

# Smilers Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 127555  
**Inspection date** 12 December 2007  
**Inspector** Susan Jennifer Scott

**Setting Address** Walderslade Baptist Church, Catkin Close, Chatham, Kent, ME5 9HP

**Telephone number** 01634660148

**E-mail**

**Registered person** Smilers Pre-school

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Smilers Pre-School opened in 1991. It is run as a part of the church, with the committee made up of church members and parents. It operates from two rooms, with the occasional use of the main hall, in a church hall, in Walderslade, Chatham. The pre-school serves the local area.

The group are registered for up to 20 children between two and five years. There are currently 43 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 26 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties or disabilities, although no children who speak English as an additional language attend currently.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 Monday to Friday and 12:30 to 15:00 Monday and Thursday afternoons.

There are eight staff working with the children. Six of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3, one staff member is working towards a level 4 and another is working towards a level 2. All staff are involved in taking short courses. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and tidy environment where there are written routines to ensure toys, resources and equipment are clean and hygienic. They benefit from clear routines and activities that enable them to learn the importance of good hygiene and healthy living, although they do use a shared bowl of water after painting. For example, staff encourage hand washing before eating and after they use the toilets, through conversations and reminders. As a result, children's understanding of hygiene is good. Six staff hold current first aid certificates and are able to administer first aid in the event of an accident. This ensures children's welfare in the event of an accident, when parents and emergency contacts are not available. The policy on sickness provides additional safeguards for children by helping to prevent their exposure to infection.

Children benefit from healthy choices of food and drink at snack times when they enjoy a variety of vegetables and fruits. They enjoy the social opportunities offered to them at these times when they can help themselves to foods and pour drinks at the small tables with their keyworkers. This encourages good conversations, such as one about Rudolf the reindeer eating carrots. Children use individual laminated mats for their snacks to reinforce their understanding of healthy eating habits. Many children are able to pour themselves water whenever they feel thirsty, which encourages them to develop their independence. Staff use reliable systems to ensure that all food and drink complies with parental instructions and children's preferences, enabling them to have confidence in the choices offered.

Children explore the interesting play and learning opportunities in the locality and the outdoor environment is used to promote children's physical development successfully. This provides them with access to fresh air and vigorous physical play on a frequent and regular basis. Children also enjoy opportunities to use the climbing equipment and tunnels and space hoppers inside, when using the large church hall. Children are keen to use this large space inside during directed physical play sessions although there are some occasions when children with learning difficulties are not fully engaged. Children develop a good sense of space steering bikes and cars, as well as using scooters proficiently.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle well at this secure and welcoming setting. They feel a sense of belonging from the pegs provided for their coats and benefit from using the warm, clean and attractive environment. There are plentiful pictures, posters and displays of their work, such as the autumn pictures, which show that staff value and encourage children's contributions. Children have easy and safe access to a good range of toys and resources appropriate for their age and stage of development. Resources are used well by staff to meet the needs of the children, for example there is a system to ensure resources are varied each session. Toys and resources are carefully selected and regularly checked to ensure they are safe and suitable for children to use.

Children enjoy their play in a safe environment and regular risk assessments, indoors and outdoors, ensure children's safety. For example, the outdoor area is being cleaned, with scaffolding erected, and is not being used. Good staff interaction helps develop children's awareness of safety within the setting. Outings are planned carefully to ensure staff ratios are

sufficient and emergencies are covered; for example, by taking a mobile phone. Children benefit from good security systems which ensure they are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult. Staff are vigilant at all times though there is not a procedure to ensure all children are aware of the procedures, such as the emergency evacuation, soon after starting at the setting, to keep them safe. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to be followed if they have concerns about child protection issues. This safeguards children's welfare in the setting.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of activities that are stimulating and well balanced for all ages and include quiet and active games. Children enjoy and learn from a varied range of activities and good quality, stimulating toys provide balance and challenge.

The youngest children benefit from a programme of activities that is planned to meet their level of interest and understanding. However, the story read to them on one occasion does not fully engage them because it is suited to older children, although it reflects the current theme. Staff have a system to methodically observe, assess and plan children's progress in all areas of the Birth to three matters framework which successfully develops their understanding.

Children develop their understanding of numbers by counting the cups at snack tables and discussing shapes such as stars during craft activities. They benefit from discussing their environment and experiences, such as the pictures of vegetables on their placemats. Staff use good questioning techniques to develop their language skills and challenge them. Snack time conversations about food and families develop their communication skills and confidence. Children's creative and imaginative development is stimulated through activities such as sharing books, painting, singing, dancing, role-play and dressing up. They enjoy and learn from a range of activities that allow them to explore and investigate, such as cooking and growing herbs, recording and observing the changes.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from practitioners' secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Children are confident and secure as staff work together effectively, utilising daily opportunities to get to know the children well and using this information to support their planning. Children's observations during spontaneous and planned play are used to form a reliable and clear assessment of their development. Key workers share a system to ensure there are regular and frequent assessments to cover children's progress in all six areas of the curriculum. The planning of activities is informed by assessments of children, although there are occasional undated assessments which can result in less clear information. Children are making good progress because the staff encourage their learning by providing spontaneous and planned play activities related to the topics and which they adapt to suit the range of needs. Children benefit from plans which encourage contributions to be brought in to support activities.

Children relate very well to staff and some to each other. They help tidy away activities which encourages them to work together. Children confidently approach staff for support and have lively conversations with them, indicating good trusting relationships are built. Children are interested in the activities and spend time concentrating on self-chosen activities such as water play, painting and mark making. Children are developing respect for each other and their

environment through planned topic work and local visits, such as those to the church activities, play area and woods.

Children speak confidently to their peers and adults. They talk openly during 'circle' and snack times when staff sit on each table and have conversations about their families and celebrations such as Christmas. This develops children's vocabulary and their confidence. Children are encouraged to write, and staff skilfully ensure methods are compatible to children's stage of development so that they enjoy success. Children count confidently and older children recognise numbers that are important to them. They discuss the weather and the date at each session. They choose number activities during free play and enthusiastically perform number rhymes and songs.

The outside environment is used imaginatively to support children's understanding of nature, such as investigating the log pile. They explore and build on their understanding of science by making and flying kites out of plastic bags. Children investigate using their senses, enjoying visits to the woods nearby to learn about trees and plants. They learn about their environment through visits from Firemen, the Police and others.

Children demonstrate cutting and joining skills when they select and use appropriate materials, such as paper and glue to create attractive cards. They also build their fine motor skills by using clay and decorating it with varied craft materials such as matchsticks. Children enjoy music and respond enthusiastically during music and singing sessions, learning to listen and vary rhythms. They experience stimulating opportunities for imaginative play in the role play area such as acting out well-known scenarios which staff support well. This gives recognition and value to the suggestions and ideas made by children. For example, children post cards they make in the Christmas postbox and these are delivered.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Partnerships with parents are good. Parents exchange information verbally when they register their child to ensure staff have knowledge of individual needs and achievements; this enables staff to build on what children already know. Children benefit when the observations, assessments and records of progress are shared with parents on a regular basis. Parents access consultations with staff each year when they exchange information about their children's progress. Parents are provided with good information about the curriculum and each child regularly takes examples of their work home. This supports children's learning and provides an opportunity for parents to comment on their children's experiences. Regular newsletters inform parents of events and topics so that they can contribute items to support their understanding and experiences. Good relationships with parents ensures children's changing needs are met and continually discussed with staff.

All children engage in a full range of activities and staff provide good individual acknowledgement. For example, one child is asked if his mother is better now which encourages him to feel valued. Staff ensure they can acknowledge varied cultures and provide recognition for individual children. Children learn to respect others and staff provide sensitive support to ensure all understand the importance of accepting differences. Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are welcome in the setting and staff provide individual support to enable them to feel secure and well settled here. However, there are a few occasions when planning does not fully promote inclusion for all children in the activities. There is good liaison

between parents and other professional agencies. There is access to some parts of the building for those with disabilities.

Children have good relationships with staff who encourage them through modelling polite behaviour and treating them with respect. For example, children are addressed by their names and are given gentle reminders to sit so that others can contribute at circle time. Children are confident and respond positively to staff when they are reminded about basic rules. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

All the staff working in the setting have been checked and those who are not fully checked are not left unsupervised with children. This ensures that children are safeguarded. Children benefit from the support of staff who are enthusiastically increasing their skills and knowledge through attending courses and workshops. Children benefit from the combined knowledge in the staff team. Children are making good progress due to the effective organisation of space and of resources. For example, there are clearly defined areas for activities, including physical play when they can use the large church hall or outside space.

Children's welfare is promoted through the use of clear and informative records: for example, there are accurate registers for children, staff and visitors and reliable accident and medication records. Policies and procedures are well thought through and effective in keeping children healthy, safeguarding their welfare and effectively promoting their learning. The documentation is clear, helpful to staff and users of the service, and well organised. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Management and Leadership is good. Staff are enthusiastic about their work in the setting and keen to develop the provision further. This results in benefits to the children as staff attend training courses and develop their ideas to improve the facilities and build good practice. Staff work well as a team, promoting clear aims for the provision and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. This provides good support for the children and their families. There are secure systems in place for interviewing, assessing and employing new staff. Effective measures are in place to improve the provision. For example, the supervisor and staff monitor and evaluate to identify improvements which develop the ongoing quality of the provision.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous inspection for nursery education the setting were recommended to make two improvements. These have been addressed successfully. They have introduced opportunities for children to learn through daily routines and practical free play. Staff also give good attention to increasing children's awareness of written text so that they begin to recognise many of these and encourage children's confident use of mark making for enjoyment. This successfully builds upon their literacy development.

At the previous inspection for care the setting were recommended to make three improvements. They have ensured that existing injuries are recorded and signed by parents. The policies and procedures are available to parents and users of the pre-school and staff have updated and reviewed information to ensure it is valid and toys and resources have been increased to reflect diversity.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- devise a system to ensure all children are aware of the procedures for an emergency evacuation soon after starting at the setting, to familiarise them with safety procedures

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all observations of children's progress are dated
- differentiate play plans so that all children are engaged and can be included (also applies to care)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)