Inspection of Salvation Army Preschool

The Salvation Army, Nelson Road, Gillingham ME7 4LH

Inspection date:	23 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy their time in the setting and respond well to the friendly interaction of staff. They benefit from a good balance of adult-led experiences and time to explore and initiate their own games. They develop their physical coordination and control as they independently navigate the challenging climbing equipment. Staff recognise the importance of letting children test their capabilities but stay close by to intervene, if necessary, to keep them safe.

Staff use their knowledge of child development, and of each child's unique needs, to plan activities that capture their interests and extend their learning. For example, older children have fun as they make play dough. Staff cook the dough before it is ready to play with. They make good use of the opportunity to teach children about safety, explaining why they need to wait for the dough to cool down.

There is a strong focus on promoting children's language. Children chat happily as they play, and staff introduce new words to extend their vocabulary. Staff use sign language to support the youngest children, and those with delayed speech, to communicate while their spoken language develops.

Staff help children to understand the expectations of their behaviour. For example, younger children benefit from the support they receive to share and take turns as they play with their friends. This helps them to develop valuable social skills.

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

- The manager and staff work effectively together to devise and implement a broad curriculum, tailored to reflect the unique learning needs of each child. There are good arrangements to provide staff with ongoing support and training to continually enhance their skills and knowledge. This, along with their good communication and friendly interactions, creates a positive and efficient environment.
- Staff in each room collaborate effectively to plan the activities that underpin their curriculum. They also make good use of the space and resources available to promote children's learning and enjoyment. They thoughtfully organise the learning environment to reflect children's interests and needs. For example, the room used by the youngest children is specifically designed to support them in settling and developing their confidence. Older children enjoy the freedom to explore a broad and interesting range of toys, books and craft materials.
- Staff provide good opportunities for children to learn about their local community. For example, children benefit from visiting local facilities such as the park and library. They also enjoy spending time with older members of the community. Children learn about different cultures and religions through stories,

discussions and creative activities. Experiences of this kind help to prepare them for their future lives in modern Britain.

- Overall, arrangements to promote children's behaviour are effective and positive, although there are occasional inconsistencies in the approaches used. At these times, children do not fully benefit from the support that managers intend to understand why some behaviour is not wanted. However, staff are skilled at responding to children who need support to regulate their emotions. For example, they intervene effectively, when needed, to help children overcome their frustrations. They also successfully reassure those who are still getting used to being away from their parents.
- The care of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has a secure understanding of her role. She works effectively with staff and parents to identify and meet the unique care and learning needs of each child. The SENCO, and manager, have experience of working with other relevant professionals to meet children's needs.
- Partnerships with parents are a key strength of the provision and have a significant impact on children's emotional well-being. Children benefit from observing the friendly interaction between staff and their parents. The manager and staff team keep parents informed of their child's progress. They also provide a safe space for parents to share concerns, offering support and reassurance. Parents are extremely positive in their feedback about the support from the staff team and the quality of the service they provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance the support for staff to address inconsistencies in the approaches to managing children's behaviour.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2740815
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10353880
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	2 to 7
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	69
Name of registered person	Salvation Army Trustee Company (The)
Registered person unique reference number	RP903315
Telephone number	07872403917
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Salvation Army Preschool registered at its current address in 2023. It is one of several childcare provisions owned and operated by the same provider. The setting opens from 8am to 6pm during school terms times and offers a holiday club that opens from 8am to 5.30pm during school holidays. There are 11 staff, of whom nine hold early years qualifications from level 2 to level 6. The setting receives funding to provide free early years education to children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Liz Caluori

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.
- The manager showed the inspector around the setting and discussed their intent for children's learning and development.
- The inspector and manager completed a joint observation and a planned activity and discussed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The views of parents were sought through discussion and written feedback.
- The inspector viewed a selection of relevant documentation.

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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