is clear and strong. Effective policies and procedures further ensure children's safety if there were any concerns about their wellbeing. The owners have robust recruitment procedures to ensure anyone working with the children are safe and suitable. There are clear policies about adult's access to children, which take into account the occasional members of the church who pass through some of the outdoor areas used by the nursery.

Partnerships with parents are strong, resulting in positive relationships that promote children's wellbeing and their learning and development well. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection were very supportive of the nursery. They say that staff are warm and caring and good at sharing information. Many noted the increasing independence of their children and others highlighted the academic achievements. Parents of children who are learning English as an additional language say staff work hard to integrate all children and offer individual support. The nursery has links with other agencies to help them support additional needs, such as the local children's centre. None of the children currently attend other early years settings, however, there are established methods to share information with feeder schools. This helps to ensure continuity of care and learning as children transfer from nursery to reception classes.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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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	EY437969
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	901784
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	30
Name of provider	Smiths Children Partnership
Date of previous inspection	07/01/2013
Telephone number	01223 301 047

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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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