



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY243400

DfES Number: 546220

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 23/11/2004
Inspector Name Diane Mary O'Neill

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Sunbeams St. Nicks
Setting Address 59 Canterbury Way
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG1 4LJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Katherine Taylor

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Sunbeam St Nicks pre-school opened in September 2002 and operates from one large hall within the St Nicholas Community Centre, Stevenage. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The Preschool is open each weekday from 9.30 am to 12.00 pm term time only. All children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from 2 years to under 4 years on roll. Of these 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from, the St Nicholas, catchments area and some other surrounding areas. The Pre-School currently supports no children with special educational needs, but does support a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 9 staff, 6 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff members are working towards a qualification. The Pre-School have input from a qualified teacher as well as support from their local Pre-School Learning Alliance Development worker.

How good is the Day Care?

Sunbeam St Nicks Pre-School Group provides good care for children.

The pre- school provides a welcoming environment for all children and their parents. There are clear routines in place and staff's interaction with the children is excellent, this enables the children to settle into the pre-school.

The staff have a very good awareness of health and safety practices and procedures. They are deployed well within the setting to ensure children's safety and well being both inside and outside. The staff ensure that all areas of space within the pre-school are used to its full potential to benefit the play and learning opportunities for all children.

There is a very good variety of toys and resources accessible to the children within

the provision. However staff need to enable children to be more independent in their choosing of equipment, and to further encourage their independent skills at snack time. Staff are developing their planning to show what topics and activities will be available.

Staff have a very good working relationship with the parents. There are effective systems in place that enables the sharing of information formally and informally. Parents are encouraged to help in the pre-school; this is very beneficial, as it helps them see what their child does when they attend.

There is a clear behaviour management procedure in place that takes account of the children's understanding.

Documentation is well organised and staff have worked hard to have in place, planning and children's assessment records, they are now looking to develop these more. In some areas of their documentation they need to ensure it covers all elements of their practice.

The staff are dedicated to undertake training courses, this helps them keep up to date with ongoing information as well as developing their own learning and practice.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the provider agreed to provide parents with information about the activities provided for the children. This has been addresses by a parents information sheet and news letter. They had to ensure there was procedures in place which enabled good hygiene practice in relation to children wearing nappies. The pre-school now has a clear nappy changing rota in place, and staff adhere to good hygiene practices when changing children's nappies. The provision was to provide evidence of a risk assessment this is now done on a daily basis, with a documented risk assessment. The provision had to ensure procedures were in place which demonstrated that staff have appropriate experience , skills and ability to carry out their role. The provision now has staff files with all relevant details, staff appraisals are carried out and monthly staff meetings review staff practices.

What is being done well?

- There is a warm, welcoming and safe environment for both children and their parents. There are health and safety polices in place that provide staff, children and parents with clear guidance for the promotion of children's health and safety whilst attending the pre-school.
- The staff build effective working relationships with parents and keep them informed about their child's progress in regular meetings and day-to-day conversations. This ensures that a strong partnership with parents is established enabling the children to feel more secure.
- The daily routine within the planning ensures that the activities are interesting

and stimulating, which helps to encourage the children's learning and development. These activities are flexible depending on the needs of individual children.

- Staff are dedicated to doing training courses, this helps them keep up to date with on going information as well as developing their own learning and practice.

What needs to be improved?

- Provide opportunities for children to develop their independence skills during play and snack time.
- Develop documentation to include information for staff re complaints and if an allegation was made against them. Also to include attendance times in the register.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

Since 1st April 2004 Ofsted has not received any complaints about this provider.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
3	Develop opportunities to enable children to be more independent as well as having choices within activities and snack times.
14	Ensure organisation of documents and staffing meets the needs of all children.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Sunbeams St Nicks Pre-School is of good quality overall. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals within personal, social and emotional development and physical development, and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a suitable knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Curriculum plans are starting to give appropriate emphasis to the majority of areas, although some development is required. The staff work directly with the children and provide a good balance between structured learning and child led play. However they need to consider opportunities for children to develop their learning for linking sounds to letters and mark making, calculation and simple problem solving, ICT and how things work. Some areas of creative development require expansion. Staff promote positive role models, which is reflected within children's behaviour.

Staff have children's assessment records in place. However some further development is required to highlight children's progress, so that this can inform future planning. There also needs to be increased opportunities for the key worker system to evolve more effectively. Staff do well at giving individual children good levels of support, there are effective systems in place to support any children with special educational needs.

Leadership and management is generally good. The pre-school benefits from a dedicated and committed staff team, who are prepared to go on training to improve their practice to enable them to provide a good learning environment for children.

Partnership with parents and carers is generally good. They receive information about the pre-school, its procedures and routines. However some development is required for the parents to be more informed and involved in their children's learning.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident speakers and listeners; staff develop children's confidence to speak as part of the group and in smaller peer groups. Staff have effective questioning skills, which encourage the children to think for themselves. Children take turns to talk and interact well developing good conversation skills when playing. They listen well to others and concentrate during story time.
- Children's physical development is well fostered in all areas. There is a good selection of resources to extend children's learning capabilities. Such as the parachute, use of the climbing and balancing equipment, toys to define fine motor skills such as paintbrushes, drawing and mark making materials and

construction opportunities.

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority, which helps children gain in confidence, and helps develop their feelings of security. Staff give the children clear and constant boundaries that helps them to understand right from wrong.
- Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting. There is a good informal system in place for the sharing of all relevant information and the parents are happy with this practice.

What needs to be improved?

- Opportunities for children to develop their early reading skills with letter and familiar word recognition and to practice their writing and mark making skills in both structured and free play activities.
- Children to have opportunities to explore mathematical concepts, such as calculation and simple problem solving, through practical experiences and focused teaching.
- Develop opportunities for children to learn about ICT and how things work and expand learning about past and present.
- Develop opportunities for children to have more colour recognition and expand experiences of using colours more in practical activities.
- Increase opportunities for parents to be more involved in their children's learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are very motivated and keen to learn. They show high levels of concentration and are absorbed in their chosen activities. They listen attentively during story time and play well beside their peers and are starting to form friendships with both children and adults. They are learning to share and take turns such as playing with out door equipment. Children's self-esteem and independence is well developed with good support from adults.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversation with other children and adults. This is especially evident when sharing a story with staff when open-ended questions are asked. Also when children are playing together in the home corner. Children's opportunities to practice linking sounds and letters is limited this is an area for development as is increasing mark-making availability.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children confidently count how many spoons of flour are needed in a cooking activity. They also use known nursery rhymes to extend counting. Their number recognition is developed through staff having a number of the week and simpler exercises used to extend learning. They can effectively complete puzzles, thread large beads and starting to do some pattern making, although this needs expansion as does simple calculation and problem solving.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore and investigate texture through playing with corn flour. Good staff interaction helping to develop children's learning. Children confidently use their construction skills to build and play with road and train tracks. Resources however are limited to promote their IT skills and looking how things work. Planned topics encompass the wider world in which we live. Some development required to give children opportunities to develop concepts of past and present events.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move confidently and demonstrate an awareness of space as they move independently around the activities both inside and outside. Staff ensure that within the planning, there is a variety of opportunities for the children to play and learn with different play materials, such as climbing, balancing, using the parachute, as well as activities to help build confidence with hand and eye coordination. They are able to use a wooden spoon to mix the cakes for the cooking activity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are able to explore colour, texture, and shape, through various resources such as play dough, corn flour, sand and water. However more opportunities to relate the colour of the week and more painting availability would be beneficial to children's learning. Children are able to use their imagination through role-play and dressing up and small world play such as the cars. Children actively join in with the songs at singing time.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve opportunities for children to explore mathematical concepts such as calculation, simple shape and pattern making, through practical experience and well planned activities.
- extend opportunities for all children to have an increasing awareness of letters and the sounds they make and to explore mark making through structured play as well as more focused teaching.
- increase children's opportunities to explore colours and have opportunities to learn about how things work , ICT, and past and present, through planning and practical experiences.
- develop curriculum planning and key worker system to promote all aspects of children's learning.
- extend information to enable parents to be part of their children's learning and progress.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.