

Smilers

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 14/07/2010
Inspector Evelyn Riley

Setting address Chattenden School, Chattenden Lane, Rochester, Kent,
ME3 8LE

Telephone number 07817398519

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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

Smilers is one of two nurseries run by Smilers Limited. It opened in 2003 and operates from three rooms in a purpose built building in the grounds of Chattenden School. It is situated in Chattenden Village, Rochester, Kent. A maximum of 51 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 5.30pm for 48 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 50 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Children receive funding for nursery education. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children come from a local catchment area and further afield. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs nine staff; of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification as well as the manager who has just completed the Foundation Degree.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Supportive play opportunities that allow for children's different abilities encourage a wide variety of learning opportunities and contribute towards children's positive outcomes within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are dedicated to meeting the children's welfare needs, which results in children feeling safe and settled in the welcoming atmosphere of the nursery. Effective relationships with parents and carers help to promote inclusive practice, and systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Self-evaluation opportunities are in place and the setting has a good capacity for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- establish more formal systems for sharing information with parents
- establish more formal systems to develop and strengthen the role of staff, parents and children in the self-evaluation process.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well-protected as all staff have undergone child protection training and are knowledgeable in respect of the indicators of abuse. Child protection policies are comprehensive and are reviewed on a regular basis. Staff recruitment carefully ensures that staff are suitable for each post and all staff are subject to

the appropriate checks. Children play in a safe and well-organised environment as resources are readily accessible and practitioners' vigilance ensures that children play safely at all times. Suitable risk assessments are in place and staff carry out visual assessments and follow appropriate procedures covering everything that a child may do while at the setting. A welcoming environment and skilled staff ensure that all children and families are welcome at the nursery. Transition through the nursery is managed sensitively as is the move onto the adjoining school.

The premises are bright, warm and welcoming, with an extensive range of equipment and resources. All equipment, toys and resources are well-maintained and enable children to independently choose their activities and play safely. Parents and carers receive regular information from the setting and their opinions are actively sought through an annual questionnaire. The importance of parents' input in their child's learning is recognised and staff have recently strengthened links with parents by providing '20 second' feedback to each parent at the end of each session. A lively 'What Did You Do At the Weekend' sheet has recently been introduced and this has provided a useful link between home and nursery and supports conversations about the people and events in children's lives outside of the setting. These systems effectively contribute towards children's positive outcomes and encourage parents to actively contribute towards their child's education. However, the staff do not meet with parents on a regular basis to discuss the learning and next steps for their children or to more formally gather parents' views on how the setting could be improved. Observations and assessments are regularly completed and these are kept in comprehensive files which inform weekly planning, which supports the learning and development needs of each individual child.

Practitioners are well-qualified and well-supported in their individual training needs. The manager is completing a Foundation Degree in Early Years Education and plans to continue to a full degree with Professional Status. Her commitment to study and training provides an excellent role model for all staff who have a strong commitment to professional development. Staff have opportunities to reflect on their practice and can use this as a basis for self-evaluation, although this is not yet systematically captured and used to inform the overall self-evaluation and action planning process for the setting. Equality and diversity are promoted well through explanations and a wide range of activities that raise children's awareness of the needs of others. Children who have specific learning requirements are very well supported and productive links have been established with outside agencies that provide additional support and input for some of the children. There are outdoor play sessions and indoor physical activity lessons that take place in the primary school hall. Regular visits to the primary school for events and assemblies, and a photo-display of familiar faces who work in the school, all help to ease the transition and children say they are looking forward to their big move. Children develop an awareness of the community they live in through regular visits and explanations. Their communication and language skills are effectively promoted as they engage in lively conversations with adults, enjoy story books and experience a rich environment that is carefully labelled with relevant names. Children's involvement in creative play encourages their language development as they

describe what they are doing while they play and involve adults in their play activities.

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

Practitioners know each child in their key groups well and are aware of each child's capabilities and preferences. All staff have a sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan activities to build on individual children's interests and skills. Children's creative skills are encouraged as they cut and stick brightly coloured paper and fabric using glue sticks to create images. Their communication skills are encouraged through a wide range of activities that involve listening carefully to instructions and requests and responding in an appropriate manner. For example, in a physical activity session in the primary school hall, children listened attentively, followed instructions such as 'Can we get into a big circle?' readily and made relevant comments about what they were doing; 'I can jump high'.

They explore the textures and flavours of different fruits as they create their own fresh-fruit milk shakes for healthy snack time. Children extend their physical skills as they use the primary school hall for high quality, physical activity sessions. They go on visits to the local park and engage in extended, imaginative play activities sensitively supported by adults. Social skills are effectively promoted as they sit with each other during lunch time. Activities that encourage turn taking and sharing are actively promoted by staff. Consequently, children are kind to each other, behave very well at all times and are consistently polite to adults. There is an effective balance of child- and adult-led play, where children are actively encouraged to select their own toys and create their own scenarios. This results in children who are well prepared for the future, confident and eagerly delight in the wide variety of activities that are available to them. Learning journey portfolios are completed for each child and these are available for parents to view and to share in their child's achievements.

Children's imagination is supported through the use of role play. They learn about the wider world as they celebrate birthdays and festivals. Children feel safe and their behaviour is managed extremely well and there is consistently clear and sensitive practice employed by all staff. Adults provide very effective role models using clear directions, distraction and language that the children can understand. Children's self-esteem and self-confidence is well developed and the older children are excited and ready for the next stage of their education in the primary school.

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

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| 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

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| 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