

Inspection of Smartys Day Nursery

The Old Community Centre, Burford Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2UZ

Inspection date: 6 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are settled, content and happy. They demonstrate that they feel safe and secure as they access the indoor and outdoor play areas. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Staff are good role models and help children to understand the importance of respecting each other. Children mirror this positive attitude and are polite and respectful. They show great care and kindness towards each other and staff. For example, children ask staff if they are feeling better following a fall at home. Children form warm relationships with their key person and often return to them for comfort when needed.

Children enjoy activities that are closely linked to their individual needs and interests. They are enthusiastic and concentrate well on activities. Sensitive support from staff ensures all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are meaningfully included. Children enjoy accessing the toys from low-level open shelves placed throughout all rooms. Children develop their independence and self-help skills, for example, as staff encourage them to feed themselves. Staff are sensitive to potential issues caused by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. For example, they kept in touch with families during national lockdowns, helping to promote their well-being and welfare.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Children of all ages show a love of books and reading. Babies use their senses, such as touching different textures, as they explore books. Older children use props as a visual aid when reading, supporting their concentration and recall of the stories.
- Staff use sign language alongside verbal language, to support children's early communication and understanding of the daily routines. This particularly aids babies and children who speak English as an additional language, and they make good progress in their communication skills.
- Staff carefully assess and monitor children's progress, ensuring no child falls behind in their learning. Staff understand what children already know and what they need to do next. They then use this information when planning activities and resources. This means that children have fun while participating in activities that promote their development.
- Parents report that they are updated regularly about their children's progress. Staff feedback at the end of the session highlights children's achievements during the day. For example, children enjoy receiving 'star of the day' and proudly celebrate this with their parent and friends.
- Staff sensitively promote children's emotional well-being. They follow children's home routines, helping children to feel secure and comfortable. However, at times, staff do not share their knowledge and offer parents information that

could aid them in keeping their children safe, for example when sleeping.

- Children extend their understanding of the natural world. For example, they learn about the life cycle of a bee and link this to seeing how honey is made. They grow their own tomatoes, which they then turn into tomato puree for their pizza. Parents take part in cooking activities, supporting them to continue their children's learning at home.
- Managers thoughtfully consider staff training and support the development of staff's knowledge and practice. They offer regular supervision sessions and ensure that each staff member has a manageable workload.
- Children participate in many play opportunities to develop physical skills. For example, older children concentrate as they throw and catch balls and crawl through a tunnel. Staff support babies to stand and start to walk.
- Children enjoy playing outside and access resources, such as the role-play kitchen. However, children who prefer to play and learn outside are not consistently offered a wide range of opportunities that support their learning in all areas, such as mathematics.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding. They are confident in identifying when children may be at risk of harm. They understand how to recognise the dangers posed to children from extreme views and behaviours. Staff understand the importance of responding promptly to a concern relating to a child or an adult. The manager ensures that staff receive regular safeguarding training, so that they are up to date with all current practice and procedures. The manager follows robust recruitment procedures to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- extend the opportunities to support the early mathematical skills of children who prefer to learn in the outdoor environment
- support staff in sharing their knowledge of safety with parents, for example safer sleeping practices for children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY555147
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10174539
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	58
Number of children on roll	72
Name of registered person	Smartys Day Nursery (Hitchin) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP555146
Telephone number	01462441397
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Smartys Day Nursery was re-registered in 2017 and is located in Hitchin. It operates all year round from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are 18 members of staff, nine of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Shazia Kauser

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager carried out a joint observation of an activity with the inspector.
- Several parents shared their views of the setting during the inspection.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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