

Inspection of Smartys Pre-School Nursery

225 Lichfield Road, Stone ST15 8QB

Inspection date: 10 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arriving at the pre-school nursery are welcomed by the warm and caring staff. They quickly become engaged in a range of interesting activities. For example, children manipulate play dough and use a variety of resources to form construction models. Staff identify that using tools enables children to develop hand-to-eye coordination. They also use these opportunities to strengthen hand muscles. This lays the foundations for handwriting later on. Children are eager to learn new skills because staff have high expectations of them.

Staff provide a curriculum that gives clear focus to children's interests and helps all children to make good progress. Children benefit from stimulating learning activities outdoors. They have opportunities to develop their physical skills and use their imaginations well in their play. For example, children become engrossed using bricks and straw to build houses for 'The Three Little Pigs' and delight in acting out the story together. Staff help children to learn simple descriptive language. For example, they say 'strong', 'weak' and 'scary' to challenge children to develop their emerging language. Children behave well. They interact easily with their friends and learn from a young age about sharing with others in their play. Children of all ages learn about emotions, including through stories, rhymes and role play.

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

- The educational programme for children is effective. Staff know children well. They gather information from parents when children join the nursery. This helps the staff to know children's starting points and their wider life outside of the nursery. Staff complete regular assessments and monitor children's achievements, to plan purposefully for their future learning. Staff ensure that there is a clear progression in the curriculum.
- Children of all ages develop a love of books. Staff help bring the books to life by reading with enthusiasm and questioning children about what happens next. This supports children's early literacy skills. However, sometimes, questioning is not always skilful enough to develop more sustained conversations with less confident children.
- The setting strives to promote children's independence and individuality. Children experience a range of traditions and festivities, including the Chinese New Year. They enjoy learning about Valentine's Day and proudly show their finished cards where they have written their own name.
- Staff are proud of the environment and the opportunities for children to freely access activities. Consequently, children are motivated learners who express their preferences. Staff explain, with confidence, why they have prepared an activity and what they want children to learn. However, staff occasionally miss chances to extend children's mathematical knowledge while they play.

- Children develop their physical skills through a range of stimulating experiences. They develop muscle control and coordination as they fill and empty pipettes and test tubes with water to make their scented 'potions'. Children develop their small-muscle skills as they learn to hold scissors and draw pictures.
- All children have a designated key person and build good bonds with all staff. Through recent staffing changes, this system has helped to ensure children's individual needs are being cared for well. Good hygiene measures are in place and children are encouraged to develop independence with their self-care. They enjoy healthy and nutritious meals. Children learn skills that prepare them well for school.
- Parents speak highly of the pre-school nursery. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they do not enter the setting but wait at the door. Staff promote partnership working and provide regular feedback on children's progress. Parents know what their children are learning and understand what they can do at home to support them.
- Members of the management team are knowledgeable and have a clear vision of how they want to develop the nursery further. They reflect on practice and evaluate the setting to ensure that continuous improvements benefit children's learning. Staff are provided with ongoing opportunities to help them develop their practice through regular supervision and taking part in peer-to-peer observations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff focus on children's safety consistently well. They carry out effective risk assessments to keep children safe. Staff are confident in their safeguarding knowledge and know what to do if they have a concern about a child. They understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and are aware of the process to follow if they have a concern about a colleague. The management team ensures there are secure systems to check the ongoing suitability of staff working with children. Staff are deployed effectively to help keep children safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to use consistent and effective questioning techniques to further extend all children's communication and language skills
- help staff to identify further opportunities to develop children's understanding of numbers, counting and mathematical concepts as they play.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY344031
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10116294
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 7
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Smarty's Day Nursery (Stone) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP535129
Telephone number	01785 288992
Date of previous inspection	3 June 2014

Information about this early years setting

Smartys Pre-School Nursery registered in 2006 and is situated in Little Stoke, Staffordshire. The nursery employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, and two hold qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacqueline Coomer

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector and the deputy manager completed a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- A joint observation of a teaching activity was carried out by the inspector and the pre-school nursery manager.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of relevant records and documentation. This included evidence of staff suitability and training.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the pre-school nursery management team.

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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