

# Seedlings Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY279371
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Leoarna Mathias
<b>Setting Address</b>	Dunstone Primary School, Shortwood Crescent, PLYMOUTH, PL9 8TQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 491547
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Seedlings PLC
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Sessional care

## 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](http://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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Seedlings PLC was registered in 2004 and operates from a classroom within Dunstone Primary School. The pre-school is on a residential estate in Plymstock, which is on the outskirts of the city of Plymouth. It is run as a community business venture and is managed by a committee of local people, including staff, teachers and parents. The nursery is currently open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:30, for 37 weeks of the year, term-time only. Seedlings also offers daily before and after school care, from 07:55 to 08:55 and 15:20 to 18:00.

Seedlings has sole use of one classroom with its own toilets. There is also access to the large school hall, the school computer suite and library, and parents' room for quiet, small activities. The large playground outside the classroom is available for outdoor play. There are plans to fence an area of playground and grass surrounding the classroom, to give sole use of an outdoor play space.

There are currently 64 children on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs eight staff, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, with five of those staff working towards higher qualifications. The group receives support from the Local Authority, and is a member of the Pre School Learning Alliance. The group is currently undertaking the Bristol Standard quality assurance programme.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted within the setting. They enjoy a healthy range of snack items and readily access drinking water and other healthy drinks throughout the day. Children are consistently encouraged to wash their hands after toileting and before food, and children also demonstrate an understanding of why germs can hurt us. Staff maintain eating and activity areas in a hygienic fashion, and the majority of staff are first aid trained, so that children are cared for by adults who prioritise all aspects of their health. Documentary systems that promote children's medical health are in generally good order; only minor amendments to the process by which parent's consent to staff seeking emergency medical advice and treatment for their children, required to bring them fully in line with the National Standards.

Children's physical development is progressing well, as a result of the many appropriate measures taken by the staff. For example, they ensure children have very regular access to outside play, with outdoor areas available to children throughout the session, whenever the weather allows. Children move, both indoors and out, with confidence and safety. Similarly, staff are consistent in encouraging children to 'do for themselves', so that children are quickly learning to pour their own drinks, use scissors and mark making materials, and to manipulate a wide range of objects.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The safety of children is a clear priority within the setting. Access to the provision is very closely monitored by the whole team, and visitors to the setting are quickly recorded. In this way, adults overcome the particular challenges of operating within a multi-use building. Children are also closely supervised both indoors and out, at all times, and any hazards that arise are promptly responded to. Formalised risk assessments, which are thorough and regular, further underpin the safety of children. Fire drills are regular, done with the whole school, and are evaluated. The child protection policy is particularly thorough, and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to monitoring children for any issues that may arise. Staff also ensure that they access regular training in this area, and as a result of all of these measures, the welfare of children is well promoted during their attendance at the setting.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Supportive and warm relationships between children and staff are very much in evidence within the setting. Children are settled and engaged throughout the session, readily gravitating towards staff for praise, encouragement and guidance. The good practice of staff is further underpinned by the detailed knowledge of each child's strengths, challenges and personal lives; this enables them to offer individualised support to children at all times. Children attending the out of school provision enjoy similar levels of support, as close working relationships exist between

the two staff groups, who often share tasks. All staff demonstrate a good understanding of how children develop and learn, planning an interesting range of activities across all parts of the provision.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children sustain their interest in both self chosen and adult led activities, for substantial periods of time. They are enthusiastic about their participation, demonstrating a curiosity about the world around them, and a willingness to learn. For example, they extend a imaginative play activity using space rockets and astronauts, by making a moon and creating rockets using recycled materials; these activities are skilfully supported by staff. Children also show genuine concern and consideration for each other, using good manners, and helping with group tasks, such as tidy up time, with enthusiasm.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Children use their good conversation skills extensively throughout their play. They enjoy making use of the inviting book corner, often asking for stories to be read to them, or using role play resources to act out familiar tales. They also enjoy mark making and painting, independently and with adult support. Children are encouraged to problem solve and to use numbers throughout the session, deciding, for example, how many cups are needed for each table at snack time. Children use numbers in the play without prompting, and a weekly emphasis in planning on a comparative word, such as 'huge', helps children to grasp these concepts. Children are developing a strong sense of time and place, as staff use good strategies for encouraging children to be aware of how time passes, as well as participating in activities that give them a sense of geography, other cultures and seasons. Similarly, children access good quality resources that give them a clear understanding of both how things work, and information technology. Children particularly enjoy creative activities, making good use of craft resources. They extend their role and imaginative play for considerable periods. They are given plentiful opportunities by staff to plan their own activities and to express their ideas, as well as enjoying music making, using everyday household items.

Staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to child centred practice, as they readily enter children's worlds, successfully facilitating children's own choices and curiosity. There are only very occasional examples of staff not maximising naturally arising opportunities to promote learning; for much of the time, staff are using their secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and of how children learn, to beneficial effect. They plan a varied and interesting range of activities, and closely observe children's participation in, and contribution to, the activities. Staff then regularly collate their observations of children to form a detailed picture of how children are progressing. This valuable information is then promptly used to revise current planning to further meet the learning needs of all children.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Detailed and appropriate equal opportunities and special educational needs policies are in place, and are fully implemented by staff who possess a clear grasp of the importance of working with children at an individual level. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are properly supported, as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is skilled in accessing outside support for children, and for tailoring the programme to give children the extra support they may need. She is further helped in this task by the high ratios of adults to children maintained by the setting, which gives children plentiful access to one to one and small group support for

their development. These high ratios also enable the staff to give children good amounts of praise and encouragement, and as such, children behave well throughout the day, responding positively to the guidance they receive. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents access an informative notice board and useful prospectus, as well as a half-termly newsletter. Parents are invited to participate in the work of the group, and good relationships between staff and parents, that enable valuable exchanges of information, are in evidence. Parents are encouraged to access the records of their child's developmental progress at least once a term, and to further support their child's learning at home through the book lending scheme.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The staff team maintain high ratios of adults to children at every session, and are clear as to their deployment, giving children access to a high level of support for their learning and play. The play leader demonstrates a good understanding of the regulatory requirements within which the group operates, keeping documentation in good order and regularly reviewing policies and procedures with the help of the committee. Registers of attendance are clear and accurate. The setting meets the range of needs of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management is good. The whole team demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement through training, and appraisal systems work well to identify the continuous professional development needs of all staff. Similarly, they are well able to reflect on their practice, evaluating teaching on a daily basis, and meeting regularly to refine plans and ensure that they are building the individual needs of children into the ongoing programme. They also work closely with the school, in particular the Foundation Stage team, to ensure a smooth transition from the setting to school attendance.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the group were asked to improve nappy changing facilities and to ensure parents acknowledge the administration of medicines in writing. New equipment has been installed for nappy changing, and procedures for administering medicines have been amended, better promoting children's medical health needs.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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.

## 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### 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):

- revise the documentary procedures that request parental consent for staff to seek emergency medical advice and treatment for their child

#### **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):

- continue to increase staff's ability to maximise on naturally arising opportunities to progress children's learning and development

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)