

Inspection of Smiles

The Hereford, Hereford Terrace, Billingham, Stockton On Tees TS23 4AA

Inspection date: 5 December 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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children benefit from an interesting curriculum and show enjoyment in their learning. Staff listen to children and plan experiences based on their interests as well as their stages of development. This helps them to stay engaged and excited to learn for long periods of time. Babies thoroughly enjoy sensory play with ice and foam. Staff support them to touch the different textures and offer praise when they participate. Toddlers show good levels of concentration as they use tweezers to put the 'baubles' on their tree. Older children are keen to use small brushes to paint over the snowflake patterns and demonstrate good fine motor skills.

The manager and staff team provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and their families. Children develop strong bonds with staff and show they feel secure in the nursery. They seek reassurance from their key person and sit close to them during activities. A key strength of the nursery is the way staff help children to become aware of their own community and the wider world. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the manager has identified gaps in some children's language, and personal, social and emotional skills. Overall, staff focus their teaching in these areas of children's learning.

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

- Staff focus the curriculum to broaden children's experiences and provide them with real-life experiences. For instance, children enjoy lots of trips into the community to the library and local town. Older children went to the local airport and enjoyed a visit from the fire officers. Staff promote children's awareness of different celebrations, such as Remembrance Day, and take part in fund-raising events. There is a strong sense of community in the nursery and partnerships with parents are good.
- Staff in the pre-school room focus on developing children's communication and language skills using specific focused groups. Children are keen to join in and staff encourage them to use describing words as they take objects from the bag. Staff use assessments to monitor the progress of children and this has had a positive impact so far. Gaps in this area of children's development are closing.
- However, some staff have not yet accessed training to support their understanding of how to support language development. For instance, staff do not consistently model single words to babies during planned activities. In addition, other staff use incorrect language when talking to children, such as 'doggy', and ask closed questions which do not encourage children to extend their sentences.
- Staff promote children's early mathematical development and encourage them to enjoy stories from an early age. Children show excitement to use the lending library and take books home to read with their families. Young children show

awareness of size as they point out big, small and medium-sized animals. Older children share their knowledge of more complex shapes as they chat to staff during activities.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported effectively by staff in the nursery. They know them exceptionally well and ensure their teaching focuses on working towards their individual goals. Staff work in partnership with other professionals to promote continuity of learning.
- Children's behaviour is very positive. Staff are good role models and consistently model good manners. Older children remember the rules for their group activities and tell staff how they need to have 'good listening'. They concentrate well and for extended lengths of time. Staff praise young children for being kind and help them to build resilience by encouraging them to keep trying to develop their skills.
- Staff focus on developing children's good health and independence from an early age. Young children wash their hands and begin to use the toilet independently. Staff promote children's oral health and encourage children to brush their teeth each day in the nursery. Although children benefit from outdoor play each day, staff do not consistently promote their learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- The manager is caring, approachable and experienced. Staff say they feel valued here and there is a good focus on their well-being. They access training which helps them to develop skills and benefit from regular, robust supervisions.
- The manager and staff team work hard to make continual improvements to the nursery and maintain strong partnerships with parents. Parents say they are very happy with the care their children receive and the progress they make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager, who is also one of the lead safeguarding officers for the nursery, ensures that staff have clear policies and procedures to follow if they have concerns about children's welfare. Staff regularly refresh their knowledge of child protection issues and confidently identify potential signs of abuse, such as signs of neglect, female genital mutilation and county lines. The manager follows safer recruitment procedures when she employs new staff. She regularly checks their ongoing suitability and well-being. Staff teach children about risks and how to stay safe. For instance, they supervise toddlers using scissors and talk to them about road safety.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help all staff to focus their teaching on developing children's communication and language skills, so this is consistently embedded in the nursery

- enhance the curriculum outdoors so children who prefer to learn here are consistently challenged.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY539912
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10312046
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 10
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	81
Name of registered person	Smiles North East Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP539911
Telephone number	01642 803190
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Smiles registered with Ofsted in 2016. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Fourteen staff members hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The manager has a relevant level 4 childcare qualification. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year, from 7am to 6pm. It is closed for a week over Christmas and is closed on bank holidays. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. Children with SEND attend.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michelle Lorains

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 setting and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed by the manager and inspector, indoors, during a planned activity.
- The inspector held a discussion with the manager in relation to the leadership and management of the nursery. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of recruitment, staff's qualifications and their suitability to work with children. She discussed children's learning and development with the staff team and the nursery manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents and obtained feedback for the inspection.

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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