

Small Talk Nurseries Ltd.

85 Grove Lane, Handsworth, BIRMINGHAM, B21 9HF

Inspection date

13/11/2013

Previous inspection date

05/06/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 3

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 3

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Staff promote the prime areas of learning appropriately and use a wide range of resources to support children's development.
- Children grow in confidence as they form strong bonds with staff and feel emotionally secure in the nursery.
- The staff have a clear understanding of procedures to be followed to protect children in their care.
- Partnerships with external professionals are in place to ensure children get the support they need.

It is not yet good because

- The quality of teaching across the nursery is variable. Activities to promote skills in making marks and writing are at times unrealistic and not sufficiently stimulating to enthuse children.
- Staff do not always help all children to learn about the benefits of healthy eating, particularly those aged two years.
- Staff do not encourage all parents to continue with learning activities at home.
- The self-evaluation of the nursery is not sufficiently rigorous to identify priorities through the monitoring of staffs' practice and it does not take account of staffs' suggestions to make further improvements.

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 held discussions with the provider and manager.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children.
- The inspector observed activities in the rooms and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including policies, children's learning journals and staff's records.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the premises.

Inspector

Adelaide Griffith

Full report

Information about the setting

Small Talk Nurseries Ltd was registered in 2010 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery operates from the ground and first floors of a designated building in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four rooms. There is no outside play area, but children are taken on regular outings to the local park.

The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above.

The nursery opens from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 42 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for 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 meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- raise the quality of teaching with regard to the programme for literacy to promote children's skills in writing their names through stimulating and rewarding learning experiences
- develop the relationships with parents to fully involve them in their children's learning and development, enabling them to fully support children's learning at home.

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

- improve the methods for reviewing and monitoring practice so that weaknesses are quickly identified, action taken to address these and any required training sought and build on self-evaluation by extending opportunities for staff to make a valid contribution to further improvements in the nursery
- use mealtimes to help children learn about healthy eating and the reasons for drinking water; this applies particularly to children aged two years.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff follow children's interests to plan activities, which cover all areas of learning. The staff ensure activities for younger aged children under three years, are focussed on the prime areas of learning. They observe children's preferences during play and provide resources accordingly. For example, children aged 16-24 months remain attentive when staff set out a selection of musical instruments on the tables. Staff make a range of sounds with triangles, tambourines and shakers, which hold children's concentration and promote their listening skills. Staff in the baby room challenge children to take a few steps as they stand and sway uncertainly. This means that they receive encouraging support to develop skills in moving. Staff regularly sing nursery rhymes with these younger children who enjoy the activity, which builds on and develops their speaking skills appropriately. Staff provide a suitable range of activities, which they deliver skilfully. For instance, as pre-school children introduce discussions about television characters, staff support them appropriately. They allow children to develop their stories, therefore, encouraging children to demonstrate understanding and recall. They plan effectively to extend children's learning by taking them on outings to local shops to purchase materials for making bears and eye patches. This means that children learn about the world around them through enjoyable activities. However, some staff are less skilled at delivering activities to meet children's learning needs. In some instances, there are unrealistic expectations as very young children are encouraged to colour within the outlines of templates. Furthermore, some activities to promote children's abilities to write their names are not sufficiently stimulating to engage all children. Consequently, the variable quality of teaching in the nursery support children to make steady, but not consistently good progress.

A wide range of good quality resources are available and staff ensure children can access these according to their preferences. In the physical playroom known as the 'indoor garden' large play equipment helps children to develop their large muscle skills. Children demonstrate active learning by taking the lead in self-directed play, for instance, by exploring musical instruments. There are currently a number of children on roll who speak English as an additional language. Some staff speak children's first languages and this means they can communicate easily with children and parents. Therefore, children receive appropriate support to develop their skills in speaking English to prepare them for their future learning. Key persons work closely with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They follow guidance in the play plan to promote children's concentration, language skills and behaviour appropriately. Most parents receive guidance to continue with children's learning at home. However, this practice is not consistently maintained for the parents of some younger children in the nursery. This means that for some children the partnership with parents does not fully support their learning and development.

Peer monitoring of planning ensures that all areas of learning are covered. Before children move to new rooms staff fill in a development chart which shows where children need help in their learning. This information is used as a starting point for individual planning. For instance, staff are aware of the need to promote colour recognition for children when

they move to the pre-school room. They link planning to observations to ensure the next steps in learning are helping children. Progress checks for children, including those at age two are completed regularly. Staff work together as a team to review the assessments, including the progress checks at age two, completed by their peers and this contributes to their skills in monitoring practice. Staff prepare pre-school children appropriately by encouraging the development of independence skills. They help children to develop self-help skills, for instance, to put on their coats. The self-registration process is used to promote letter recognition leading to name recognition so that they can find their bags when they start school.

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

The key person arrangement is effective because children have time to form strong bonds with particular members staff. This means that children feel secure and valued as staff are attentive to them and response promptly to their requests. Staff interact positively with children at all times. They cuddle babies during routine activities and hold them closely while feeding. In other rooms staff constantly talk to children and follow their lead during child-led play. Consequently, children are fully at ease in the nursery. Transitions into the nursery are well-managed as settling-in procedures are tailored to children's individual needs. Staff discuss routines for babies and adapt these to mirror any changes made in the home. As a result, the continuity in routine helps young children to have a sense of belonging. Within the nursery, a gradual changeover ensures that children have opportunities to form new relationships with staff and peers. Transition arrangements for children leaving the nursery are developing as staff talk to children about what to expect when they start school.

Staff often use resources chosen by children for their play activities. Therefore, they enjoy play and as a result, they maintain concentration. In turn, this contributes positively to their good behaviour as they focus on their play activities. Children also learn to share resources and this means they develop an understanding of the boundaries of behaviour. Children are confident as they look and choose resources in their play. They are self-assured as they talk to adults, explaining their ideas and experiences. An outside play space is not available, but a ground floor room is dedicated to physical play. Weather permitting children, including babies, go to the park for play on large equipment or go round the block. These arrangements allow children to get fresh air and to develop their large muscle skills appropriately.

A variety of balanced meals are served daily and staff ensure children's dietary needs are met. Staff consistently encourage children to eat all the food served. However, some children are not always encouraged to learn about the benefits of healthy eating and the reasons for drinking water. For example, this is not routinely addressed with children aged two years. This means that some care routines are not used appropriately to promote children's development. Drinking water is accessible to children who can help themselves throughout the day. Staff offer water regularly to other children to ensure they drink sufficiently. Pre-school children take turns at helping staff to hand out cartons of milk during snack time. Consequently, their independence skills are developing adequately. Staff give clear reminders during physical play to be mindful of others. As a result, children

learn to be careful as they run around and to have regard for the safety of others. Security is addressed very well. The lobby is similar to a holding area and buzzers to rooms ensure that parents and visitors can only access those rooms when entry is allowed.

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

This inspection was prioritised by Ofsted following concerns raised about mice infestation in the nursery. Concerns were also raised about the failure of the provider to act promptly to address all aspects of the problem. The management team have taken appropriate steps to address the issues and have ensured relevant guidance was obtained from external agencies. Risk assessments were completed to ensure hazards were identified and addressed appropriately to ensure the premises are suitable for children. The nursery is currently maintained in a safe and clean condition throughout. The safeguarding arrangements in the nursery are satisfactory. Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with children, and ongoing suitability is reviewed regularly. Vetting is completed for all staff and students work under supervision at all times. Designated persons for child protection are clearly informed about their responsibility to support children and staff at all times. All staff have completed child protection training, ensuring they are clear about procedures to be followed to protect children. These procedures contribute positively to the safeguarding of children.

There is a programme of professional development that encourages staff to fill a variety of roles. For example, a member of staff organises events in the nursery. All staff have had supervision with a manager at regular intervals. This means there are opportunities to discuss staffs' role in the nursery and how they meet their responsibilities to support children. Reviews of planning and observations are achieved through peer observations, ensuring staff support colleagues in accordance with their understanding. The manager monitors staff informally while she is in care rooms. However, clear guidance on making improvements in practice is not systematically shared because a robust system for improving the quality of teaching is not in place. Therefore, staff do not always receive support to make improvements in their teaching practice to promote children's learning consistently and effectively. The impact of staff qualifications on the quality of the teaching and learning experiences for children is generally positive. Although most staff have a reasonable understanding of promoting children's learning appropriately, the quality of teaching is variable across the nursery. This means that some children make steady, but not good progress from their starting points. There is a positive impact of staffs' training and development on the provision with regard to safeguarding, child protection and first aid.

The provider and managers aspire to improve the nursery. During monthly meetings staff share current information from training they have undertaken. Children are asked about their preferences for play and following most activities, staff review what children know and have learnt. Parents say they are asked to comment on how the nursery is run and staff evaluate events with parents. For example, they invite parents to make suggestions to improve projects delivered in the nursery. The provider has recently introduced

consultation sessions for parents to ensure they have allocated time to discuss their children's progress. However, staff are not actively invited to contribute to the self-evaluation by making suggestions for the benefit of the children. Consequently, the ideas of the staff are not explored to make changes that support children's learning and care appropriately.

The partnership with parents is based on friendly communication. Parents receive a wide range of information, for example, safeguarding procedures are displayed on parents' boards. Folders with policies are accessible and parents are asked for suggestions for some activities. This means that parents make a worthwhile contribution to events. As a result, all children and staff gain an understanding of the cultural values of the families who use the nursery. However, some parents do not receive clear guidance to continue with children's learning at home. Consequently, the parent partnership does not support all children to make good progress in their learning. Working relationships with other professionals is established as the nursery works with external agencies to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The provider is aware of the importance of sharing information with other early years providers where children attend other settings.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY390736
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	942127
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	42
Name of provider	Small Talk Nurseries Limited
Date of previous inspection	05/06/2013
Telephone number	0121 5543445

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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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