

Inspection of Smarties Nursery

Postley Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6TL

Inspection date: 20 April 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. They enter happily and join in activities enthusiastically. Children develop the skills they need for the next stage in their learning. Staff skilfully support babies and toddlers to develop very good physical coordination. They pull themselves up on furniture and, spurred on by the very positive response they receive, develop the confidence to practise walking.

Children learn new vocabulary as staff target key words during activities. Throughout the nursery, children use their rapidly developing language as they play. Older children engage in complex conversations. They learn to listen to others and develop good social skills. They concentrate for very long periods as they complete puzzles, make and decorate sandcastles, and create unique and expressive artwork.

All children behave extremely well. They interact with each other very politely, following the good example set by the staff. There are spaces in each group room where children can choose to spend time if they want to rest or play quietly. Children's strong emotional well-being is evident. For example, a child happily sings as they wash their hands in the bathroom. They make up the words and use excellent intonation and expression.

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

- Leadership and management of the nursery are strong. The manager has clear aims for children's learning and shares her vision well with staff. She offers good support and supervision for staff, and observes their practice to check that their knowledge remains up to date. Students on placement feel well supported. They are given the opportunities and coaching they need to complete the requirements of their course.
- The manager monitors and evaluates all aspects of the provision effectively. She successfully identifies areas for improvement and implements appropriate changes. For example, a reorganisation of space and resources has created a very cosy, inviting environment for babies and toddlers to explore. In addition, staff have attended training to specifically focus on enhancing teaching for the youngest children.
- Staff interact very warmly with the children and create a relaxed atmosphere. They offer support and encouragement for children to explore their own ideas. Staff teach children skills such as how to use tools to spread glue and how to operate scissors. They set out resources for children to use independently and give them plenty of time to practise and master each skill. Children develop confidence in their abilities and become very independent learners.
- There are good arrangements to support children with special educational needs

and/or disabilities. Staff work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure that children's care and learning needs are understood and met. The manager spends additional funding appropriately to benefit individual children.

- Overall, partnerships with parents are positive. Parents praise the staff and report that their children are very happy to attend. Staff keep parents up to date with information about their child's progress. However, some information provided by parents is not shared effectively with staff. For example, when children start at the nursery, parents provide details of their ethnicity and other languages spoken in their home. This information is not always shared effectively with staff. Therefore, although staff are largely successful in promoting children's confidence and individuality, they sometimes lack knowledge that would help them to enrich children's sense of self-identity.
- Staff have lists of key words in a range of different languages. This, along with picture cards and basic sign language, helps them to communicate with children who have limited English. However, opportunities to celebrate some children's full language development are slightly impacted as staff are not always aware of all the languages they speak or hear.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding and has a thorough understanding of her role. All staff complete regular training to ensure that they retain an up-to-date knowledge of child protection issues. This includes wider safeguarding issues, such as the risks posed by exposure to extreme views and beliefs. There are robust recruitment procedures, and the manager monitors the ongoing suitability of staff. The premises are secure, and staff understand how to identify and manage risks in the environment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- share information provided by parents more effectively to enable staff to have the fullest possible picture to reflect and build on individual children's backgrounds and experiences
- strengthen the arrangements to support children who speak English as an additional language.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2502387
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10233290
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Edseco Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2502385
Telephone number	01622 692374
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Smarties Nursery registered in 2019 and is located in Maidstone. The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven hold relevant early years qualifications. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Liz Caluori

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager led the inspector on a tour of the nursery and discussed the educational programmes.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children during a range of activities indoors and outside.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, parents, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- A range of relevant documentation was scrutinised.

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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