

# St Nicholas Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	129392
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<b>Inspector</b>	Hilary Preece

<b>Setting address</b>	Bennetts End House, Eastwick Row, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4JQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 253488 Ext11
<b>Email</b>	stnicholasnursery@sunhilldaycare.com
<b>Type of setting</b>	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

St Nicholas Nursery is one of eight privately owned nurseries operated by Sunhill Daycare Ltd and was registered in 1995. It operates from a listed manor house located within a residential area of Hemel Hempstead and close to schools and the M1 motorway link. The nursery serves the local area. It is accessible to all children and there is fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday throughout the year closing only for a week between Christmas and new year. Opening times are between 7.30am and 6.30pm and children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 77 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 100 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and 15 at level 3 or above. Four staff members are working from level 2 towards level 3 and two staff members are commencing an early years degree. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety and welfare are promoted by generally effective procedures and organisation. Most children enjoy their learning and they progress well overall, whilst a small number are less well engaged. Strong links with parents and carers help to involve them in children's care and education, and contribute to meeting their individual needs in most cases. Partnerships in the wider context are less well developed. Effective self-evaluation and monitoring of the provision, leading to progress since the last inspection, indicate a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

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

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- provide guidance to staff on how to manage children's behaviour effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development, and how to engage them in active learning
- make sure staffing arrangements are organised to meet the individual needs of all children with regard to toilet routines and movement between indoor and outdoor play areas
- develop stronger partnerships with other providers, organisations and services to promote continuity of learning and seek their knowledge and

advice to support the best learning opportunities for all children.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children are regularly reviewed and carefully managed. Staff members understand their individual roles in following procedures in order to identify and protect those who may be at risk of harm. Regular refresher training is provided. The company has recently reviewed its recruitment procedures and developed a very rigorous recruitment toolkit to aid managers in appointing staff who are suitable, thereby minimising the risk to children. Vetting arrangements are thorough and include obtaining references, health information and Criminal Record Bureau checks. A more structured staff induction and appraisal system also means staff members are carefully monitored and supported in training and development. The staff continue to build on their qualifications and overall feel they are supported well by the management. Generally well-managed procedures ensure children are kept safe and secure. Risk assessments are used effectively to ensure the premises and equipment remain safe for children to use and clear procedures are followed in the event of emergency evacuation or any potential threat to children's safety. Staff are deployed appropriately most of the time to ensure children are supervised and their individual needs are met. However, organisation of some routines is not so effective when staff are busy supervising groups of children in the toilets, leaving other children unoccupied or with insufficient levels of supervision. The new closed circuit television cameras around the nursery also provide additional security and are used as a constructive tool to help monitor staff deployment and performance.

The nursery manager is always keen to secure improvements and receptive to new ways of working. She has high expectations and works hard to motivate the staff team. Self-evaluation is used accurately to reflect on practice and identify most priorities for development. All staff are involved in the process and the views of parents are sought and acted upon. Children too are consulted about new developments and give their ideas and views. An example of this is seen in the refurbished toilets where children chose bathroom fittings and helped to decorate the tiles. Recent monitoring from the company's quality assurance manager has highlighted further areas for improvement and led to the nursery working towards some very clear action plans. It is likely that once this system is better established it will have a positive impact on the outcomes for children. Targets are realistic and challenging and are already beginning to make a difference. For example, a recent review of procedures for administering medicines in line with appropriate guidance will mean tighter regulations on the use of non-prescribed medicines. This will ensure children do not receive such medicines unnecessarily and ultimately this is better for their health. In addition, simple changes to the way that meals are served have led to children in the pre-school being able to help themselves to food more easily which develops both their interest in food and independence. Menus too have been reviewed following assessment by a nutritionist so that they meet the dietary requirements for young children. All these improvements have a positive impact on children's health and well-being.

The nursery team works hard to engage with parents and build strong partnerships. Parents report that staff are approachable, their children settle in well and they enjoy coming to nursery. Parents are given good access to policies, procedures and a wealth of information about general childcare issues. An example of this is useful healthcare information which is available in languages other than English to reflect the diversity of those using the service. Regular newsletters and informative noticeboards provide parents with information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery is always seeking new and improved ways to communicate with parents and to involve them in children's learning. A range of opportunities is offered to meet the differing needs of parents including parents' evenings, weekend information sessions and the new parent involvement scheme. Here, parents are encouraged to share with their children's key workers as much as possible about their children's interests at home so that staff can better plan for personalised learning that builds on children's experiences. Partnerships in the wider context are appropriate. The nursery has developed a link with the local children's centre and has a procedure in place for working in partnership with other agencies in order to support children with additional needs. There has been communication in the past with some schools and nurseries that children move on to in order to support the transition but these are currently not well established. This means information sharing between Early Years Foundation Stage settings is not used effectively to support children's continuity of care and learning.

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

The nursery offers a welcoming and inclusive environment which reflects children's backgrounds and some sections of the wider community. There are many signs displayed in a range of languages used by the children, and staff make a point of using some key words in children's home languages to aid communication. The rooms are equipped with age-appropriate resources and are easily accessible to children. Staff have a solid knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and generally provide suitable activities and experiences to meet the needs of children. Observation, assessment and planning systems are reviewed to ensure activities take account of children's interests and abilities and to monitor children's progress. Children generally develop the appropriate skills, dispositions and attitudes required for future learning. The level of challenge is sufficient to interest and engage most children most of the time. A small number of younger children, however, find it difficult to engage in purposeful learning without adult support and do not have sufficient attention skills to stick with a task. They do not respond easily to expectations for their behaviour and occasionally this has an impact on the quality of the experiences for other children. This means the quality of learning is not consistent for all children.

The behaviour of the majority of children, however, is positive. They make confident relationships, are polite and really enjoy helping others. The pre-school children, for example, take on responsibilities for setting the table and serving drinks to their friends. They do this with some confidence and skill. They show fondness for their friends by drawing pictures for them. They make confident choices in self-chosen play and are keen to take part in story sessions. They listen

well, ask appropriate questions and repeat familiar lines of text aloud. Children apply their knowledge of numeracy and literacy throughout their play. Younger children begin to problem solve when working out whether play figures are too big or too small to fit on the scales. Younger pre-school children count while lining up to come in from the garden and are challenged to think about what numbers come next. They show awareness of the initial sound of their names and attempt to write their names on their pictures. All children have access to toys and equipment to help them understand simple technology. Some older children show an interest in the digital camera as photographs are taken.

Children do not go on outings but the well-planned garden provides many opportunities for exercise and active learning outside and visitors to the nursery help children gain awareness of the wider world. In summer, for example, children plant vegetables, flowers and herbs in the garden and learn how to nurture them. The long paved path has road markings and a zebra crossing along which children love to ride pedal cars, scooters and ride-on toys. They show some awareness of using the zebra crossing to safely cross the road and also know they must be careful when using the challenging climbing apparatus. Children enjoy being active in the fresh air and develop appropriate physical skills. Older pre-school children have access to a separate outdoor area that is currently being developed to provide free flow play, so children have the choice to play and learn inside or outside depending on their interests and learning styles. Babies sometimes go outside in buggies or sit under a shaded gazebo in summer. Staff provide a cosy indoor environment where babies can explore in confidence. They show through their body language that they appear content and settled and this is because their health, physical and dietary needs are well met. They sleep and feed according to their home routines and their changing developmental needs are fully discussed with parents. Staff ensure they are regularly checked whilst sleeping, cuddle them and offer them drinks on waking to reassure them. Children follow safe hygiene practices such as washing their hands and using tissues to wipe their noses. They enjoy eating fresh fruit and are involved in activities that develop their understanding of what constitutes healthy eating. A '5 a day' chart allows children to think about what fruit and vegetables they have eaten each day. Children recognise when they are thirsty and independently operate the water coolers to pour a cup of water.

## 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>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### 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>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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