

Little Smarties Academy

Rocky Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B42 1NG

Inspection date

03/09/2014

Previous inspection date

24/09/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

4

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- The provider has failed to meet a number of legal requirements. Safeguarding practices are not fully understood because leaders are not clear on the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made about a member of staff. In addition, there is not always a member of staff present with a first-aid qualification. This puts children at risk and does not promote their well-being.
- Children's safety and good health are not fully guaranteed because risk assessments are not robust enough. The provider has not ensured that hazards in the nappy changing area and the outside area have been removed.
- Activities and care provided do not always take into account all children's individual needs, to ensure their development and emotional well-being is fully supported.
- Staff do not utilise the outdoor area effectively to promote opportunities that support children's physical development and contribute to a healthy lifestyle.
- The system for the performance management of staff is weak. This means that staff practice is not routinely monitored and weaknesses are not addressed.

It has the following strengths

- Staff routinely share information about children's learning and achievements with parents to enable them to support ongoing learning at home.

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 indoor areas used by children and the outdoor play areas.
- The inspector and deputy manager carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector spoke to the provider, staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence and the suitability and qualifications of staff working with the children.
- The inspector looked at a sample of records and policies relating to children's welfare, health and safety.

Inspector

Julia Galloway

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Smarties Academy was registered in 2002 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a converted semi-detached house in the Great Barr area of Birmingham and is one of two nurseries privately owned and managed. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children and there is an area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 17 children on roll, who are all within the early years age range. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that all persons who have a lead role for safeguarding responsibilities have the required knowledge and understanding to undertake this role, including the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff
- ensure that robust risk assessments are carried out, with particular regard to the nappy changing area and outdoor play area, so that hazards are identified and risks to children are minimised
- ensure that at least one person who has attended the required training to administer first aid, is on the premises at all times when children are present, and accompanies children on outings
- ensure children form close relationships with key staff, particularly very young children who are new to the nursery, so that care is tailored to meet their individual needs to help them settle into nursery and support their emotional well-being
- ensure that children have regular access to a safe and suitable outdoor area, where activities are provided to support their development, helping them to achieve a healthy lifestyle
- ensure that the planning of learning experiences and the teaching of children takes into account their individual needs and stage of development, to enable all children's learning to be fully supported during activities
- implement an effective system for the performance management of staff to ensure that they are effectively monitored and supported to develop their skills, to fully support children's care, learning and development.

Inspection judgements

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

Generally most children are engaged in activities and make some progress towards the early learning goals during their time at the nursery. When numbers of children attending are low, the children spend their time together as a group. Although this provides opportunities for younger children to have contact with older children, staff have not fully considered the impact that this has on their learning. For example, when a small group of older children are gathered together to take part in an adult-led activity, this session is

disrupted by the younger children who are having a story and singing. As a result, some children become distracted because they are more interested in what the other group is doing. The nursery has a well-equipped under two's room that is suited to the needs of these children. However, staff do not always use this room and therefore opportunities to support children's learning are not maximised. Children do not have regular access to the outdoor play area, which means that opportunities to support their physical development are limited. Staff do not utilise this area to provide children with a wide range of experiences that suit children's different learning styles.

Children show an awareness of routines and most children readily take part in the range of activities available. They enjoy joining in with singing sessions and staff sing each child's name, which ensures they are included in the activity. Resources are laid out with some structure and children play well with each other. Staff generally interact well with children and support their learning by sitting with them during activities. The key-person role has been established and each child has their own individual file, which contains observations and photographs of their time at the nursery. The key persons use assessments to monitor children's progress and identify the next steps in learning. Staff also take information from children's assessments to influence some planning of activities. However, on occasions they do not effectively adapt activities, by taking into account children's individual needs or stage of development. For example, during a mathematics activity, which focuses on counting, size and sequencing, children are not given cards that match their skills and understanding. This makes it too hard for them to complete. Furthermore, the member of staff does not adjust her questioning to ensure that all children fully take part. When she asks 'give me a green, little bear' and a child does not do this successfully, she tells them 'no' each time, but does not explain which is the right choice, or why. As a result of such weakness in the quality of teaching, children are not always developing the key skills to promote their future learning.

Staff routinely share information about children's learning and achievement with parents. They are asked to attend parents evenings and an 'All about me' document is sent home for parents to complete periodically. This gathers information about what children have been doing at home and about their interests and preferences. Staff also provide copies of children's assessments for parents to read at home. The nursery has developed partnerships with local schools to support children who are moving on to school. Transition documents have been completed and forwarded to ensure that teachers have important information about children prior to them starting.

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

Most staff are friendly and approachable. The key person liaises more closely with parents of individual children. However, not all children appear happy and settled because they have not yet developed secure attachments with staff. This is because key persons are identified, but they are not always available during settling-in sessions. As a result, when a new child is upset they seek comfort from another member of staff. Although staff report that they are trying to help the child get to know their key person, they have not given enough consideration to how best to achieve this. Consequently, the child remains upset

for extended periods of time which impacts on their emotional well-being. Furthermore, they do not choose to take the child into the room where they will be based, which has fewer children and staff, and is more suited to their needs.

Children's safety and good health is not fully guaranteed because areas within the nursery pose a risk to the children. Cleaning materials are easily accessible to children in the toilets because they are left on a shelf at child height. In addition to this, the changing mat used for all nappy changing is ripped and split in a number of places exposing the foam inside. This means that the surface is not easy to clean and there is a risk of cross contamination. Staff report that they do place a plastic apron over the mat, but they have been doing this for a number of weeks while they wait for a new mat to be purchased. This does not provide evidence that children's good health and safety is of paramount importance. Furthermore, the outdoor area has a number of hazards that compromise children's safety. A bin is overflowing with rubbish, unused pushchairs are stacked on top of each other, and broken or unused equipment is not stored securely. Although children do not access the outdoor area regularly, staff do not check that it is safe for the periods when it is used. The provider has not ensured that a member of staff who has attended the required training to administer first aid is onsite at all times. This means that children's well-being is further compromised on some occasions.

Children are provided with a variety of healthy meals that are freshly prepared on site each day. These meals include fruit and vegetables which help children to eat a balanced diet and any specific dietary requirements are catered for. Staff routinely share information with parents about what children have been doing and information about children's individual care needs are shared before children start. Detailed documents are completed and discussions between parents and staff take place when children move from the under two's room into the pre-school room. This means that children are provided with continuity of care. Staff prepare children for the move to school by discussing what will happen when they move. They encourage older children to become more independent so that they can manage some of their own care needs. For example, older children take themselves to the toilet when required. This means that they have skills that will support them with this transition. Most children play well together and staff are positive and affectionate, which helps them to feel secure.

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

The inspection was prioritised because Ofsted received information about the welfare and safety of children, specifically with regards to managing children's behaviour and the role of the key person. In addition to this, concerns were raised about the suitability of the educational programme; specifically with regards to access to outdoor play and provision for children who are aged under three years. The inspection found that the nursery was not meeting all of the requirements in these areas. Furthermore, the provider has failed to identify other areas for improvement or take effective action where concerns have been raised by staff or parents. Children are not effectively safeguarded because the provider and management are not clear about the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made

about a member of staff. This puts children at risk. However, staff demonstrate that they understand the role they play in child protection. They can explain how they would report any concerns about a child in their care. All staff who have been employed have been subject to robust identify checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. Although a performance management system has been established, it is not effective in addressing weaknesses in staff practice. For example, although the manager has recently held discussions with staff about using the outdoor area more, on the day of inspection children only played outside for a total of twenty minutes between 8am and 4pm. In addition to this, the outdoor area had not been adequately set up for children to use because staff do not identify and remove all hazards, so that children can play safely.

The management's understanding of their responsibilities to fully meet the learning and development requirements is limited. Monitoring does not effectively support staff with their performance to ensure that they receive support, coaching and training that strengthens their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching is on occasions weak and arrangements for children do not fully take into account their individual needs. Staff fail to respond effectively to children who are finding it difficult to settle. For example, children who would normally be placed in the under two's room spend their first weeks at nursery in the pre-school. Staff report that this is due to low numbers of children, despite the nursery having enough staff to operate both rooms. This means that the youngest children do not benefit from a stable, familiar environment that is more suited to their individual needs. This does not help them to settle and build close relationships with their key staff. However, staff generally manage children's behaviour in a positive way and children who are upset and crying receive affection and care from staff.

The nursery has not implemented effective systems to monitor the overall performance of the provision to ensure that legal requirements are met. As result, there are breaches of requirements of the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register. For example, the provider does not ensure that an appropriately trained first aider is onsite at all times. Management has not given enough consideration for children's safety and therefore their welfare and good health is not guaranteed. Although the nursery has used self-evaluation systems, such as asking parents to complete questionnaires, this has not been done recently enough to impact positively on the provision.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure that at least one person who is caring for children has an appropriate first

aid qualification (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)

- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health or safety of the children and staff attending (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that at least one person who is caring for children has an appropriate first aid qualification (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health or safety of the children and staff attending (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY152795
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	987663
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	17
Name of provider	Tasmiya Ahmed
Date of previous inspection	24/09/2013
Telephone number	0121 358 0481

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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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