

Inspection of Smiths Children

St. Lukes Church, Victoria Road, CAMBRIDGE CB4 3DZ

Inspection date: 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	GoodGood
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children receive a warm welcome from staff, when they arrive at the setting. They show they feel happy and safe in staff's nurturing care. All children have formed strong attachments to their key person. For example, babies nestle in staff's arms when they are tired or upset. Young babies show increasing interest in their surroundings. Staff gently support and guide babies, which gives them the confidence to explore.

Staff get to know children well and are sensitive to their individual needs. For example, babies smile as they recognise familiar adults. Staff talk to older babies to support their emerging language skills. Babies benefit from effective back-and-forth interactions, that help lay firm foundations for their language and cognitive development.

Children's behaviour is good. Older children are learning to manage their feelings and are beginning to understand how their behaviour affects others. Staff help children to develop the social skills they need to play together. They lead by example, encouraging children to listen to each other, take turns and share resources. Staff praise children when they have tried hard, which develops their self-esteem.

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

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff stayed in contact with children and their families when they were not able to attend the setting. Staff helped parents to guide their child's learning at home, providing activities and information to support them during this time.
- The manager ensures that adult-to-child ratios are always maintained. She makes sure that staff have the necessary qualifications and knowledge to fulfil their role and responsibilities. The manager provides effective supervision, ensuring staff have regular opportunities for training. Staff work well together. They say they enjoy working at the setting and they feel well supported.
- Staff have a good knowledge of their key children. They understand what children need to learn next and use information from their observations of children to guide their planning. Occasionally, staff do not plan enough rich experiences for older children, that challenge them and extend their learning.
- Staff promote children's good health and encourage them to be physically active. Children follow sensible hygiene routines and understand the importance of washing their hands before eating. Older children competently attend to their personal needs and help themselves to water throughout the day. Babies enjoying sitting together to eat. Staff encourage them to feed themselves, gently offering support and guidance when needed to help babies be successful.

- Older children are confident communicators. They have acquired a wide vocabulary, which they use readily. Staff talk to children during activities, ensuring they pronounce words correctly, and ask questions that engage children's thinking. Children show great interest in the words on a map. They ask, 'What does this word say?' Staff point to the word and tell them the name of the place. Children practise saying the word 'Antarctic'.
- Although children enjoy being outdoors, the curriculum content is not embedded securely across the provision. There is less focus on using it to guide children's learning in the outdoor area in more meaningful ways. Sometimes, children's learning is less purposeful outside.
- Parents praise the quality of the provision and provide positive comments about their children's experiences. They say their children have settled well and enjoy an interesting range of activities. Parents say they are, generally, kept informed and appreciate the effort staff make to care for their children, particularly during difficult times.
- Staff skilfully support children's physical development. Younger babies eagerly crawl to explore the inviting space. They are motivated to pull themselves to standing on the sturdy furniture to select the toys they want to play with. Staff help children to understand about keeping safe. They gently remind them to be aware of any dangers, while encouraging them to take risks in their play under their watchful supervision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The provider has robust recruitment and vetting arrangements in place to help ensure that staff working with children are suitable for their role. Effective staff deployment means that children are well supervised, particularly in the outdoor area. They carry out daily checks to ensure the premises remain safe and secure. Staff have a good understanding of child protection and wider safeguarding issues. They know the importance of acting swiftly to protect children and the procedures to follow. Regular safeguarding training and professional discussions help to keep their knowledge up to date.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- plan and provide more highly challenging activities to extend older children's learning
- strengthen the planning for the outdoor area to provide children with the same rich experiences for learning as those inside.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY437969
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10232760
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	45
Number of children on roll	41
Name of registered person	Smiths Children Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP910952
Telephone number	01223 301 047
Date of previous inspection	9 August 2017 9 August 2017

Information about this early years setting

Smiths Children registered in 2011 and follows the Montessori philosophy. The setting employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one with qualified teacher status. The setting opens from Monday to Friday all year round, with the exception of bank holidays and one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Emma Bright

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed activities indoors and outside and assessed the impact these have on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss and understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised. The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector had discussions with staff at appropriate times during the inspection. She took account of parents' views through verbal and written feedback.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the manager about the leadership and management of the setting. The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including the safeguarding procedures and evidence of the suitability of staff.

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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