

Little Smarties Academy

218 Hamstead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 2RE

Inspection date	03/09/2014
Previous inspection date	03/12/2013

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

- Management roles are not always clear and staff do not follow the correct procedures to safeguard children. Allegations made against staff are not reported to the relevant agencies and their guidance is not followed to ensure that appropriate interventions are made to safeguard children, which is a breach of requirements.
- Parents have poor information about the meals their children will eat. Also, children are not actively encouraged to understand a healthy lifestyle as their meals lack nutritional value.
- Children's health is not protected as there are poor hygiene routines practised in the children's toilets and nappy changing area.
- Observations and assessments are not used effectively to plan a wide range of learning experiences, which reflect children's individual interests and stages of development. As a result, not all children make sufficient progress in their learning and their emotional well-being is not always fully promoted.

It has the following strengths

- Children have opportunities to visit the local park and play outdoors in the spacious garden, which promotes their understanding of the wider world.
- Younger children make progress in their physical skills as their room is spacious and comfortable and they are able to use wheeled toys indoors.

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 and outdoor areas used by children.
- The inspector spoke to the provider, staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, staff, parents and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with the children and looked at a sample of records and policies relating to children's welfare, health and safety.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of children's activities with the manager of the nursery.

Inspector

Susan Rogers

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Smarties Academy was registered in 2013 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is privately owned and is one of two nurseries in the same ownership. The nursery operates from five rooms in a converted detached house in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It opens on Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, all year round, with the exception of bank holidays. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, one member of staff holds a degree in early years, one member of staff has a level 2 qualification and the remainder have level 3 qualifications. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 20 children attending, who are within the early years age range. 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. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review procedures for reporting allegations made against staff and ensure signs of possible abuse and neglect are responded to promptly; this refers to notifying agencies with statutory safeguarding responsibilities without delay about any concerns about children's safety or welfare
- ensure that the nursery safeguarding policy is followed and support guidance and advice is provided for staff by the designated person when there are any safeguarding concerns
- improve planning, so it matches activities to children's individual needs accurately and ensure observations and assessments are precise enough to help build on children's progress
- extend the systems in place for the performance management of staff, for example, by strengthening the supervision arrangements, so they are provided with coaching and training to enable staff to fully support the needs of all children and to help raise their attainment to the highest level
- ensure that there are clear management roles in place, that staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and foster a culture continuous communication to ensure the smooth and effective running of the nursery at all times
- promote children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle by providing meals that are consistently nutritious and well balanced and protect children's health by ensuring the children's toilets, nappy changing areas and children's potties are maintained in a clean and hygienic condition
- ensure that parents are provided with accurate up-to-date information about the meals and snacks their children will eat
- ensure children's emotional well-being is appropriately promoted, for example, by ensuring staff offer appropriate support and reassurance if children are distressed or insecure in a new environment.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff gather information from parents before their children start and use these to understand and support their different needs. They observe children's activities, however, these observations are not sufficiently robust to plan effectively for the next steps in their learning. As a result, staff do not have a clear understanding of the children's different stages of development and the quality of teaching and learning is variable. At times, staff watch children rather than engage with them and sometimes do not ask them questions to extend their ideas and critical thinking. The manager does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively, which has an impact on the progress children make in their learning and development. This also limits opportunities for staff to plan activities that provide children with enough interest and challenge to support their learning. For example, children of a mixed age group sit together with staff during circle time. The activities provided do not engage all children. Some children listen avidly while younger children are clearly uncomfortable, do not participate and are bored. Staff do not recognise this and do not provide alternative activities for these children despite the fact there are other accessible rooms and resources nearby. As a result, staff do not make the most of the available learning opportunities, so some children make poor progress. Although, there are weaknesses, some staff do engage with children, helping them to develop. They encourage children to identify colours, pictures and numbers during circle time. However, the size of the group makes it difficult for the less confident children to see the pictures and feel included. Some younger children become distressed during the day and this makes it difficult for them to learn as they are not reassured by staff.

Younger children have a spacious environment where they can explore and use wheeled toys. They enjoy singing together during the 'hello' song at the beginning of the day. This extends their communication skills and helps them to learn the names of their friends. Children's physical skills are promoted as they use the slide and climbing frame outdoors and enjoy experimenting with the properties of sand. Staff collect words from parents to help support children, who speak English as an additional language. Some activities help children to prepare for school, such as discussions and stories. Staff complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years and to a certain extent, this helps staff to plan for the next stage in their learning and to identify areas in which they may require further support. Parents are provided with a daily contact sheet, which records their child's routines. Staff talk to parents about the activities their children have taken part in at the setting, which encourages them to support their children's learning at home. Children have access to an outdoor play area where they use a range of wheeled toys to support their physical skills and coordination. They visit the local park, which helps them to learn about the environment around them.

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

Staff do not fully understand the needs of children when they are distressed and do not provide care that is appropriate to their individual needs. This makes some children feel uncertain and insecure in their new surroundings because if they are distressed, they are not always offered reassurance. Senior staff advise junior staff not to comfort children when they are crying or distressed. Instead, they try to distract children, which is not always successful and does not support their emotional well-being. However, children

transferring from one room into another are supported by a gradual introduction and after discussions with their parents, which encourages them to feel confident and enjoy the experience. Children are encouraged to drink regularly during the day and staff are mindful of their safety and encourage them to sit down as they enjoy their drinks. However, there is a lack of clarity in respect of management responsibilities, which results in confusion during meal preparations. As result, the lunchtime meal is prepared very quickly, using convenience foods. Although, children are provided with fresh fruit for dessert, the resulting lunchtime meal has poor nutritional value. This does not promote children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, the displayed menu is not followed, which misleads parents about the food children eat at lunchtime. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before their meals and enjoy eating their meals in positive social surroundings as they chat to each other and staff. Staff help younger children eat and encourage older children to become independent as they feed themselves. Children enjoy daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air and sunlight, which contributes towards a healthy lifestyle. Staff monitor children's activities to make sure they are safe when they play. There is a risk assessment in place that promotes children's safety on the premises and when they go outdoors on visits to the local park. For example, staff sweep away harmless berries and fallen leaves from the outdoor play area before children play outdoors to ensure they do not slip or fall. Staff implement appropriate behaviour management strategies. For example, staff praise good behaviour. They raise older children's awareness of potential hazards, such as sitting correctly on chairs and taking care when they climb the stairs. Children are encouraged to recognise when they are thirsty and become aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies. There are regular routines, which help to prepare children for school, for example, lining up to go into the dining room for lunch and washing their hands. This helps children to acquire some of the personal skills that they need to be ready for school.

Most children are settled within the nursery and are familiar with their surrounding and the nursery routines. Staff discuss children's sleep arrangements with their parents, so that the length of their sleep complies with their parents' wishes. Children's sleep is monitored and staff reassure them when they wake and understand their need to wake gently. Managers ensure that there is a high staff ratio when children are taken outside the nursery on outings and ensure younger children are able to enjoy outings also by providing push chairs. There is an appropriate range of equipment and resources for the ages and abilities of the children who attend and these are stored at a low level, so that children of all ages can access these. Children's health is compromised because of poor hygiene in the children's bathrooms. Although, potties are emptied after children have used them, they are not cleaned and are left on the floor where children can reach them. Toilets are not cleaned in between children using them and soiled nappies are left on the floor of the bathroom when there are children crawling around the area. Staff do not remove plastic gloves after changing nappies and continue to carry out other duties, such as packing children's bags, which places children at risk of cross-infection.

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

This inspection was prioritised following concerns raised about the provider's ability to safeguard children in the nursery. The inspection confirmed that there were breaches in the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and both parts of the Childcare Register. Managers failed to follow procedures to report allegations made against a member of staff. Furthermore, there was a delay by the management team to inform the relevant agencies and Ofsted when concerns had been brought to their attention about children's welfare. This compromises children's well-being and does not assure that they receive the best possible care. Managers have a limited understanding of the safeguarding procedures and therefore, do not follow these correctly when there are concerns regarding children's care. This has resulted in the local authority not being contacted when parents voice their concerns regarding children's care and the nursery conducting their own investigation and making decisions regarding safeguarding concerns. This places children at risk and is a breach of requirements.

The manager also manages another nursery under the same ownership, so spreads her time across the two nurseries. There is a designated deputy but she is sometimes not present, which results in confusion regarding management roles and responsibilities. This results in insufficient monitoring of the educational programme and overall support for staff. As a result, children's progress is inadequate. The lack of consistent management support impacts on the weaknesses in teaching and learning. Monitoring systems to support staff development and progression are not effective and this impacts on organisation, such as the preparation of meals. All staff have a Disclosure and Barring Service clearance in place and managers provide new staff with an induction when they start employment. Effective organisation of staff ensures that there is always a member of staff on-site with a relevant paediatric first-aid qualification. Although, there is some planning in place to improve the nursery, this is not sufficiently robust to identify weaknesses.

Staff exchange information with other settings to enable children to continue with their learning when they move onto full-time school. Parents are informed of children's progress through discussions with staff and receive written feedback on their children's care. However, parents are not fully informed of the food their children eat as food is prepared at short notice and does not follow the menu that is displayed. Discussions with parents show that they are very happy with the care their children receive and they feel staff are friendly and approachable. They are informed of their children's daily progress and staff encourage parents to continue learning at home.

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 children receiving childcare are kept safe from harm; this specifically refers to ensuring all staff are fully aware of their safeguarding role and responsibilities and understand and follow Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and procedures (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that children are kept safe from harm; this specifically refers to ensuring that all staff are fully aware of their safeguarding role and responsibilities and understand and follow Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and procedures (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	EY467307
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	987667
Type of provision	Out of school provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	47
Number of children on roll	20
Name of provider	Little Smarties Academy Limited
Date of previous inspection	03/12/2013
Telephone number	01216791355

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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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