

Smartys Day Nursery

Old Community Centre, Burford Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2UZ



Inspection date

8 April 2015

Previous inspection date

27 May 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Staff are confident and use purposeful teaching methods. This means that all children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Staff work well with parents. They offer them practical ways to share updates about their children's development at home. They also support parents in extending their children's learning. They inform them of the planning and offer ideas for stories and rhymes that link with this.
- Children enjoy positive interactions with staff and eagerly tell them their news and ideas, thereby developing their language and social skills.
- Staff carefully link activity plans to children's current interests. As a result, children are motivated and eager to participate. They have positive attitudes to learning and this prepares them well for the move to school.
- Safeguarding procedures have been reviewed and strengthened, ensuring that staff promote children's welfare at all times. Staff attend regular safeguarding training and are clear about the process to follow to contact relevant agencies and report any concerns.
- Staff attend further training and put their new knowledge into practice in order to further improve the provision for children. For example, staff working with the youngest children now give greater consideration to the use of effective communication methods.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not always make the most of all routine opportunities to encourage children to develop their skills in critical thinking to the maximum.
- Staff do not always organise resources in the outdoor area so that these are easy to use and enable children to extend their own play to the optimum.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the opportunities for children to think critically during activities and discussions, for example, by asking more open-ended questions and giving children additional time to respond
- enhance the organisation of the outdoor area to ensure that children are always able to make maximum use of the resources and equipment in order to fully extend their play.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the outside area.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the nursery, who is also the nominated person. She carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector talked to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation. She checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the suitability of committee members, the provider's self-evaluation information and improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from information included in the setting's own parent survey.

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Staff have improved the planning procedures, ensuring that activities are now tailored to children's individual needs. Their flexible approach to planning means that they offer children opportunities to explore and experiment. For example, children plant seeds and then play with the compost. A staff member offers them water and the children explore the changing texture and consistency as they add small amounts of water and compost. Children then extend their creativity as they add toy animals and make up stories involving these. On most occasions, staff encourage children's critical thinking. Children work out how to set out the train track so that it fits on a round table. Occasionally, staff do not optimise these opportunities. For example, they direct children's play with the sand and tell them how many plates are needed for snack rather than encouraging them to work this out. Good use of local resources means children have additional learning opportunities. For example, children enjoy walks along the nearby nature trail. They use clipboards to make a record of what they see on their walk, thereby developing their observation and writing skills.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is good

Good organisation means that children get to know the staff in their room and staff are readily available to support them. This aids children in settling. Children form secure attachments to staff and are confident to develop friendships with their peers. Staff support these relationships well. They are good role models and explain issues to children, helping them to share, listen and respect each other. As a result, children are emotionally secure and ready for school. Staff organise indoor areas well, ensuring that resources are accessible and children have space to use them. They do not always organise the outdoor area as well. Occasionally, children are unable to make full use of the resources in order to extend their play to the optimum. Staff implement good daily procedures to support children in understanding hygiene practices. Children clean their teeth after lunch and staff talk with them about the importance of good oral hygiene.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is good

The manager and management committee have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They support staff well and encourage them to use the skills they have developed through gaining their childcare qualifications. For example, staff help assess potential new staff members. This ensures that new staff understand the expectations of the setting and work effectively to promote children's well-being and development. The manager's robust monitoring means that any gaps in children's learning are quickly addressed. For example, staff now efficiently assess the provision for mathematics to ensure that children's skills in this area are extended. Thorough self-evaluation leads to relevant improvements. For example, there are clear plans to extend the provision for older children. Staff now work well with other childcare providers, regularly exchanging assessment information in order to promote children's learning and development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	146737
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	874912
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	39
Number of children on roll	54
Name of provider	Westmill Community Association Committee
Date of previous inspection	27 May 2009
Telephone number	01462 441397

Smarty's Day Nursery was registered in 1993. The nursery employs 14 members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with Early Years Professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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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