

Inspection of Smiley Centre For Children

The Salvation Army, Glendale Gardens, Leigh On Sea SS9 2AR

Inspection date: 25 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive happy and eager to learn at this community-inspired pre-school. Families socialise in the communal café as children eagerly await the start of their day. Children are warmly greeted by enthusiastic adults who tell children about the exciting day ahead. Children quickly become engaged in a range of interesting activities that have been planned to meet their talents and interests. For example, they show deep enjoyment as they make their own superhero masks. They chat together excitedly about their favourite superheroes and the special powers they hold.

Children benefit from access to fresh air and physical play outdoors. They show increasing skills as they balance securely in rope swings, laughing together as they swing back and forth. Children remember to take care when swinging to avoid bumping into their friends. They develop a secure awareness of risk as they climb trees and balance on logs. Children show immense kindness to their peers. They show patience, tolerance and respect for others during their play. A bug hunt provides curiosity and wonder as children dig in the mud for worms. They remember that they must handle them with care and be kind to living things.

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

- Leaders have constructed a curriculum that supports children to make progress across the seven areas of learning. Staff have a good knowledge of the children and use this to plan activities that broaden and deepen their knowledge. For example, children use tweezers to pick up pom-poms, naming their colour and size. However, staff do not always plan well enough for them to achieve their intended outcome. For example, adults want children to learn about the parts of a flower but do not have enough knowledge to answer children's questions.
- Children are supported well to develop emotional well-being. For example, children name emotions such as 'happy' and 'frustrated' throughout the day. Children are developing confidence. Adults place a high priority on building children's self-esteem. For instance, they praise them for trying hard and celebrate children's achievements. Children share experiences with their peers and adults during group sessions. They express their wants, needs and feelings with growing confidence.
- Communication and language are a key priority in the setting. Adults use their skill and knowledge to provide environments that support children's growing vocabulary. Children enjoy listening to much-loved stories in the 'communication-friendly' den. They benefit from language-rich interactions as they engage in back-and-forth chat with adults. Leaders work with the local authority to assess children's communication and language development. They devise clear targets for children who may be at risk of falling behind. Children

who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively to become proficient in the use of English.

- Children behave well. They understand expectations for behaviour and follow the 'Smiley rules'. Children show positive attitudes to learning. They spend prolonged periods of time at activities such as searching for bugs in the garden and making masks. The environments provide plenty of opportunities to solve problems and think critically. For example, they build bridges for cars, working out how high they need to be to enable the cars to pass through.
- Effective partnerships support children to make the best progress. Staff have developed excellent relationships with parents through a shared approach to children's learning. For example, staff carry out home visits to develop initial bonds with families. An ongoing, supportive and collaborative approach means that staff can personalise learning to meet children's individual needs. Leaders signpost parents to support groups in the church and organise information events, such as 'eating well for less'. Regular assessment identifies what children know and can do. However, leaders do not capture enough information about what children can do when they join the pre-school. This means that children's starting points are not used to inform teaching when they first join.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take appropriate steps to keep children safe. A wide range of safety checks are carried out to ensure the premises and equipment are safe. The pre-school has secure entry, and visitors are required to sign in. All staff receive regular training in relation to safeguarding. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of the different types of abuse and the associated indicators. Leaders ensure that all staff are confident in raising concerns. Staff are clear about their responsibility to take swift action. Robust safeguarding policies and practice are securely embedded, including the safe recruitment of staff. The pre-school is further supported by The Salvation Army in safeguarding matters.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to develop their planning preparation, enabling them to extend children's learning effectively
- improve the identification of children's starting points in learning when they first join the setting.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY487003
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10280799
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	33
Name of registered person	Salvation Army Trustee Company (The)
Registered person unique reference number	RP903315
Telephone number	01702 478092
Date of previous inspection	6 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

Smiley Centre For Children registered in 2015. It is located on the Salvation Army church premises in Leigh-on-Sea. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold an early years qualification at level 6, one at level 3 and two at level 2. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 3.15pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Clare Ford

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- The deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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