

Smartys Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	146737
Inspection date	27/05/2009
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
Setting address	Old Community Centre, Burford Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2UZ
Telephone number	01462 441397
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Smarty's day Nursery registered in September 1993. The provision operates from The Old Community centre in Hitchin, Hertfordshire and it is operated by the Westmill Community Association. The building is accessed via a ramp. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The provision is open each weekday for 51 weeks of the year and sessions are from 08.00 to 18.00. A maximum of 35 children may attend the provision at any one time. The setting receives funding for Nursery Education. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare register.

There are currently 40 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Five children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or childminders. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 14 staff members. Of these, ten hold relevant childcare qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Planning for the EYFS is largely child-led using creative resources and activities ensuring that children receive experiences that foster good progress. Staff create a very welcoming environment, using comprehensive risk assessments, making sure that children are safeguarded, their welfare needs met and that each child is fully included. Effective links with parents involve them in the day-to-day well-being of their children and those secure relationships help children thrive. Relationships with other settings are developing to assist children's development. Procedures for self-evaluation are robust and ensure continued improvement and outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the use of planning and assessment; ensure that a baseline assessment, involving parents, informs the planning, use the next steps for children and show differentiation to meet individual needs
- develop the educational programme and provision for children's physical development, with particular reference to exploration of natural materials and planning for younger children outdoors
- develop links with all other settings providing for children in the EYFS.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that all children's needs are met. Staff use particularly thorough daily and annual risk assessments to minimise hazards. Staff carry a first aid pack at all times when outdoors, showing evidence

of forward thinking and positive risk assessment. Rooms are inviting and well-resourced with provision freely accessible to children to support choice. Robust safeguarding procedures ensure that children are protected. Security is especially monitored with any visitors identity closely checked before they are admitted. Staff show a genuine desire to promote the best care and opportunities for children. They review and update training through courses such as 'the autistic spectrum', food hygiene, and a group safeguarding children course; this ensures continued development. The robust self-evaluation procedure, which involves all staff and managers, mean that staff have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for development and can implement change to improve outcomes for children.

The managers and staff work well with parents to ensure there is an exchange of general information to promote children's welfare, learning and development. Parents are invited to 'stay and play' at any time, they have parents evenings and regular reports on development. Questionnaires and suggestion boxes invite parents to feedback their views on the care and become involved at the setting. However, parents are not yet involved in a system to establish a baseline starting point for children's development nor are they actively contributing to their progression. This means they are not fully involved in their child's learning journey. Very good systems are developed to involve parents and children with English as an additional language such as learning key words and involving parents in the setting. The provision works closely ensuring inclusion; they follow programmes set for children by other professionals, incorporate signing into all aspects of the care and develop picture timelines to assist children to understand routines. The provision is establishing links with other settings although these are not yet fully developed.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are consistently offered a stimulating range of activities that help them to make good progress in their learning and development. Observation and assessment by key persons is systematic and makes use of spontaneous observation, narrative observation and photographs. Individual 'Learning Journey' folders are produced which are particularly attractive and identify next steps for children. However, whilst staff clearly know their key children very well and plan for individuals, the next steps are not seen to fully feed the planning and there is no challenge or support shown within led activities to ensure that all children achieve their full potential. Staff respond to children's interests. For example, treasure and sensory baskets are used productively with the very youngest children. They explore colour meshes and gel packs, glitter and sound bottles, as well as natural materials such as cereals which they crunch and sprinkle. These activities encourage children's early concentration, creativity and learning skills. They show avid attention to music and singing, swaying and clapping to the beats, exploring their voices and use some basic signing including 'more' and 'finished' exerting some control and developing self-esteem.

Staff support children well and encourage them to play imaginatively. For example, some children become entranced by the workman they see through the window asking questions about why he is on the roof, what the gas bottle and 'fire' they

can see is for, and comparing the gas bottle to the milk churns they saw at the farm during a group visit. Children explore their language discussing safety for the workman, later linking this to their own safety and why climbing ladders alone may be dangerous. Children move on to build houses adapting the blocks indoors and working on the home corner. However, whilst the outdoor area is well-equipped with slides, wheeled vehicles and a playhouse, they have limited opportunities to use and explore natural materials such as bricks, wood or other building materials limiting their continued interest. There is also limited planning or provision for the youngest children outdoors which means they have few opportunities to explore outdoor learning. Older children are very skilled at using the computer and other technology. They choose programmes for art creating drawings, changing colours and competently printing their works. They independently organise turn-taking and show great interest in each others works showing social skill. Tesla lamps are explored as well as magnets, light boxes and metal detectors offering children insight into early science. They avidly cooperate making buildings from blocks seeking and finding shapes, identifying by size, and agreeing on a purpose for their buildings. All children regularly visit the Oughtonhead Nature Reserve seeking insects, fish and observing wildlife and plants. They travel on the bus to visit the library and museum extending their knowledge of their local community.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. They gain an appreciation of personal safety as they practise fire evacuation and take part in excursions discussing road safety for pedestrians or those in vehicles. Children enjoy freshly cooked meals and gain an understanding of healthy eating through projects and understanding each others needs. Staff check the menu at each meal for every child noting if an alternative is required, this is verified by another staff member to ensure that each child's need is met. Children enjoy receiving stickers for positive behaviours or achievements and develop pride in themselves. They use non-verbal communication each day and learn French in daily care, this supports their appreciation of others and helps them to develop a continued interest in the world around them.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met