

Inspection of Smarties Nature Kindergarten

Cotton Lane, Cotton Edmunds, CHESTER CH3 7PZ

Inspection date: 19 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), settle well and are happy at the nursery. This is because of leaders' careful arrangements to enable staff to get to know each child well. Staff focus on meeting individual children's needs and interests. For example, they play babies' favourite music to help soothe them to sleep. This helps children to feel safe and secure at the nursery.

Children benefit from the meaningful learning experiences that staff thoughtfully provide. For example, they learn how to care for and feed the nursery's pigs, Edna and Edith and the goats Daisy and Buttercup. Staff help children to learn about the life cycle of frogs through closely observing frogspawn from the nursery's outdoor pond. Such well-considered activities help children to learn important information about the world around them. They learn the curriculum well.

Staff support children to develop a positive attitude to learning. They help children engage in new and exciting activities, such as using a hand drill to make holes in wood. Children become confident in trying out new experiences. Mainly, children behave well. Staff praise children's positive behaviours. They learn how to be kind, caring and helpful to their friends.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Mostly, leaders have designed their curriculum so that it helps children, including those with SEND, to learn the important knowledge that they need to know. Children learn to be independent, understand how to manage their emotions and know how to make and keep friends. They are ready for their future learning.
- Staff support children's language development well. They model rich language, such as when playing games about who will be the 'detective'. Children learn ambitious words, as well as everyday words, because staff plan for introducing words in play thoughtfully. Children learn to use words to explain their ideas and questions.
- Staff share a wide range of high-quality fiction and non-fiction books with children. They read stories with enthusiasm and skill. These early experiences help children to develop a love of books. However, mostly, staff choose books to read to children at random. This is because leaders do not help staff to build children's knowledge of stories and books in a logical order. As a result, some reading activities that staff provide do not build on children's previous learning.
- Staff arrange activities to help develop children's physical skills well. They help children to engage in physical activities that build on individual children's gross motor development. For example, staff notice when children are ready to use

the balance bicycles. Children develop strong muscles, coordination and confidence in how they move their bodies.

- Mostly, children behave well. Older children listen to staff's instructions and are respectful towards their friends. However, some staff working with two-year-olds do not explain to children the consequences of their behaviours, such as throwing heavy objects. At these times, some children do not learn how to behave appropriately.
- Leaders ensure that children eat a healthy, balanced diet. They make sure that staff cater fully for children's dietary needs. Children enjoy the social aspects of eating a meal together with other children and staff. They develop a healthy attitude towards food.
- Staff skilfully develop older children's understanding of how to take sensible risks. For instance, when toasting marshmallows over the outdoor campfire, they remind children of the distance to stay away from the flames of the fire. Children are so familiar with the nursery's rules and boundaries, that they remind visitors of why they should also follow what staff expect of their conduct.
- Children with SEND are well supported by the knowledgeable staff. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has formed a good working relationship with the local authority to help ensure children with SEND get the support they need. The nursery's regular monitoring of children's development helps staff to identify children's needs early. The needs of all children, including those with SEND, are met.
- Leaders make certain that new staff receive effective induction training when starting their employment at the nursery. Staff undertake a wide range of useful training, such as about safeguarding. However, leaders do not identify the training needs of individual staff. This means that, at times, staff are not clear how to improve their work even further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide greater support for staff so they know how to build children's knowledge of books and stories in a logical order
- strengthen staff's use of behaviour management strategies so that younger children learn what is expected of them
- improve the procedures for staff training so that professional development supports staff to improve their practice.

Setting details

Unique reference number	305305
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10335904
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	89
Number of children on roll	135
Name of registered person	Smarties and Smartcare Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP527512
Telephone number	01829 741608
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Smarties Nature Kindergarten registered in 1989 and is located in Chester. The nursery employs 39 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds qualified teacher status, two hold relevant qualifications at level 6, one at level 5, 19 at level 3 and four at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Andrea Vaughan
Joanne Buckley

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager joined the inspectors on a learning walk and talked with the inspectors about the nursery's curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspectors carried out three joint observations of group activities with the manager and a room leader.
- An inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Staff spoke with the inspectors during the inspection.
- The SENCo spoke with an inspector about how they and staff support children with SEND.
- The manager showed the inspectors documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

We carried out this inspection 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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