

Inspection of Swindon Early Years Centre

Swindon Borough Council, The Saltway Centre, Pearl Road, Middleleaze, Swindon SN5 5TD

Inspection date: 10 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in this specialist centre. New children are very sensitively supported to settle into the sessions. Staff work closely with parents to get to know children. They support children to understand behaviour expectations and what is coming next in the routine. Children enjoy freely exploring activities, and staff are close by to offer lots of support and encouragement.

Staff create a highly individualised curriculum focused closely on each child's needs. The manager and staff have high aspirations for children. Children listen well during their singing session in the morning, excitedly holding a toy animal, and some knowledgeably join in with known phrases. Staff use specialist equipment and resources to help children participate in a sensory-based singing session in the afternoon. Staff work hand over hand with children to help them feel items as they sing to the children. Staff, parents and children enjoy coming together at the end of the session. Children move their bodies with excitement, smiling broadly, and clap their hands in delight as they hear their names during the goodbye song. Parents smile while listening to staff celebrate each child's 'wow' moment of the day. Staff work hard to help children with SEND to be appropriately prepared for their next steps in education and their future in the wider world.

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

- Staff plan activities carefully to help children to build on what they can do. Each child's key person outlines clear targets to extend children's learning. Staff are very encouraging and help children to try new experiences, linking closely to children's interests and preferred ways of learning. For example, staff sprinkle cereal into tins, as they know children like the noise, and this prompts children to try this themselves, extending their exploration.
- Managers and staff work tirelessly to get children and families the help they need. They liaise closely with parents and other settings the children attend, ensuring that children receive a beneficial collaborative and consistent approach. They provide considerable support for parents, helping them navigate each stage of their children's journey. Parents say that staff do so much to cater for their child's needs and that they do not think they could manage without their help.
- Some staff make excellent use of signs, visual cues and speech to reinforce children's understanding and encourage children to express themselves. However, occasionally, other staff do not make their messages clear by breaking down their communication consistently to enable children to understand. Additionally, at other times, staff do not adapt their approach and respond promptly to children's attempts at communicating, such as when children seek

out the bubble wands for more bubbles.

- Children develop their physical skills appropriately, based on their individual needs. They are encouraged to build their strength and sit for short periods. Fun, motivating activities encourage their fine motor skills, and children push puzzle pieces together. Children learn how to use the balance bike outside. Staff patiently offer tips and lots of encouragement as children try again. Children smile broadly as they manage to push themselves along the path.
- The new manager and senior staff are dedicated to the ongoing development of the provision. They are committed to making a positive difference in the lives of the children and families in their care. Managers and senior staff have outlined key areas of improvement. They have started to introduce changes to the children's snack time. These arrangements are at the very early stages. Managers and senior staff know that they need to enhance these further, ensuring they support children to eat a variety of food and support their good health and lifestyles.
- The manager and senior staff ensure recruitment procedures are robust, induction processes are implemented, and regular supervision and team meetings are held with staff. They recognise the importance of a highly skilled team to support the complex needs of the children in their care. Training needs are focused on and supported closely. Senior staff are currently assisting their two unqualified staff to complete relevant early years qualifications.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff-to-child ratios are high. Staff deploy themselves thoughtfully to support children's learning effectively, but also to supervise children closely to help keep them safe. The manager and staff understand their responsibility to protect children from harm and they monitor children's welfare diligently. They are aware of the needs of all their families and very mindful of children's specific medical and health requirements. Family support staff provide very beneficial outreach work, giving families much-needed help and advice for their mental and physical well-being. Staff know the correct procedures to follow if they need to report a concern about a child or another member of staff. The designated safeguarding lead liaises with other professionals promptly to help safeguard children.

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 consistently adapt their teaching and extend children's understanding, and their emerging communication, as much as possible
- implement the planned changes for mealtimes to enhance the support for children's healthy lifestyles and diet further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2649482
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10305178
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	8
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Swindon Borough Council
Registered person unique reference number	2649481
Telephone number	01793 465360
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Swindon Early Years Centre registered in 2021 and is in Middleleaze, west Swindon, Wiltshire. It is a specialist provision providing half-day sessions for children with SEND. Sessions run from 9am to midday and from 1pm to 4pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 9am to midday on Wednesday, during school term times only. There are 16 members of staff working with the children. Of these, 14 hold early years qualifications. Two members of staff hold qualified teacher status, two hold early years professional status, six are qualified to level 6 and four staff hold qualifications at level 3. The centre provides funded places for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rachel Howell

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting. They discussed the ethos of the setting and the early years curriculum.
- The senior early years practitioner and the inspector evaluated the effectiveness of an activity together.
- The inspector observed the children and staff and spoke with them at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Leadership and management meetings were held with the manager and the special educational needs coordinator/practice lead.
- Parents shared their views on the provision with the inspector.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including suitability checks and paediatric first-aid qualifications.
- The manager discussed their safety and child protection procedures, and safeguarding discussions were held with members of the staff team.

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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