

Inspection of Little Smarties Nursery Ltd

Bakers Lane, West Hanningfield, Chelmsford CM2 8LD

Inspection date: 19 May 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 are happy in the relaxed, nurturing and very pleasant nursery environment. They settle well, and those who are new to the nursery quickly adjust to new people and places. Children benefit from the attention of kind and caring staff. They have their care needs met by staff who know them well. Children and staff have positive relationships that enable children to seek comfort when they need it. Staff have high expectations for all children who attend the nursery, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children's behaviour is good. Whenever children's behaviour falls below what is expected, staff gently support and guide them to find solutions. They help children to develop the skills they need so that they learn how to manage their feelings and emotions. Children are polite and well mannered. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Children of all ages have very good opportunities to participate in group activities, and are equally able to choose to observe or try something different. Children relish time in the garden looking for minibeasts, and celebrate their achievements when they find a very long worm in the big tyre. Children are very curious and show lots of interest in the way it moves. They excitedly show it to others in their group.

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

- The provider and the curriculum manager describe the early years curriculum that they have developed. It covers all areas of learning and helps to ensure that children gain the knowledge and skills that they need for the next stage in their education. There is a strong focus on helping children to become independent, to build successful relationships and to acquire effective communication skills. Staff implement the curriculum well. They understand what children need to know and the skills they need to master. They are beginning to use sign-supported speech to aid communication. Toddlers enjoy signing the days of the week when they sing their morning welcome song.
- Staff help children to learn about and explore the natural world. They create interesting experiences and opportunities for children to observe the life cycle of small creatures. Older children are fascinated by the changes they see as the caterpillars form a chrysalis and hang from the netting in their cage. Children talk confidently about what will happen next. They use books to help support their learning and to help them explain to others about life cycles.
- Children are interested in the activities. They like sensory play, where babies explore textures and make patterns with their hands in whipped cream. Children are captivated by natural materials. They make small models of bees and ladybirds, and model faces from dough using tiny pine cones, twigs and leaves to make facial features. Children show that they are creative and imaginative.

- Staff place a strong focus on promoting children's communication and language skills. They help children to listen, follow instructions and build their vocabulary. For example, staff organise group activities where children listen to stories and, in some groups, each child takes a turn to share a favourite experience with the others. Children participate well and many show that they have good concentration and recall. However, these activities do not always engage all children and they are sometimes expected to sit for too long, which leads to them becoming restless.
- Parents speak highly of the staff and the way they make children feel safe and secure. They compliment staff for the excellent communication and call them 'amazing'. Parents say their children 'have come on in leaps and bounds'. Parents appreciate the care and attention given to meeting children's dietary and medical needs, and the opportunities children have to spend time with Barclay, the dog. They value the regular updates about their children's learning and the support staff provide to the whole family.
- Staff speak highly of the management team and their colleagues. They say that managers take staff well-being seriously. Staff have good opportunities for high-quality training. They explain how training has a positive impact on staff practice and the quality of education. Managers evaluate what works well and what can be improved. With staff input, they devise action plans to help bring about improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff across the nursery, working with children of all ages, have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding. This includes recognising the signs that children are at risk of radicalisation and grooming. They know the possible indicators that children are suffering harm. Staff attend regular training to help them keep their knowledge up to date. Staff know which members of the senior team have a designated safeguarding lead role and that they can assist them in making a safeguarding referral. Staff are aware of the nursery policy and procedure for managing a safeguarding concern and how to contact the local safeguarding partnership at the local authority.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff to embed agreed teaching strategies so that they are consistently implemented across the nursery
- support staff to reflect on the organisation of adult-led activities to help them understand when these could be adapted to better meet children's needs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY549918
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10174184
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	0 to 11
Total number of places	100
Number of children on roll	124
Name of registered person	Little Smarties Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP549917
Telephone number	01277 841424
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Smarties Nursery Limited registered in 2017. The nursery is open from 7am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including the senior leadership team who are qualified at level 6. The nursery receives funding for the early education of two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Alison Reeves
Jane Le Marie

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with managers and have taken this into account in the evaluation of the nursery.
- The provider, curriculum manager and inspectors discussed how the provision for children's learning is organised. The inspectors observed interactions between staff and children indoors and outside.
- The curriculum manager, the provider and the inspectors observed and discussed planned activities and the impact these had on children's learning.
- The inspectors spoke to parents who use the setting and considered their views. The inspectors spoke with children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed evidence of qualifications and the suitability of staff working at the setting.

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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