

Sunbeams St. Nicks

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Sunbeams St. Nicks opened in 2002. It is one of three Sunbeams groups in Stevenage, Hertfordshire. The pre-school operates from one large hall within St. Nicholas Community Centre, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open on Monday, Thursday and Friday each week from 09:15am to 3:15pm and from 09:15am to 12:15 pm on Tuesday and Wednesday during the school term. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. All children share access to a large secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children in the early years age range on role. Children come from within the St. Nicholas catchment area and the other surrounding areas. The pre-school supports a number of children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 8 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members of staff hold the Early Years Foundation Degree.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive at this welcoming pre-school. Excellent observations of children's individual achievements and individually tailored challenges enable children to make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. Staff ensure that parents are fully informed about what their children are doing and are effective in sharing information about their needs and routines.

The manager and dedicated staff team are highly motivated and have a positive approach to self-evaluation. They have established detailed systems to support the continuous review of their work, enabling them to prioritise areas for improvement and offer a service which is fully inclusive of the needs of all of its users.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the outstanding organisation of the setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare are actively promoted. All members of staff are aware of the procedures to follow should they have a concern and they additionally access certified First Aid training. This ensures that the staff responsibilities are clearly understood. Thorough risk assessments and daily checks ensure that hazards are minimised and children can explore in safety. Stringent checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. The management team follow a robust recruitment and selection process to provide a highly skilled and dedicated staff team who deliver warm, consistent care and education to all children.

The setting has established a detailed self-evaluation process which highlights the outstanding organisation of the setting and highlights positive improvements. All members of staff regularly exchange views and ideas through regular discussions and staff meetings. They actively seek feedback on their strengths and weaknesses from children, parents and carers as well as staff which provides a detailed overview from all the users. Staff are supported in attending further training and gaining qualifications. This helps create a positive learning environment, where both children and staff thrive.

Resources are used well to promote children's learning and development. All equipment and supplies are reflective of the children's cultures through an abundance of toys, books and games. Staff ensure that they understand each child's background, cultures, and beliefs and encourage children to recognise and respect differences. Children's self-esteem is promoted as they are offered opportunities to talk about their beliefs, families, and recent experiences. This enables all children to feel welcome and valued. Staff provide a wide range of high quality, challenging and age appropriate activities to aid language, social, emotional, spiritual, cultural, physical and sensory development. Staff encourage children to have fun while they learn, children made gymnastic ribbons which are different colours and wave as they run to find the colour or shape called out by the member of staff. They dig in the soil and see who can find the biggest worm and watch as their plants, fruit and vegetables grow from small seeds. Children are able to access their own choice of resources which are all stored at child height thus enabling them to become independent and make choices. Excellent use is made of the outdoor area which is a true extension of the learning environment and incorporates exciting and stimulating resources to provide an excellent selection of activities based around the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Staff are very effectively deployed to maintain ratios on a daily basis taking into account any staff absences. They have an extremely sound knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They plan and deliver an excellent range of stimulating, challenging activities and learning opportunities. These activities are assessed and evaluated to ensure the learning objectives are achieved. Plans show how activities are adapted and extended for individual children. Staff are also very effective at extending spontaneous child-led opportunities and promoting children's independence and choices in this

outstanding learning environment.

Each child is assessed on their individual needs, and their needs are met effectively through daily planning of activities which include extensions and adaptations for all children. All planned activities are evaluated to assess their effectiveness and highlight strengths and weaknesses of the children, this then informs future planning. Children's understanding of respect for one another, cultures, disability awareness, languages, race etc is promoted in a positive way through linking these areas into topics and activities. Staff are good role models and ensure that stereotypical views are challenged.

Parents and carers feel able to discuss all aspects of their children's progress. They are kept fully informed on a daily basis through chats with staff and the use of newsletters and notices. Parents and carers are encouraged to view their children's learning journeys and to complete formal observations at home. The setting also works well in partnership with other professionals such as childminders and other settings that the children may attend, further promoting consistent, appropriate care for children.

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

Children make very good progress in all areas of learning and are fully supported in achieving because staff have an exemplary understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children display very good skills and attitudes towards learning as a direct result of the excellent input from the staff team. They observe and assess children as they play, using this information to inform activity planning. Staff respond quickly to children's developmental needs and adaptations to planned activities can be carried out on a daily basis. This enables them to provide tailored experiences and activities which actively promote children's individual development.

The environment is attractive and accessible, enabling children to make independent choices and select their own resources. This promotes children's confidence and self-motivation. Children can free flow between the indoor and outdoor learning environment. They display their feelings of safety as they confidently move from one area of play to another, accessing their own resources to develop their own play. They routinely learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe, for example, following direction when evacuating the premises in an emergency and using tools safely. Children are rewarded with lots of praise from staff, which further promotes their self-esteem. Stickers and stamps are used to support positive behaviour and self-confidence. This actively encourages children to develop habits and behaviour appropriate to good learners, whilst respecting and understanding their own and others needs.

Each child has their own assessment folder which acts as a record of their outstanding progress. These assessments are meaningful and relevant to the individual child. Detailed and practical observations and monitoring of the children's development and achievements in all areas of learning highlights the

next stages of learning for individuals.

Children make independent choices and select their own resources which promotes children's independence and self-esteem. For example, children choose when to play outside in the exciting dinosaur den or water their plants from their own water butt attached to the playhouse. They participate in the preparation of the snack, cutting the banana with safe knives and peeling the Satsumas for their group. They access drinking water whenever they want from a water dispenser and pour their own milk at snack time.

Children show that they feel safe in the setting as they confidently move from one area of play to another, accessing their own resources to develop their own play. They routinely learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe, for example, adopting a healthy routine at the 'snot station' where tissues, a bin, anti bacterial gel and posters enable children to establish very good habits. Children have secure relationships with the staff, whose consistent approach to behaviour management enables children to feel secure and develop their understanding of appropriate behaviour. They show care and concern for each other, sharing resources, listening and taking turns in discussions.

Children have good relationships with the staff, whose consistent approach to behaviour management enables children to feel secure and develop their understanding of appropriate behaviour. They show care and concern for each other, sharing resources, listening and taking turns in discussions. Staff act as good role models and encourage children to work together to sort out any issues. Children respond positively and demonstrate a good sense of responsibility for their behaviour. They are confident and therefore are actively involved in their learning, developing positive attitudes to this. Children's understanding of diversity is developed as they participate in daily discussions, access relevant resources and celebrate festivals that reflect their beliefs and those of their friends. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported and make excellent progress.

Children are actively encouraged to choose their own activities and resources and are able to do so. This promotes children's feelings of being valued and they display a sense of pride in their achievements.

Children are respected as individuals and the curriculum is tailored to suit all capabilities and needs. Continual assessment by each child's key worker allows any strengths or weakness to be identified and adaptations to curriculum planning are made. They learn how to think for themselves and make decisions through the use of open-ended questions and encouragement of listening skills.

Children's progress is constantly monitored through observations and evaluations of plans. Children develop skills for the future as they share ideas and work together. For example, children using a construction set discuss their models, comparing size, shape and colour. They have many opportunities to develop early reading and writing skills. Young children enjoy snuggling up with a member of staff and sharing a book. Children regularly make marks in everyday play. They enjoy making music and learning new songs and the actions that go with them.

This enables them to learn about rhyme and to interpret the words with their bodies in a creative way.

All children, based on their starting points and abilities, make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals in this welcoming pre-school.

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

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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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