

Inspection of Smilers Nursery Ltd

54 High Street, SANDY, Bedfordshire SG19 1AJ

Inspection date: 11 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and settled in this nursery. They form close bonds with their key person and enjoy their time at the nursery. Children are kind and respectful to their peers. For example, children take turns to select nursery rhymes from a box and sit quietly while listening to others. Children follow instructions and routines of the day very well. This is supported by staff who are good role models and praise positive behaviour. Children enjoy role play activities outside. For example, they play pretend traffic jams with bicycles and experiment with the meaning of traffic signals. This helps children to understand the world around them. Staff introduce new ideas within play to extend children's learning. For instance, children make leaf cupcakes in the mud kitchen outside. Staff introduce utensils for the children to mix the cupcakes and encourage them to count. Children enjoy taking part in messy play with paints and play dough. Children make pretend pancakes with the dough and use their imaginations as they decide what toppings they would like on their pancake. They develop their sensory skills by touching and smelling the materials. Younger children explore the consistency of paints and make marks on paper with their fingers. This supports children to develop their small-muscle control.

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

- Staff have a good understanding of each child's individual needs, including information about their home lives. The staff provide bags of resources for children to take home to use, which supports their learning. Staff are attentive to medical needs and work with parents to ensure they can meet these daily.
- The leadership team work closely with the local community. This includes local schools, to support transition from nursery to the next stage of their education. The nursery staff help children learn about moving to school through discussions and role play. Children have opportunities to play dressing up with school uniform and enjoy playing teachers.
- Staff encourage children to problem-solve independently through play. For example, babies push different shapes into puzzle slots and continue this until they are successful. Staff observe the children and intervene to extend children's skills. Older children take bicycles and scooters out of the shed independently, carefully exploring the shape and size of each item.
- Parents are very complimentary of the nursery. They receive regular information about their child's day. This includes information about eating and sleeping routines. Parents express they have felt supported through the COVID-19 pandemic, which helps to provide consistency of care.
- Older children are supported to be independent. Staff encourage children to wash their hands and eat with cutlery during mealtimes. However, at times, younger children are not always encouraged to take part in self-care routines independently.

- The leadership team is alert to any children who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make appropriate referrals and contact professionals for additional support. Staff identify resources that may support children through play. They are keen to embed this into their curriculum.
- Staff provide opportunities to discuss healthy eating with children. They talk about fruit and vegetables and the importance of a healthy diet. Children are provided with nutritious meals and snacks. Staff share information with parents about healthy eating. This helps to provide consistency of healthy lifestyles within the nursery and at home.
- Staff are aware of children's next steps and what they want children to achieve. However, staff do not consistently identify how they can build on what children can already do through adult-led activities. Therefore, children are not always provided with opportunities to develop their skills even further.
- Children develop physical skills both indoors and outdoors. Staff and children sing nursery rhymes and move their bodies creatively to each song. For example, children sit in pairs and sing 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat', pretending they are boats on big waves, moving side to side. This helps teach children how they can move their bodies.
- The leaders provide effective supervision for staff. Staff can access a variety of training. They feel supported within the nursery by leaders and are provided with opportunities to contribute to the curriculum. Leaders value staff well-being and have procedures in place to support this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are confident in their role to safeguard children and this is embedded across the nursery. They can identify the signs and indicators of abuse and understand the importance of raising concerns. For example, they can identify what the signs and indicators of radicalisation are and what behaviours may provide concern. Staff are confident in how they would act should they have a concern about a colleague. The designated safeguarding leads understand their role in safeguarding children. They have had specific training around managing their role and responsibilities.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- build on opportunities for younger children to develop independence skills from the earliest stage of their time at nursery
- help staff to further refine the focus of adult-led experiences to build on what children already know and can do.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2524061
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10208193
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	60
Number of children on roll	82
Name of registered person	Smilers Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2524058
Telephone number	01767 689 688
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Smilers Nursery Ltd acquired Mini Explorers in 2019. Mini Explorers Day Nursery has since been part of the Smilers Nursery Limited chain. The setting employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, from 7am until 6pm, all year round. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Ella Sealey

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector had discussions with staff, children and parents throughout the visit and took their views into account.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including safeguarding documents and suitability checks.
- The provider, the inspector and the nursery manager conducted a tour of the setting to understand the early years setting and how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.

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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