

# Mini Stars Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY277508
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Lesley Boyle
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Margarets Church, Cricklade Avenue, London, SW2 3HH
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8678 8600
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Mini Stars Ltd. - Marie Long & Vanessa Callam
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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?

Mini Stars Day Nursery opened in 2004 and operates from a hall and a room in church premises, located within the London Borough of Lambeth. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children under five years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs seven members of staff including a caterer. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

There are good daily hygiene procedures in place which minimise the spread of infection, for example, all areas are checked and cleaned daily and children wash their hands before snack and meal times. Children's health in an emergency situation is promoted because the majority of staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications. There is clear guidance regarding action to be taken should a child become ill whilst at the setting and also covering the exclusion of children who are unwell, further minimising the spread of infection. First aid and emergency procedures are well documented in the appropriate forms, which are signed by the parents. There is a good procedure to ensure any accidents are dealt with appropriately, ensuring the best interests of the children are maintained at all times.

Topics and themes inform children about good hygiene and how to stay healthy. For example, the role play area is set up as a dentist's surgery and children learn ways in which they can keep their teeth healthy, for example, by learning that foods and drinks like apples and milk help to keep their teeth strong. Children brush their teeth daily after lunch and their toothbrushes are stored in hygienic cases, further promoting their health. Children show good levels of understanding and know how to care for themselves as they use the toilets independently, wash their hands and help to prepare for snacks and meals.

Children enjoy a good range of meals, which are well presented by a committed and skilful cook. Meals are home cooked from fresh produce and reflect children's backgrounds, for example, they eat food such as curries, pizzas or rice dishes. Children's food allergies and preferences are catered for and recorded in a practical way on the back of the children's individualised place mats and the managers consult with parents to provide suitable meals, such as vegetarian or Halal.

Children in all areas of the nursery take part in physical activity every day. Music and movement helps children stretch and move with enjoyment and confidence indoors. Babies visit the garden or go for walks so they have fresh air and exercise, which develops positive attitudes to physical activity. Children are enthused by staff who plan games and activities, such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf'.

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

The provision is good.

Staff carry out daily checks to identify potential hazards, taking appropriate steps to minimise or remove these. This helps to ensure that children are able to move freely and independently around the setting. The consistent daily implementation of policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety. For example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised frequently. This area is further supported as a comprehensive risk assessment has been completed, which is reviewed regularly.

Children are gaining a realistic understanding of safety issues and how to keep themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff to reinforce their understanding, for example, during outings children learn about the inventor of the traffic light system and this consolidates their understanding of road safety. Children are kept safe during outings because

staff have robust procedures such as taking mobile phones and a first aid kit, and children are given luminous jackets and wrist bands with the nursery's phone numbers.

Children have access to a suitable range of toys and resources. These are well organised, in good condition and generally accessible so that children are able to make choices about their play. Children's welfare is appropriately promoted because staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. They have ensured that they have up-to-date information regarding current procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Babies and younger children benefit from a well-organised environment where they have space to crawl and toddle safely and explore the resources. They enjoy secure and warm relationships with staff. They share cuddles with happy confidence and staff are kind and attentive to their needs. Flexible routines enable babies to rest or play according to their own needs and parents' wishes and as a result they are settled and content. Staff have a good understanding of how to accommodate younger children. They plan and use the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively and have devised a clear system to record children's progress.

Children access a wide range of activities, which staff thoughtfully plan and prepare to encourage children to develop skills and have fun. Topics are carefully thought out and cover a wide range of relevant experiences, for example, 'Red Nose Day', Pancake day and the Nottingham Carnival. They include outings such as visits to the green grocers, pet shop, and local travel agency. This enables children to experience different aspects of the local community.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, enabling them to plan and provide activities that promote children's development in all areas. Written plans for activities are sufficiently detailed and linked clearly to the stepping stones so that children access a balanced range of learning opportunities over time. Children's learning is further enhanced because staff know them well and are skilled in adapting the activities to suit their individual needs. Plans are evaluated and highlight the next steps in the children's learning. Assessments are clear, linked to the stepping stones and show that children have made good progress. Relevant observations further inform these assessments to provide parents with a formal observation profile each term so that they are kept up-to-date with their children's progress.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment of their time at the setting as they participate in a suitable range of activities and play opportunities. They are offered familiar toys and activities which help build their confidence within the nursery. These include regular opportunities such as painting, reading, imaginative play, construction activities and sand play. Children's knowledge is extended and they are offered further challenges as they participate in a variety of topic work. This enables them to look more closely at subjects, such as keeping healthy. The conversion of the role play area into a dentist reinforces and extends what the children know about looking after their teeth.

Children have daily opportunities to develop the attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. They are motivated to learn through interesting activities and are well supported by staff in these. Children usually persevere in their chosen tasks, for example,

printing patterns or drawing for extended periods of time, however, some children are not always purposefully engaged which means their daily learning is not fully optimised.

Children enjoy reading and sharing books with each other and with members of staff. There are resources for mark-making such as writing equipment and easels and children are beginning to write their names, usually aided by the accessibility of their name cards. Children are given some opportunities to link letters to sounds, however, there is a greater emphasis on letter names which could delay the development of their early reading skills.

Children use mathematical language in their play such as 'one more', 'big', 'bigger', 'little', 'smallest', and numbers are brought into routine activities. For example, they count how many children there are sitting in the circle and how many cups and plates are needed for snack time. The children participate with enthusiasm in counting songs, developing their conceptual knowledge of adding and taking away. Staff use children's own interests to develop their understanding of patterns, for example, by looking at patterns in modelling dough or by examining print patterns made by vegetables.

Children enjoy singing familiar songs in group sessions. They use traditional instruments to explore rhythm and listen to different sounds they make. Children use their imagination to express their ideas in role play situations such as pretending to be a dentist. They are well supported by staff who join in activities which makes it more meaningful for the children. Children participate in a wide range of craft activities such as modelling, collages and vegetable printing.

Children learn about their local environment through walks and visits and extend their understanding of the wider world through topics such as Black History month as well as more local events like the Notting Hill carnival. Parents and staff contribute their knowledge and resources to make the activities both relevant and exciting.

Children learn good physical skills through a range of resources such as bikes, scooters and by playing organised games like 'What's the time Mr Wolf'. Children develop their small muscle groups through manipulating construction pieces, bead threading and using peg boards. Furthermore, creative daily use of action songs and rhymes allows children further opportunities to practise their skills and increase their knowledge of the importance of exercise to their health.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and respected as individuals. This is demonstrated by the approach that staff use in greeting each child by name and the knowledge they have of their home life, for example, asking about a newborn sibling. This fosters a sense of belonging in the children because the staff know them so well and provides good continuity of care.

Younger children follow their own routines for resting and eating. Staff collect good information from parents so they understand children's individual needs and as a result children are well-rested and content. Children in all areas of the nursery have times when they select their own resources and activities, which enables them to follow their own interests and develop individual skills.

Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities. They foster links with children's own culture and gain information from parents to make the activities more interesting and relevant.

Children have access to a broad range of resources, play opportunities and activities which reflect diversity in a positive way. Children learn to value differing lifestyles by learning about other countries and engaging in activities like cooking traditional Indian and West Indian food. They also enjoy celebrating a range of festivals such as St George's day, Diwali and Eid.

Children generally behave well, their self-esteem is enhanced by the high expectations of staff and they usually play harmoniously together. Staff have developed consistent guidelines so children have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Children's self-esteem is promoted because their work is valued and displayed attractively around the room. Children respond well to requests from staff to tidy up and work well to do this and staff praise them for helping. Children's spiritual, moral, social & cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given clear, practical information about the setting's procedures and policies, ensuring that they are aware of daily practice and expectations. The good use of newsletters and notice boards ensures that they are kept up-to-date with information about activity plans, topics and themes. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and activities through daily discussions with staff, meetings with key workers and access to their child's assessment files.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

A rigorous recruitment process ensures staff are safe and suitable to work with children and have the necessary skills. Staff development is promoted through an annual appraisal system and they are able to extend their skills through regular training opportunities which further develops the effectiveness of the service provided. A comprehensive parent questionnaire and discussions with staff helps the management team decide on future areas for development. Policies and procedures are complete and up-to-date and these are shared with parents to ensure children's health, safety and welfare.

Children are generally happy and settled. They enjoy activities and achieve well because staff create an environment where they have appropriate space and resources to do so. However, there are occasions during the daily routine where children are not purposefully engaged and this impacts on their individual needs being met. Adults working with children show care and concern for their welfare to give them a sense of well-being and regular staff know them well. They have good levels of support to help them feel welcome, comfortable and at ease. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. Children's learning, development and welfare are promoted by the thorough understanding that the managers have of their roles and responsibilities. The setting is well-managed and continuously monitored to ensure that appropriate care is provided. Staff are supported in their daily work through regular meetings, appraisals and training. The managers ensure that children, staff and parents are consulted about any changes. They act as a good role models to staff and children by showing enthusiasm for their work and an appreciation of each child and their individual personalities, helping them to feel welcome and valued. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, in which children can learn, develop and express their thoughts and ideas.

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

In their last inspection the nursery was asked to further plan and provide opportunities for children to use and become aware of technology. They have addressed this by investing in several computer programmes and programmable toys. They were also asked to ensure that ratios are met at all times. The nursery ensures that this is done through drawing up a contingency plan whereby a member of the catering staff is able to make up the ratios. They have also monitored staff attendance and time-keeping through their appraisal system to ensure that children always have the supervision they need.

The nursery were asked at their last inspection to introduce a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning so that areas of improvement are identified and quickly addressed. The managers have revised their planning whereby it is evaluated on a daily basis so that they are able to identify children's learning needs effectively. They have developed action plans to focus on a particular area, for example, literacy and have purchased resources to support the development of this area.

### **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 the 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):

- review organisation of nursery routines to ensure that children are always purposefully engaged (this also refers to Nursery Education).

#### **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):

- provide further ways of linking letters to sounds so that children have more opportunity to develop early reading skills.

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)