

# Smilers Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date** 26/09/2011  
**Inspector** Carly Reigler

**Setting address** Walderslade Baptist Church, Catkin Close, Chatham, Kent,  
ME5 9HP  
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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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## **Description of the setting**

Smilers Pre-School opened in 1991. It is run by a 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 pre-school is registered for up to 20 children between two and five years. There are currently 39 children from two to five years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school welcomes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9am to 12noon, Monday to Friday and 12.30pm to 3.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. A lunch club is held from 12pm to 12.30pm. There are eight staff working with the children. Seven of the staff have National Vocational Qualifications at levels 2 or 3; one staff member has a level 4 and is now working towards an early years degree and another is working towards a level 2. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This is a highly stimulating and welcoming environment. Children are fully safeguarded through the effective implementation of robust policies and procedures. The innovative use of indoor and outdoor space and resources, and the expertise of the staff enable children to make outstanding progress. Dynamic and effective partnerships, together with a generally very effective engagement with parents, promote an integrated, exceptional approach to children's care and learning. The high aspirations of the staff and committee effectively create a well targeted and continuous improvement plan.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- enhancing positive relationships with parents in supporting children's learning and development at home.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

An extremely strong emphasis is placed on safeguarding children by staff who clearly recognise their responsibilities in keeping children safe. They are fully aware of procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. Excellent recruitment procedures and the robust staff appraisal system ensure all staff

remain suitable to work with the children. Policies are well understood and implemented by all staff. Record keeping is of an exceptionally high standard so clear records are kept. Children's safety is given a very high priority, with staff being highly vigilant and children supervised carefully at all times. All visitors are required to sign in and times of arrival and departures are recorded. A clear and comprehensive risk assessment programme is used to ensure that the premises and resources are safe and suitable for the children to use.

The leadership and management of the preschool are exceptionally strong and provide very clear guidance to staff. The committee and management team is deeply focused on promoting children's welfare, learning and development. Staff are enthusiastic in their work, and keen to reflect on practice and improve the provision. The whole team is open-minded and flexible, and enjoy trying out new ideas that they gain from training. Motivation is encouraged as the manager involves both staff and committee in all aspects of decision making and planning. This allows them to feel valued and know that their contribution is relevant and important.

Clear strategies are in place for self-evaluation which enables the pre-school to effectively identify weaknesses in the quality of the provision. The pre-school takes account of the views of parents, committee and external parties such as the church and the local school. This allows them to highlight areas for improvement and to take positive action to drive future progress successfully. A volunteer parent liaison officer ensures excellent communication links.

The pre-school has a strong emphasis on treating all children as individuals, and they have extremely good opportunities to develop their social skills and to gain a strong sense of belonging. The children often join groups in the hall downstairs; for example the children often play games and sing songs with a group of disabled adults. Staff know the children particularly well and are quick to address individual needs. Differences are acknowledged and valued; both adults and children are sensitive to each other's needs. The pre-school is well equipped and all resources are rotated daily to ensure that all activities are regularly offered. Staff help children to make choices about how they use their resources; for example, a staff member helps a small group of children to gather together resources for their pretend play in writing shopping lists. There is an extremely effective deployment of staff, including senior members of staff taking a hands-on role, so children benefit from excellent levels of adult support. Regular but fluid routines such as snacktime give children security as they are able to predict what will happen next. The pre-school demonstrates a high commitment to sustainability by recycling paper, plastic and vegetable matter. Children support this by taking such items to the local recycling centre, and by using household materials in activities such as junk modelling.

The pre-school enjoys a very close relationship with the local primary schools, the church and other early years settings which helps the children make excellent contributions to the wider community and aids transitions. For example a primary school teacher visited the children to read stories and sing songs in Spanish, and the church minister visits to talk about harvest or Christmas with the children. Community cohesion is promoted well and pupils benefit from broader initiatives such as a partnership with a pre-school in The Gambia. Local authority support is

also used to further develop the pre-school effectively. Very strong partnerships with parents and carers overall mean that children's care and development is highly nurtured. Parents are given comprehensive information about their children's progress, for example through observations and individual records. There are excellent two way communications about the pre-school itself through newsletters, flyers and a useful website. Parents can also learn about activities and wider opportunities from informative noticeboards, such a local support group for parents with children with additional needs. Whilst parents are encouraged to support children at home, this part of the partnership is not fully extended.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children feel extremely safe and secure and are delightfully eager to come to the pre-school. They are confident and able to take responsibility for their own safety. They handle tools correctly, for example using knives to prepare their own fruit and vegetable snacks. Children walk outside together sensibly and obediently. They have an excellent awareness of potential dangers and how to avoid them. They know the importance of staying on the pavement when walking next to a road. Children are active learners and engage in a range of challenging opportunities to crawl and climb over, under and through equipment. They use low-level chains to balance on the equipment in the local primary school playground, and practitioners join in with hopping and skipping to make learning fun.

Children initiate their own play and interact extremely well with their others in a highly stimulating and welcoming environment. High quality and caring adult interaction is appropriately offered. Children are incredibly well supported in their critical thinking and creativity and this helps them to enjoy their learning and become active learners. Individual progress is consistently good, with children making significant gains from starting points in their learning and development. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the children in their care and so activities are well matched to the individual child's needs. Children show great curiosity and an eagerness to learn and demonstrate confidence and a sense of security with both adults and other children.

Children are proficient with technology, excellent problem solvers and extremely confident communicators who ask questions and happily volunteer information. They display very good independence by using their own initiative to get resources for their play. Children are exceptionally well behaved, are polite and thoughtful towards each other whilst engaging in a wide range of freely chosen activities. The sessions run smoothly and the children revel in the regular routines of the day. On arrival, they hang up their coats independently, and place their photographs in a designated box. They are beginning to master putting on and taking off coats and hats for outdoor play.

Planning is of a high quality, using observations and feedback from children, including what children say about their interests. Information obtained from parents and carers about children's starting points is used to good effect. Staff have an excellent knowledge of how to progress children's learning, and the next

steps in learning precisely pinpoint the exact objective.

All children show an extraordinary understanding of what it is to be healthy. Children willingly follow hygiene practices by happily washing their hands before sitting at the table, and remind each other to do so. Children gain an excellent understanding of healthy eating as they are provided with healthy choices at snack time. Dietary needs are well documented and staff ensure that those with allergies do not come into contact with foods that they are intolerant to through use of carefully thought out systems. The children help themselves to water in addition to what is available at snack time. This helps children to understand the importance of taking regular drinks to maintain health and take on small, but worthwhile, responsibilities.

A strongly inclusive ethos and a 'can do' approach underpins day-to-day practice. Practitioners are genuinely interested in what children say and do and readily get down to their level to interact with them. All of the staff and the committee are dedicated to their roles and create an interesting and inclusive atmosphere where children thrive.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*  
*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*  
*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*  
*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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