

Smilers

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY266973
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Inspector	Jane Wakelen
Setting Address	Chattenden School, Chattenden Lane, Rochester, Kent, ME3 8LE
Telephone number	01634 297658
E-mail	
Registered person	Smilers Ltd
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 good. The registered person meets 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?

Smilers Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Smilers Limited. It opened in 2003 and operates from one room in a purpose-built building on Chattenden School premises. It is situated in Rochester, Kent. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from either 09:15 to 12:00, 12:00 to 15:00 or 09:15 to 15:00 for 39 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children gain a good understanding about personal hygiene routines because staff remind children about washing their hands before eating their snack and lunch and after using the toilet or playing in the garden. Children are protected against cross infection as they use antibacterial soap with paper towels and staff follow good hygiene procedures when changing nappies, thus promoting children's well-being. A first aid box is available and the majority of staff hold a first aid qualification supporting children in the event of an accident. Consent for emergency medical treatment is obtained from parents, and a sick child policy is in place to ensure children are protected and their welfare supported.

Children learn about keeping themselves fit and healthy through topic work, special days where children can make their own healthy lunch and being given a choice of healthy snacks. Children choose from the pictorial daily menu of vegetable sticks, fresh fruit or raisins and enjoy the social occasion talking with their friends and an adult. They access their drinks at all times during the day, which are supplied from home, but can be refilled when necessary. Children's dietary requirements are recorded on the child record forms, together with a record of any food allergies to ensure children's welfare is promoted.

A healthy lifestyle is promoted throughout the nursery and children have daily access to large play equipment, either in the school hall or garden. They benefit from the free-flow play from indoors to outdoors and have opportunities to use the school field, enjoying the large open space to make camps or observe the wildlife. Children develop hand-eye coordination throwing bean bags, catching and throwing the balls and using the plastic hockey sticks to move the small balls around. They develop their confidence and balance using the large gym equipment, such as the benches, climbing frame and 'horse', whilst learning how to land safely when they jump down.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have room to move around freely, accessing different activities from around the room. They are able to make choices about activities they wish to partake in and use the indoors and outdoors to meet their individual needs. Staff are receptive to children's preferences and offer suggestions to extend their play, such as painting with water on the shed outside, drawing with chalks on the path or using additional equipment to print in the dough. All the equipment is in good condition and easily accessible by the children. Storage boxes have written labels and pictures to support all children in being independent to select alternative resources or to pack away existing equipment.

Children are kept safe in the nursery because staff carry out a simple daily, risk assessment on all areas both inside and outside. Any concerns identified are recorded and actioned appropriately. Measures are in place to promote children's safety such as stairgates across the kitchen door and the two external doors to prevent children accessing unsupervised play areas. However, safety procedures when children use the play equipment in the school hall need reviewing, as at present children wear their outdoor foot wear to climb and balance on benches. Some children wear fashion footwear which do not have rubber soles, therefore causing a safety hazard. A safe arrival and collection procedure is in place to ensure children are recorded in

the attendance register on arrival, group time and on departure. The times are recorded which supports the fire evacuation procedure to provide an accurate record of the children, staff and visitors present. Children practice the evacuation drill on a regular basis and a comprehensive record is kept to ensure that all children and staff know the routine procedure thoroughly.

Staff have a good understanding about safeguarding children. A file is in place containing the policy and relevant information to enable concerns to be identified, recorded and the relevant authorities notified if staff have any concerns. The manager and supervisor have both completed training and all other staff will be encouraged to attend a course to ensure their knowledge is updated to protect children whilst attending the nursery.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the nursery confidently and are familiar with the routine of the session. They play happily with each other and are beginning to build good relationships with the staff and their peers. For example, children play with the peat and the wild animals, telling each other about the animal they are playing with and experiment with the different noises the animals make. Children use a variety of construction materials to build and construct, whilst chatting to each other about their models. Children make choices about where they wish to play inside or outside and understand the need to put boots and coats on to go outside. Staff help support and extend children's play by introducing additional resources, such as a camouflage sheet to help a group of children make a camp. Another group of children are shown how to paint the shed with the brushes and pots of water, which children do with excitement and concentration.

The organisation of the day ensures children have a variety of activities to involve themselves in, including additional experiences such as using the school hall and field. The routine ensures children have the opportunity to complete their task before moving on to another activity and staff ensure all children are fully engaged in activities to promote their learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are new to the nursery and are building up their skills as a team with the full support of the supervisor and manager. The majority of staff have a basic understanding of the Foundation Stage, but are in a transition period changing the planning and their understanding to the new Early Years Foundation Stage which is to be implemented later this year. At present long and medium term plans are not in place as the staff are using the key person system to identify individual targets under the six areas of learning for each child. These are then used to inform future planning. However, this is not secure at present and some areas of learning are being given less consideration than others in the planning. Regular observations are carried out on children's learning and development which staff then transfer into the children's Learning Journey books, supported by photographs and examples of children's work.

Children are learning to count whilst playing box games and in some practical activities, but staff often fail to fully promote number skills including recognition of number, in daily routines and child-initiated play. Children use dice to help support their number concept and look at weight and quantity when playing with vegetables and the scales in the role play area. They are beginning to use some mathematical language in their play, such as large, small and more than, and name shapes when playing with the dough, such as round and star.

Children enjoy looking at books, especially when adults are supporting them. They point out familiar pictures and use books to learn about the world they live in. Children find their name card with photograph at snack time and some children are able to write their name or form some letters. However, labels around the room are fairly small and difficult for children to see, thus not encouraging them to identify familiar words. Children are not encouraged routinely to link sounds to letters and some staff do not encourage children to label their work, therefore not promoting children's mark making skills on a regular basis.

Children enjoy good opportunities to learn about the world they live in through topic work, such as 'Minibeasts' and looking at fruit and vegetables through popular story books. They explore their surroundings when using the school field and learn about living things, when planting seeds to water and watch grow. Children learn about the community they live in through visitors to the nursery, such as the Police and Fire Departments. They learn about road safety and practice crossing the road with a lollipop person. Children have access to the computer, although few children choose to use this independently. Children enjoy reading the story of the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar' and learning about the lifecycle of the butterfly, using the toy minibeasts and photographs staff have compiled. Children learn about celebrations from around the world as well as their own and enjoy opportunities to taste different foods, such as noodles and pancakes. Opportunities to use natural materials such as sand and water are not a daily occurrence.

Children have opportunities to make marks daily, using a variety of mediums. They have access to scissors and stencils and are told about accessing different collage materials and glue. However, very few children choose to create their own picture using their imagination, due to the fact that many art and craft activities are adult-led and children's creativity is not fully extended. The role play is changed regularly to link with the theme and children enjoy the different opportunities prepared for them, such as the greengrocers or jungle. They have opportunities to paint using a variety of tools to experiment with, such as toothbrushes. Musical instruments are available but are not planned into daily activities on a regular basis.

Children have lots of opportunities to develop their fine motor skills using a variety of tools with the dough and mark making. They use cutters and rolling pins to flatten and cut the dough and enjoy squeezing and shaping the dough with their hands. Children show good hand-eye coordination joining and fixing the construction toys and cutting around the pre-drawn Easter Eggs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children use play equipment and see pictures and posters around the walls promoting positive images of diversity. They have visits from different key people within the community and learn about each other's differences and similarities through topic work and learning about different celebrations. Staff have a good understanding of children's families and different home circumstances and use the key person system to help support children's sense of belonging and meet their individual needs. Staff obtain full information from parents about children's home language and ethnic origin to help plan an individual play plan. For example, one child takes home a bilingual book to share with the parents thus promoting his home language. All children are welcomed into the nursery and close liaison with the inclusion officer from the local authority ensures that Individual Educational Plans can be written to address children's additional needs in partnership with the parents. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good. They understand the rules of the setting and the expectations of the staff. For example, children sit patiently on the carpet in the morning for registration and on the mats in the hall until the equipment is ready to use. Children are able to wait for their turn when playing games or joining in group times. They share the equipment and learn to negotiate with support from the staff, who treat children in a calm, fair manner. All children are valued as individuals and treated with respect which provides a good role model for children to follow. Children are given praise and encouragement from staff promoting children's self-esteem. They are encouraged to put their work on the display board, promoting pride in their achievements and valuing their contributions.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive information through newsletters and access the extensive noticeboard in the entrance area informing them of future events, fund raising and wanted items for the nursery. There is information about different children's health problems and a copy of the nursery policies to ensure parents are kept well informed about the care their children are receiving. Parents are told who their child's key person is, but have not been shown their child's assessment records, due to the new staff starting at the nursery and planning systems recently implemented. Parents are asked to complete a form for their child called 'All about Me' helping staff build up a picture of personal details about their child, such as their favourite toys and their siblings. Staff then use this information to help settle the children into the nursery. There is no system in place at present to provide an initial assessment of children's development on their arrival at nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the team of staff who are committed to providing quality care and education for children. All staff are fairly new to the setting and the owner has worked hard to ensure all staff are settled and understand the policies and procedures of the setting. Induction training, reviewing one policy each week and encouraging regular training ensures that children's welfare and well-being is fully promoted. Measures to monitor the provision and improve practice are constantly being reviewed and addressed to support staff's effectiveness and provide positive experiences for children. All required documentation is in place and records are kept confidentially, supporting children's privacy. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities within the setting and are beginning to build up a strong staff team with the support and guidance of the supervisor and manager. The manager has started to implement a new system of planning using the new Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to support staff with their training and provide good outcomes for children. Each member of staff has a professional development file which contains an excellent record of information for staff regarding training, appraisal and self reflection to support each member of staff in their personal development. This provides a comprehensive monitoring system to promote children's care at the nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendations from the previous report. To ensure the time of arrival and departure of staff, volunteers and students is maintained and devise and implement a procedure for allegations of abuse made against staff, volunteers and students.

Both these have been addressed and written procedures put in place to protect children's welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider of 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 satisfactory.

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 safety procedures when children use the play equipment in the school hall

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 develop planning, observation and assessment to ensure all areas of learning are given equal consideration
- obtain information from parents about where children are in their learning to give a starting point and ensure children's records are shared with parents on a regular basis

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