

Sunbeams Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY100973 |
| Inspection date | 25 January 2008 |
| Inspector | Suman Willis |

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| Setting Address | Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1NA |
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| Registered person | Katherine Taylor |
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| Type of inspection | Integrated |
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| Type of care | Full day care |
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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.

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?

Sunbeams Pre-School is one of two Sunbeam groups in Stevenage. It opened in 2002 and operates from one main hall within the Bedwell Community Centre, Stevenage. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five days a week from 09:15 to 15:15 during term time. Children attend morning or afternoon sessions with some children staying for the lunch club and some attending all day. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 48 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local area. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are involved in a range of physical activities which promote their large motor skills. They enjoy balancing and rocking during indoor activities. Children have regular fresh air during outdoor play and are offered a variety of resources. For example, they are developing their pedalling skills as they ride bikes and use large 'tike' cars while manoeuvring with control as they chase each other. Children are also developing their ball skills as staff join in playing skittles, catching and throwing games and they are learning to skip and hop as they use a skipping rope. Children are also taken out for walks around the community.

Children develop a good understanding of spatial awareness as they move around the hall with control. They are becoming aware of their own bodies and are beginning to recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle. For example, children eagerly say 'if you don't wash hands before eating you will get germs inside you'. There are good displays around the hall about the importance of exercise and good diet to stay healthy and staff refer to them at circle time, this builds on what children know about staying healthy.

There are clear policies and procedures in place to ensure that children's health needs are appropriately monitored. Parents are asked to give written permission for administering medication as and when required. They give prior written permission for emergency treatment. All staff have up-to-date knowledge of first-aid and the first-aid kit is checked daily, which ensures prompt and efficient treatment for children in an emergency. Children develop a good understanding of simple health and hygiene practices because staff encourage them to manage their personal hygiene while being at hand to offer support. Although children have to be escorted to the toilet staff develop their independence by displaying signs at low-level reminding children to wash their hands and flush the toilet.

Children are well-nourished because they enjoy eating healthy snacks such as melons, mangoes, apples and oranges. They are involved in the preparation of snacks which are used to extend children's learning in all areas. For example, children enjoy smelling, cutting and counting as they prepare snacks for their groups. Parents provide packed lunches and staff are at hand to offer support and encourage children to eat their sandwiches and fruit first. Children enjoy the informal occasion of sitting with their peers sharing information. For example, they tell each other about their pets; this helps to develop their social skills. Children's individual dietary needs are effectively met as parents provide valuable information about any health, cultural or personal diets. However, children do not have free access to water, therefore their independence to manage their own thirst is not fully promoted.

Children have access to a cosy book corner should they get tired and need to rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and friendly environment. The premises are safe and secure and suitably risk assessed. For example, staff carry out daily risk assessments of all areas used by the children and the door is secured. They have access to a broad range of activities which are well laid out to ensure that children can move around safely, thus promoting their independence as they make their own choices. Children have access to a good variety of

resources which are stored in low-level units and clearly labelled. These are all age-appropriate and provide a suitable challenge for children.

Children's safety is promoted by staff who are appropriately deployed to monitor children's movement. Staff explain to children how to hold resources such as knives and scissors safely. Children learn to stay safe when out and about because staff carry out a risk assessment prior to the outing to ensure that it is suitable. They learn about road safety through topics and during walks within the community.

All staff have a sound understanding of child protection procedures which are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, the policy does not include procedures to be followed in case of allegations made against members of staff, which may compromise children and staff's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive enthusiastically and are familiar with the routine. For example, upon arrival they happily pick out their name cards and post them into the post box and engage in their chosen activity with ease. Staff work closely with parents to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. For example, staff send letters home to parents requesting they send in items for 'show and tell' with a brief guidance of what it is and what it means to the child. This enables staff to find out about the item thus enabling children to feel confident and secure as they share this with the group. Staff plan activities appropriately so that all children can participate at their own level. Children are encouraged to use their own initiative and their interest is fully sustained as they carry out a variety of activities such as cutting, painting and role play. Children are excited and use language well to communicate within their peer groups as they engage in role play asking each other if they would like a cup of tea or when playing shop. They enjoy being read to in large and small groups and concentrate well to the story of 'Where's My Teddy'. They sing familiar counting rhymes such as 'Wheels on the bus' and join in enthusiastically. Children develop good hand-and-eye coordination as they complete jigsaw puzzles and use a variety of shape cutters with dough.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Staff use the stepping stones to plan a varied range of activities covering the six areas of learning and demonstrate the learning objective clearly. They are good at extending children's learning as they ask open ended questions. For example, as children prepare fruit for snack time, they are encouraged to smell the fruit, compare the shape and size and count how many they need for their groups. Staff carry out regular observations and make written assessments about children's progress. However, these are not used to inform planning and staff do not seek information about children's progress from their parents. Therefore, planning does not reflect individual children's development which could potentially hinder their learning. Staff use effective methods to manage children's behaviour and provide strategies to help them manage their own. Consequently, children are keen to learn and make good progress in all areas.

Children are well behaved and enjoy being given responsibilities. This makes them feel valued and respected. They are beginning to make firm friends and are excited as they see their friends arriving. They negotiate turn-taking very well as they play with the cars. They confidently ask

for their favourite nursery rhymes during circle time. Children know that they will be supported as they ask adults to help them with activities such as cutting. They show a strong sense of belonging as they select their own play materials and are interested as they take part in their chosen activities. Children develop a good understanding of their community as they are taken for walks to fit in with themes such as collecting leaves for an autumn collage.

Children use language to communicate their needs effectively. They are beginning to recognise letters in their names as they confidently pick out their name cards. Emphasis is given to developing children's understanding of letters and numbers which is brought into every activity. They are given ample opportunities to practise mark-making and learn new words such as 'aubergine'. Children are beginning to use letters to link to sounds such as 'd' for 'duck'. Children enjoy being read to and participate with enthusiasm to the story 'Mr. Large in charge'. Staff promote children's understanding of letters and numbers well during small group time and circle time. Children enjoy playing matching and sorting games and are delighted as they correctly count out four mini teddies to the written number four. They develop a good understanding of counting money as they play shop. Children learn about weight, shape and size as they weigh play dough.

Children are developing a good understanding of technology. They competently use the computer and learn to use the mouse with control as they match shapes and colours on the screen. Children have access to a variety of resources such as a till in the role play area. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through a variety of topic work and have access to a good range of resources such as food items, dressing-up clothes and play-people. They learn about their community as they invite people such as a vet into their setting. They learn about living things as they plant seeds and bulbs. Children are intrigued as they experiment with corn flour, water and food colouring. Children examine and talk eagerly about the different shapes and colours that they can make as they mix the three ingredients. They independently choose paint and different colours as they paint using brushes and their hands. Children are creative as they independently access art and craft materials to make their own collage pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in a warm and caring environment. They are greeted warmly by staff upon arrival which enables them to feel valued. Parents provide valuable written information prior to their children starting, and share verbally daily any changes that may impact on children's care. This enables staff to meet their individual needs effectively. Children confidently approach staff for support knowing that their needs will be met.

Children develop an understanding of their local community as they are taken out for walks to the local shops and visitors are invited into the setting to extend their learning. Their knowledge and understanding of the wider world is extended as they freely access a variety of multicultural resources. This helps children to understand the diversity in culture and acknowledge the differences in people. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of working with children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities and with children who have English as an additional language.

Children behave very well. They respond responsibly to tidy up time and work alongside staff as they prepare snacks. Children develop good manners and are polite. They say 'please' and 'thank you' without prompt as they ask to have their laces tied. They work very well in their

chosen groups negotiating turn-taking and making decisions. Children are constantly praised by staff and reassured. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years is good. Parents are provided with information about the Foundation Stage through newsletters, a parents pack and displays around the room. Children's assessment records show the progress the children are making and parents are warmly welcomed into the group and informally discuss their children's progress. However, there is no formal system in place to share this information with parents. Therefore, partnership with parents is not used effectively to promote children's learning.

Parents' feedback to Ofsted is positive and they commented on how caring the staff are and how staff make them feel welcome. Parents are effectively informed of the nursery's complaints procedure.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a team of staff who work very well together and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that staff are suitably vetted and qualified to promote children's well-being and safety. The high ratio of qualified staff ensures that children's care, learning and play is fully promoted. New staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff are appropriately deployed to contribute to children's health, safety, enjoyment and ability to take an active part in the setting. Policies and procedures work in practice to promote care, learning and play; these are effectively shared with parents.

The leadership and management for children in receipt of funding for nursery education is good. Staff work well together and the group leader is a positive role model, this enables all staff to work with children effectively. All staff are given equal responsibilities and regular meetings ensure that all staff are included and kept up-to-date. The leader continues to review the nursery provision and implements changes which promote children's learning. All staff are encouraged to attend training and update their knowledge in the Foundation Stage to ensure that all children make good progress in all the six areas of learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to: review hand-washing procedures before snack time; review training needs in connection with child protection issues and ensure that information regarding the children's learning outcomes is shared with parents.

Children now wash their hands independently at the hall sink after messy activities and before snack, thus ensuring that cross-infection is minimised and children stay healthy. All staff have updated their child protection training in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and have easy access to the up-to-date booklet, thus ensuring that children stay safe. Staff continue to develop strategies for sharing children's learning outcomes with parents to extend their learning.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to give consideration to developing strategies that effectively monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education and ensure that short term planning covers all six areas of learning.

Short term planning is now effectively evaluated and monitored. However, the progress children are making and their starting points are not used to inform planning. Therefore, the provider needs to continue developing this area to promote and extend children's learning.

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):

- develop procedures to ensure that children have access to regular drinking water
- develop the safeguarding children policy to include procedures to be followed in the event of allegations made against staff.

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):

- develop procedures to ensure that children's starting points and their assessments are used to inform planning
- develop the partnership with parents to ensure that they are fully involved in the progress their children are making to promote children's learning.

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