

Smart Start Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY345517
Inspection date	13 June 2007
Inspector	Janette Mary White
Setting Address	Smart Start Day Nursery 22-23 Overcliffe, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 0EH
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Registered person	Smart Start Childcare Services Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Crèche

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Smart Start Nursery opened in 2007 and operates from 12 rooms in a converted house. It is situated in the town of Gravesend, Kent. A maximum of 84 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 98 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these 34 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 staff. 10 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing a sound understanding of hygiene because staff explain the importance of washing hands and wiping noses. For example, children say 'germs make you ill, so we must wash our hands'. Staff make sure children wash their hands prior to snack or meal times. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate. Children are protected as there are systems in place to record medication and accidents. However, these records do not always contain all the required details, such as date, time and on some occasions parents have not signed to acknowledge what has happened to their child. The provider has carried out a review of accidents to ensure that any concerns are addressed appropriately. Children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and they are offered a sufficient selection of healthy snacks, such as pears, apples and bananas. Drinking water is readily available for older children and younger children, and babies are offered regular drinks. Older children are able to talk about 'good' and 'bad' foods. For example, they know sweets and crisps are bad and fruit and vegetables are good and help to make you strong. The tables are regularly cleaned. However, children are not encouraged to use plates or bowls. There is no system in place to ensure all children in the preschool rooms have opportunities to access the snack bar system. In addition, resources for younger children do not aid their independence. For example, at snack or lunch times, drinks are provided in jugs which are too large for them to easily lift by themselves. Staff record information regarding special diets, allergies or preferences and this information is kept in the kitchens. Children have sufficient opportunities to access outdoor activities. They are developing control of their bodies and outdoor play improves children's physical skills. For example, they use large bouncy balls and ride bikes to develop their hand and eye co-ordination. Children are aware of the way activity affects their bodies and know when they need a rest. Staff have an appropriate understanding about different types of activities and levels of support. Children are gaining confidence to set their own limits and know when to ask for help. For example, when using the swings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily, settle well and staff support, and comfort children. The fire drill log does not show that the emergency evacuation procedures are practiced regularly enough. Some staff are not aware of which exits they would use, but they all know the identified muster point. Some more able children are aware of what to do in an emergency. Children benefit from playing in a secure and organised environment allowing them to move around freely in the rooms. Stair gates ensure children do not access the stairs unless accompanied by a member of staff. The main entrance is locked and the door is opened by staff. Visitors are challenged and on most occasions their details are recorded. There are sound procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children. The nursery is clean and well maintained and children are supervised when playing outside. This area is enclosed and the space is regularly checked for safety. Outdoor play equipment is checked ensuring it is suitable for children's use. The provider has not ensured that parents have given written permission to transport children. However, parents have given written permissions to take photographs and to apply sun cream. Children have easy access to a balanced range of toys and resources appropriate for their age. There is a sufficient range of toys, furniture and equipment that provide varied opportunities for children to be active or to relax and provide appropriate choices. Child height furniture helps the child's independence. Children's work is displayed and shows staff value children's contributions. Young children are beginning

to understand how to keep safe when they are choosing resources. Sleeping babies are regularly checked by staff and children have identified cots. Staff use resources to meet the individual needs of children. The provider and all staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of balanced activities and experiences within a caring environment. Babies benefit from close contact with staff. They are content and settled because staff spend time talking and playing with them. The setting does not sufficiently use the Birth to three matters framework to promote younger children's learning. Babies and toddlers are beginning to develop an awareness of colours and sounds. They have opportunities to explore and play with interactive toys to support their interest and concentration. They are beginning to develop early communication skills, because staff use routines, including nappy changes and meal times, to engage in verbal contact with them. Children have positive relationships with staff and ask for support or a cuddle. They are beginning to show interest and involvement in a range of accessible activities. Children's starting points are not recorded and this does not help staff to build on what they can already do. Staff have a sound understanding of the range of experiences required to enable babies and children to make progress using their senses and creative abilities. Activities include musical instruments, singing rhythms and action songs, such as 'walking through the jungle'. Preschool children take part in visits to places of local interest, for example, to the library and local pet shop. Children's imaginations and communication skills are encouraged through role play and easily accessible books. However, the preschool children have limited opportunities to express themselves using mark marking through free play activities. Children use resources, such as painting, water, sand and pasta to investigate and represent their experiences and make connections as they play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a basic knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The system of planning a range of activities for children is not based on their individual needs and it does not always clearly identify their next step nor does it evaluate how differentiation works with more or less able children. Most key workers contribute ideas of activities to the theme on the medium and long term planning. Senior staff do not complete evaluations to help staff to focus on the success of activities or on how the setting monitors the overall strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. Children show a sense of belonging as they learn and play together. Most respond to play opportunities and are generally engaged in meaningful activities. They are confident and friendly as they share their ideas and experiences, such as sharing the dough and using tools to make recognisable shapes. Children use pencils to make marks and some are able to write their names using correctly formed letters. However, this mainly takes place at the drawing table and hinders their free play opportunities. They are developing a sense of time and begin to differentiate between past and present experiences. For example, they talk about playing in the garden yesterday and playing with shells and stones today. They enjoy action songs and circle games. They have access to a range of books and children sit and 'pretend' to read to each other. Some more able children are confident with numbers and counting, such as counting the number of cups at snack time. They are beginning to use language, such as 'big' or 'little' to describe the size of cars. Children are developing hand eye co-ordination. Some are competent and able to click and drag the mouse as they follow simple instructions on the computer. The use of the outdoor area ensures

children's developing physical skills are regularly promoted. The areas are divided with small fences to ensure the safety of the children and they know they must not run in front of the swings and only push each other if other children wait on the grassed area. Children have opportunities to develop skills, such as balancing, climbing, riding a bike or running. Overall the provision plans and provides activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting and are generally sociable. Staff gather information regarding children's background needs, such as their cultural background, religion and language at home. There are opportunities for the inclusion of children for whom English is an additional language, but this does not always consider the basic words in their home language. Examples of positive images are displayed and supports the children in developing a balanced view of society. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are included in all experiences. Their needs are addressed in partnership with parents and outside agencies. For the older children group rules are not promoted in a way to enhance children's self help skills, such as in pictures and words. All children are offered gentle reminders to be kind to each other. More able children help at tidying the toys away. Babies and young children show a sense of belonging because they are regularly acknowledged and affirmed by staff. Staff gather some information on the children and this is used to help settle them, such as routines. This helps children settle and causes minimal disruption when they join the nursery. For example, babies choose their rest or sleep time. Young children attempt to feed themselves and staff encourage them to say thank you.

The partnership with parent is satisfactory. Parents do not have opportunities to contribute to children's starting points or to their child's assessment and progress. Most children have contact books, which the parents can record what has happened since the child was last at nursery. Staff do record for younger children food intake and soiled or wet nappies. They do note some activities the child has taken part in. Parents have given written permission to seek emergency treatment on behalf of their child, although this does not include advice. Children benefit as the staff have positive relationships with parents. Information is shared and parents feel their children are included, they are happy with the service and know who is their child's key worker. Parents of children receiving funding for nursery education feel they receive some information. Although, some parents are not aware of Birth to three matters framework. The provider has a basic understanding of the policy for parents to make a complaint. The parents are confident that they know what to do if they have a complaint. There is a system to record complaints and they now have a summary for parents to see. Children have secure relationships with members of staff and other children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are organised so that children feel secure and comfortable. Staff caring for babies, toddlers and preschool children have a clear understanding of their role. Most staff, including the manager, are appropriately qualified and vetted, and children are never left alone with unvetted persons. New staff have an induction period and this covers some procedures, such as health and safety and fire drills. Staff appraisals are undertaken each year and their development is addressed. Contingency plans are not in place to support sufficient staffing

levels at peak times. Children have plenty of space to move around and make choices as they play. Resources are organised to encourage safe and easy access for all children. Policies and procedures help to promote children's welfare, care and learning. Most of the policies and procedures are understood by staff including child protection issues. However, some staff are not aware of the procedure for allegations of abuse made against them. In addition, some staff are not familiar with the procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or an uncollected child. The registration system shows the hours of attendance for children and staff. The registration and insurance certificates are displayed for parents in the main corridors.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Satisfactory progress has been made in the educational provision to enable children to make sound progress. Staff have an understanding of the children's needs and present positive role models for them to learn from. They have a basic knowledge of the Foundation Stage and complete observations on children, although these do not always influence the child's next step. Staff work as a team and senior staff provide adequate leadership. They are reviewing the provision through staff meetings. There are occasions when some children are not fully challenged by the activities, but they enjoy their play and are making acceptable progress in their learning. Staff consistently use routines to promote a sense of familiarity amongst the children. The provider is continuing to improve the recruitment and vetting procedures. Criminal Records Bureau information now meets data protection procedures. There are details of the registered person and all persons employed who have contact with the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received one complaint about this provider. This complaint relates to National Standard 2 – Organisation. The provider was requested to conduct an investigation. She confirmed that there is a problem regarding staffing ratios and a number of actions have been taken to address this issue and ensure compliance with the national standards. Ofsted therefore took no further action in this matter. The provider remained qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- obtain written permission from parents for transporting children in a vehicle.
- ensure children's activities and experiences are promoted by continuing to develop knowledge and understanding of Birth to three matters framework.
- ensure parents are given opportunities to contribute to children's starting points and to their child's assessment and progress.
- ensure there are contingency plans in place to provide sufficient staffing levels.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure there is a system for planning a suitable range of activities for children, which is based on their individual needs.
- develop further opportunities for children to express themselves using mark making through free play activities.
- ensure that planning takes account of differentiation and extends learning for less and more able children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk