



Mini Stars Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY277508 |
| Inspection date | 09 November 2006 |
| Inspector | Pamela Bailey |
| Setting Address | St. Margarets Church, Barcombe Avenue, Streatham Hill, SW2 3BH |
| Telephone number | 020 8851 7393 or 020 8678 8600 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Mini Stars Ltd. - Marie Long & Vanessa Callum |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | 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.

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Mini Stars Day Nursery opened in 2004 and operates from a hall and a room in church premises, located in Streatham Hill 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 51 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, nine children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Older children automatically wash their hands after visiting the toilet and daily routines ensure they wash their hands before meals. However, they do not consistently wash their hands at other times. Children under three years are not supported to develop good personal hygiene. The lack of explanation and use of wipes to clean children's hands before eating means that children do not have opportunities to regularly practise washing their hands or develop an understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene.

Children are at risk from cross infection. Poor hygiene practices do not prevent the spread of infection. The nappy changing unit has accumulated dust and dirt, and although children's sheets are washed on a weekly basis, the sleep mats are dirty. The bin in the nappy changing area is overfull with used items such as wipes, aprons and gloves. Staff do not ensure soiled nappies are disposed of appropriately and tissues used to wipe children's noses are stored in apron pockets. There is no running hot water for hand washing in the nappy changing area.

There are sufficient staff that hold a current first aid certificate and parents give prior written consent to administer medication. This means that staff can give appropriate care if there is an accident and children receive the correct dosage of medication according to their needs. Staff ensure that all records relating to children's health are effectively maintained, for example, children have individual accident and medication records. All entries are countersigned by the parents.

Children enjoy varied and nutritious meals and snacks freshly prepared on the premises and babies learn to feed themselves which helps develop their independence. They learn the importance of eating healthily from a young age and older children enjoy being involved in selecting the ingredients for their meals such as using herbs from the garden. Staff monitor the menu to provide a good variety which caters to all tastes and meets special dietary requirements. Children are served water at meal times, however, water is not readily available for children to help themselves and encourage them to think about their personal needs. There are sufficient staff, including the cook, with food hygiene training and effective procedures are in place to ensure food storage facilities and food temperatures are monitored.

Children respond and move enthusiastically during music and movement sessions indoors. Younger children are beginning to learn to control their own bodies, gaining physical skills appropriate to their stage of development when manoeuvring wheeled toys outside. However, older or more able children's physical skills are not sufficiently challenged. Children have little opportunity to enhance their physical skills and develop their balance and coordination because the outdoor equipment is inappropriate for their stage of development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are happy in the nursery environment. There is a satisfactory range of indoor toys and resources and children can access most of them from boxes and low level shelves. Some furniture and equipment are age appropriate such as cots, beds, high chair, child size table and chairs.

Some routines and gentle reminders help children learn about safety in the nursery. For example, children lift and carry chairs competently, staff emphasise safety when sitting on chairs and using scissors. However, staff have not taken positive steps to identify potential risk or dangers to children. The lack of rigorous safety checks and risk assessments both inside and outside the nursery compromises children's safety. For example, inadequate radiator guards do not fully cover the very hot to touch radiators in areas used by the children. The water in the children's toilet area is very hot and one tap is not working. The nappy changing facilities in the baby room and broken equipment which is discarded in the outdoor area are all accessible to the children.

Staff ensure that some fire safety requirements are implemented such as regular fire drills, inspection of fire fighting equipment and all fire exits clearly labelled. However, staff do not ensure that fire exits are free from obstructions and can be opened easily in an emergency. The fire exit in the baby room is jammed which makes it very hard to open. It is obstructed from the outside by debris, leaves and twigs which have accumulated and bags of leaves and twigs which are stored behind the door. Although fire procedures are displayed by the exit in the main hall, they are not predominantly displayed in the designated areas. There are no procedures displayed by the exit in the baby room or by the exit in the main entrance to premises. As a result children' safety is compromised in the event of a fire.

The premises are secure. TV intercom and key code systems ensure staff can monitor access, although visitors are not asked to sign in and out. There are effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and departure of children.

The majority of staff are aware of the child protection policy and understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care or an allegation is made against a member of staff. They receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse. This supports children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children under three are cared for in a warm stimulating environment where they benefit from being together and develop sound, trusting relationships with staff who are responsive to their needs. Staff use of the Birth to three matters framework is improving children's achievements in most areas.

Young children have opportunities to develop their language and communication skills. They show lots of interest in books and listen attentively to stories repeating words and pointing to objects. Staff read with lots of expression and use appropriate language that young children

are able to understand. They join in with action songs and music and dancing which helps to develop their coordination.

Children spend some time concentrating on self chosen activities such as role play in the home corner, imaginative play with dolls, small world equipment and exploring a variety of sound making toys. They show an interest in adult initiated activities which are appropriately presented for their age and development but lack creativity. For example, babies enjoy tearing up magazines to decorate their pictures templates, whilst younger children stick glitter on theirs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff make regular observations, record achievements in children's profile and use as a basis to plan activities. Although plans are linked to the six areas of learning it is not clear what children are expected to learn from the activities or differentiate from younger and older children to ensure effective learning takes place.

Children are actively involved in their learning. They are confident, work well independently, co-operate well when working as part of a group and show high levels of concentration. Children are developing good relationships and get on well with their peers and adults. They behave extremely well and understand the need to share and take turns when playing. Children are becoming independent as they see to their personal needs such as visiting the toilet. The organisation of resources and equipment allows children to independently self select and make choices. However, staff do not provide further opportunities for children to build on their self care skills or independence through practical experiences such as helping to lay the table, serving themselves at meal times and pouring drinks. Children are beginning to understand differences in their lives to others around them. Staff encourage children to have respect for each other and for the resources. Children help to clear up and are encouraged to work together.

Children are keen to communicate with adults and their peers. They speak confidently when taking part in group discussions and listen intently at story time. They enjoy looking at books and re-telling stories to adults and their peers. Some attention is given to aspects of early writing during structured adult led activities such children are encouraged to recognise letters and write their first and second names. However, opportunities to write for different purposes are not exploited enough during practical activities such as in imaginative or role play settings.

Children are interested in numbers and are confident in counting. They are learning to recognise numbers as they work out the date and enjoy number rhymes and songs. However, there is a lack of opportunities to challenge more able children's understanding of more or less and problem solving during routine tasks, such as preparing for lunch. Children's awareness of shape, space and measure is limited to the use of templates. Large group sessions are used well for children to learn about different size and colours.

Children freely explore everyday items such as the microwave, toaster and kettle during role play. However, children do not have regular access to the computer. They learn about the environment through topic work such as growing vegetables and herbs, through discussing changes in the seasons and different cultures and beliefs through celebrating festivals. They

are beginning to understand past and present as they discuss nursery events and regular outings and trips help children become aware of the local community.

Children have some opportunity to practise their finer motor skills and have good control when using pencils, glue sticks and scissors. However, further development of their skills and coordination are not fully encouraged, for example, when eating children are only provided with a fork. Children enjoy singing sessions and have a good repertoire of songs and actions rhymes. Children make their own musical shakers and enthusiastically join in music and movement sessions. They play cooperatively during role play and take part in cooking activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children have a sense of belonging. They welcome each other on arrival, settle well and enjoy respectful relationships with adults and each other. Staff introduce topics to teach children about other cultures and themed activities, outings together with sufficient resources, help children develop a positive attitude towards diversity and the community. Although there are no children currently attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the nursery receives support from outside agencies. Staff are not secure in their understanding of the Special Needs Code of Practice and the policy is not in line with current legislation and guidance.

Children are very well behaved. They benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and from basic ground rules that are consistently applied according to the children's age and stage of development. They learn important social skills such as sharing and listening to each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are enthusiastic about the nursery and happy with the service provided in most areas. They receive information on the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. Staff share information with parents about children's general care needs and parents attend progress review meetings each term and contribute to their children's learning through homework and being involved in the nursery topics. Parents are not provided with up to date information about the complaints procedures and staff have no knowledge of the amended regulations for complaints. This is a breach of regulation.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Effective recruitment procedures ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. The induction programme is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all staff work together to effectively promote children's health and safety. Staff deployment is not effectively organised to ensure that staff to child ratios are appropriately maintained throughout the session. All policies and procedures and most records are in place, although the special needs statement is not in line with current legislation. Staff do not ensure that parents are kept well informed about all relevant policies and procedures or that these have been updated in line with current regulation, for example, the complaints policy and complaint record. Over half of the staff team

are appropriately qualified in childcare and staff are actively encouraged to undertake further training. Staff have attended training courses in food hygiene, the Birth to three matters framework and first aid.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Those who work with children in receipt of funding for nursery education have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage to enable them to help children make progress in most areas of learning. However, staff do not make good use of routine tasks and practical activities to extend children's learning. The lack of monitoring of the teaching and learning means gaps in children's learning continues unnoticed. Management have successfully identified areas for improvement such as Foundation Stage training for staff, but have not yet drawn up clear plans to achieve their aims. The setting does not meet 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 there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National standards. The complaint related to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 9: Equal Opportunities, National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers and National Standard 14: Documentation. Concerns were raised over unvetted persons being left alone with children, staff:child ratios during the day and grouping of children, discriminatory practices, staff not observing parents preferences and informing Ofsted of significant events. Ofsted carried out an investigation on 13 January 2005 and found evidence that the provider was not complying with National Standard 14. An action was raised that required the provider to inform Ofsted of all significant events which the provider agreed to. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted. The provider has not made a record of the complaint 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- assess the risks to children in relation to all areas of the nursery premises both inside and outside including fire safety and take appropriate action to minimise identified risks and potential hazards to children
- implement effective hygiene procedures for the disposal of soiled nappies and ensure that furniture and equipment used by children are maintained to a satisfactory level of cleanliness
- improve staffs knowledge and understanding of the October 2005 complaints regulations and revise the written document to reflect these changes

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- improve planning, use of practical activities and routine tasks to enhance children's independence and challenge more able children's learning in aspects of mathematics and literacy
- introduce a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning so that areas for improvement are identified and quickly addressed

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