

Smart Start Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	13/06/2011
Inspector	Claire Parnell
Setting address	Smart Start Day Nursery, 22-23 Overcliffe, GRAVESEND, Kent, DA11 0EH
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

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 registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is open each weekday from 7:30am to 6:30pm for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 120 children on roll within the early years age range. Of these 72 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 26 staff including apprentices and those who work in the kitchen. Nineteen staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards Level 2 qualification and three staff who currently hold a Level 2 are working towards Level 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The unique needs of children are promoted well and staff work together to meet children's learning and welfare needs, although some systems lack consistent approaches from some staff. Children make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage due to the wealth of resources, equipment and activities and the ethos of child initiated play. Strong links with parents and outside agencies helps to promote continuity for children although some information from parents needs to be used more effectively. The management team work alongside the staff team to self-evaluate the setting and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and to identify the areas for development within the setting. Action plans and regular monitoring is used very effectively to maintain continuous improvements to promote better outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use consistent systems to value linguistic diversity for all children
- further develop systems to share, gain and use initial and ongoing children's development information with parents and carers
- provide consistent approaches by staff to interact, challenge and stretch children's learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are exceptionally well protected because high priority is given to safeguarding children. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of their duties to protect children from harm and know procedures to follow if they have concerns about children in their care. The manager has updated her training for child protection and ensures that staff are given the latest information, enabling consistent approaches to safeguarding. All staff have relevant checks that are re-checked every three years to ensure continuing suitability to work with children. A thorough induction and probationary system fully complements this process to protect children's well-being. Consistent and very thorough risk assessments are in place to enable children to play in very safe and secure environments. A well thought out outings procedure is implemented when a child is accompanied on a local trip to provide very safe opportunities for children to explore the local community.

Staff work cohesively as a team to provide ongoing developments and enhancing children's experiences through an effective improvement plan, which is continuously monitored and evaluated for the effectiveness of its actions. The setting's service is monitored through regular senior meetings as well as by professionals such as the school improvement partnerships. The setting uses a self-evaluation system to monitor its strengths and areas for improvement. Recommendations from the last inspection have been carefully actioned to promote better outcomes for children and considered to be a positive aspect of sustaining ambitious targets for the future. Staff identify areas within the setting to change, adapt and improve to ensure children benefit from the provision offered.

Children access a wealth of resources in all the rooms as well as a very well established outside play area. Staff work flexibly to enable children to initiate their play in their chosen place. For example, when a child wants additional craft resources from another room, staff quickly guide them to where they can find it. The indoor and outdoor environment is well thought out with a self-selection system for all children of all ages and stages. Staff's knowledge and skills, gained through training, is used effectively as a resource to share new initiatives and implement new skills. For example, some rooms have introduced 'sign along' to enhance children's communication skills and self-esteem.

The setting promotes inclusive practices effectively, most of the time. Children with English as an additional language have language valued and respected in the majority of rooms. Staff are well informed about children's home languages and confidently converse in simple phrases and words, helping children to feel welcome and secure. However, this is not always consistent throughout the nursery. Resources positively reflect equality and diversity, helping children to share in the experiences of other faiths, cultures, disabilities and home lives. Most staff have a clear knowledge of children's backgrounds and use this information effectively to reflect their individuality positively.

Parents make very positive comments about how they feel part of the setting and feel valued for their contributions. They have ample opportunities to speak to staff discussing their child's time at home and their participation in the setting. They access a wealth of displayed, written and pictorial information within the setting giving them clear information about what their children have been doing and what is planned for in the future. They have regular access to development records and are encouraged to share information about their children's development at home, although this is not always effectively used to inform their children's future development plans. New parents are asked for plenty of information about their child when they settle them in but by gaining this information at this time, the key person is not able to plan for the child's first day at the setting by providing familiar activities and resources that help children to settle and feel secure in this new environment.

The setting understands the importance of working alongside other professionals within the community and through a good support network. This maintains continuity of care and provides guidance and support for the staff to enable individual children's needs to be met and monitored successfully.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children participate in an extensive range of stimulating opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, due to the effective activities and self-selection of equipment made accessible to them. Children arrive confidently and happily say goodbye to their parents. They move freely around rooms making independent choices with effective interaction from most staff. They encourage mainly child-initiated play where children self-select and decide what they want to do. Therefore children are confident and independent learners, actively engaging in learning opportunities. However, some staff are sometimes limited in skills to support children's learning further and do not always stretch children during their play.

Children communicate confidently using verbal speech and gestures. Older children use complex language to describe and express their feelings. All children in the nursery independently mark make using a range of tools from their creative workshops as well as shaving foam. Very young children demonstrate advanced skills, holding pencils in a pincer grip and using precise movements that lead to pre-writing skills. Children thoroughly enjoy participating in story time and show interest in books, due to the layout and inviting environments and the accessibility of books both indoors and outdoors. Children are inquisitive learners who enjoy exploring materials, especially in the outdoor area. Children investigate the new pumping station, discovering how to pump water into trays and watching where the water flows. They are intrigued by technology finding out how things work and how to make changes. Children use computers competently and use others forms of technology on a daily basis such as CD players and cameras demonstrating their understanding of cause and effect. Children regularly explore the local community with the staff, gaining an understanding of the diverse society in which they live

and play. They visit the local temple and celebrate festivals throughout the year. Children have an innate skill at problem solving, due to the resources that are accessible to them. They use craft materials and tubes to thread, discovering if pipe cleaners fit through holes as well as calculating how many snacks they ate at morning snack, using their fingers to work out the numbers. Children's imagination is encouraged in dance and creative activities, choosing which songs to dance to and which materials and tools to use for their creations. The mainly child-initiated play encourages children to think for themselves and help them to gain the skills for the future.

Staff provide a flexible approach to planning children's learning. Their individual learning is managed by highlighting each child's learning intention within the planning. All staff refer to this so that learning opportunities are not missed. The planned activities link to areas and stages of development for targeted children as well as activities requested and planned by children themselves. Children's achievements are spontaneously recorded, with clear links to areas and stages of development and effectively used to develop an overall profile of children's development which is shared with the parents every few months. Observations are written and photographic to show how a child has progressed within the Early Years Foundation Stage, demonstrating that staff have a good understanding of the curriculum.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles which is encouraged by all staff. The setting has received the highest award for hygiene by environmental health and this is demonstrated on a daily basis. Children independently use bathrooms and displayed information reminds them to wash their hands and why. They use paper towels to dry themselves and most children automatically put these in the bin. Nappy changing facilities are very clean and hygienic with excellent procedures followed by all staff such as gloves, aprons, anti-bacterial sprays and wipes for mats. Children are encouraged to prepare snacks by peeling fruit and spreading their own crackers, talking about healthy foods and making choices for themselves. They help themselves to wipes to clean their hands when they get sticky. Children access fresh drinking water throughout the day. Staff are fully aware of children's dietary needs and the kitchen is kept informed of any changes. Meals are prepared each day, relating to children's individual needs. For example, the setting cooks alternative meals for children with allergies and restrictions. The majority of staff hold paediatric first aid certificates that are displayed around the nursery and parents give permission for emergency treatment. Children demonstrate a developing understanding of their own bodies by removing their jackets after running around in the garden.

Children have a high sense of safety within the setting, towards themselves and others. They confidently ask for help. The children develop a sense of safety through the information displayed at their height in photographs reminding them to carry chairs correctly, use the stairs safely and to use scissors safely. Older children are very aware of the expectations and are heard reminding others. They understand the importance of safety and convey this to visitors and adults when in the garden, explaining that only one child can go with them to see the rabbits and that they need to tell an adult. Children display a high sense of belonging, settling into routines quickly and confidently, due to a familiar and regular routine as well

as the welcoming and reassuring attitudes of the staff. Very effective behaviour management systems that promote positive reinforcement are implemented to support all children. Praise, encouragement and acknowledgement is given however small their act of kindness is.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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