

Southlands Kindergarten

15 Southlands Avenue, NEWCASTLE, Staffordshire, ST5 8BZ

Inspection date

06/09/2013

Previous inspection date

14/01/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children enjoy a superb learning environment. The fantastic outside area provides numerous opportunities for exploration and play, while indoor areas provide a comfortable and homely environment where children fully engage with a range of excellent activities that challenge and stimulate them.
- The well-established staff team have an exemplary understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn. They are extremely skilled at providing activities that are suited to children's individual levels of attainment, providing the perfect level of challenge to help every child reach their full potential.
- Children's safety and well-being are of paramount importance. Staff are highly attentive to children's needs and are constantly vigilant to ensure that any hazards are successfully minimised.
- Children's individuality is fully valued and respected. Individual Educational Plans are used to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive targeted additional support, and consequently, all children make extremely rapid progress as staff meet their needs precisely.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to the children, staff and parents and held discussions with the management team.
- The inspector observed free play, focused activities, outside play and meal times.
- The inspector examined children's learning journal records and the planning and assessment procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with the children, the provider's written policies and procedures and self-evaluation documents.

Inspector

Jennie Dalkins

Full Report

Information about the setting

Southlands Kindergarten was registered in 1991 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in Wolstanton in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire and is managed by a private provider. The kindergarten serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 3 and one is a qualified teacher.

The kindergarten opens Monday to Friday for 49 weeks of the year. It is closed for bank holidays and for a week at Easter, Christmas and the end of August. The opening hours are from 8am until 5.45pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 32 children attending, all of whom are in the early years age group. The kindergarten provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- scrutinise further the excellent tracking documents to identify trends in learning for different groups of children.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are bursting with energy and excitement in this vibrant setting. They show that they feel extremely safe and secure as they freely move around the fantastic indoor and outdoor spaces, accessing a wide range of activities that stimulate and interest them. The homely atmosphere and supportive staff encourage all children to quickly relax and they confidently join in group games, even when they are unfamiliar with them. For instance, even new starters have fun in the 'Poppets' session, where they interact with puppets, shake maracas and sing songs. Staff are calm and reassuring, speaking to children in soft tones and making sure that their every need is promptly met. They respond positively to requests for additional resources, ensuring children are able to develop their imaginative play fully by providing additional pushchairs during a game of 'mummies and daddies' or adding blocks to a game with toy trains, so children can make tunnels and other structures. There is plenty of time for children to explore their imagination and determine their own games as staff provide them with a range of resources based on their interests.

For example, as children show interest in the building work outside, staff turn the conservatory into a builder's yard, providing children with toy cement mixers, hard hats and other items to stimulate creative play. Staff recognise the value in allowing children to play uninterrupted and great fun is had as they pretend to mix cement and build walls. Similarly, as children enjoy pretending to be pirates, staff fully embrace their enthusiasm, turning the climbing frame into a pirate ship, with a skull and cross bones flag and providing children with toy cutlasses. Writing skills are incorporated as staff help them to make treasure maps to find buried coins. Staff are extremely skilled at developing children's skills as they play, encouraging them to show what they know. For instance, they help them to count the spots on their ladybird pictures and encourage them to do basic calculation as they work out how many more they will need to match a friend's picture. Children also learn to recognise numerals and use this practically as they go blackberry picking. Their baskets have numbers in, and they pick the correct number of berries to match this. This well thought out activity makes learning fun as children exclaim with delight as they find the ripe berries and bring them back to the setting, where they weigh and measure ingredients to make a crumble.

Other activities are equally as engaging and exciting. Incubated eggs are observed every day as children count down how many 'sleeps' to go before they hatch. The arrival of the chicks provides children with lasting memories as they see the eggs crack and the birds emerge and grow on a daily basis. This fantastic activity provides them with a rich learning experience as they recognise how things grow over time and learn to respect the wonder of the natural world. The fabulous outdoor classroom allows this to be further extended as children gather outside to interact with farm animals. They pet the lambs and calves and ask lots of questions about the animals as part of this farmyard visit. Staff also provide daily opportunities for children to come together, sing songs and share items from home during circle time. They talk about the weather, the clothes they will need to go outside and start to recognise the link between written and spoken word as they label the weather board or find their own names during self-registration. Communication and language skills flourish as they take part in activities, such as 'letter of the day', where they bring in items from home to correspond to the alphabet. This is made challenging as the emphasis is on sending in items that are unusual. As a result, children's vocabulary grows as they learn 'v' is for vinegar and 's' is for submarine. The setting also uses circle time to celebrate the uniqueness of each child. Every child has the opportunity to enjoy their own 'special day' when circle time focuses on the items they bring in and they are able to suggest the games and activities to play. This excellent practice ensures all children feel valued and take an active part in the setting.

Staff are outstanding carers and teachers. They know when to intervene and when to allow children to develop their own play or develop their independence. Time is taken to provide one-to-one support or to ask pertinent questions to develop children's critical thinking and understanding. Individual learning styles are considered and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with specialised support to ensure that they are able to fully enjoy and join in with all activities. Parents comment that the setting has been 'fantastic' and that they have been 'amazed' with the progress their children make. All children's achievements are recorded in progress files and scrapbooks and the key person for each child regularly monitors their development to ensure that they are continually making excellent progress. Staff successfully identify ways to help

children move forward and uses this to inform the planning of future activities. This ensures that planned events are always challenging to promote continual development. Staff consult with parents at the start of a placement to determine children's starting points and review children's progress every term to ensure that all areas of learning are being effectively covered. A newsletter, social network page and regular text messages are provided for parents, to keep them up-to-date with activities at the setting so they can support their children's development at home. Children also take home activities to do with their parents as part of the settings topics. For instance, they take home paper cut-out figures to decorate in traditional clothing as part of the theme 'people of the world'. Parents help children to find out what people wear in different countries and to decorate their doll. When the figures are returned to the setting, they are then proudly displayed. The learning continues as staff help children to use the computer to research the country further and write 'hello' in the language that corresponds to their country. This exemplary practice ensures parents are fully involved in their children's learning, which fuels children's rapid development.

Children learn to share, listen to others and wait their turn with popular equipment as they play together or take part in group activities such as 'poppets'. This helps them develop key skills for future learning, such as concentration and turn-taking, as well as helping them to be confident in other group settings, such as the classroom. All children are making fantastic progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points. This also helps to prepare them well for their future learning and the move onto school. Staff skilfully support them, knowing the children's individual abilities well, which helps to ensure that activities are appropriate and stimulating for them. More able children are successfully challenged as staff also consider ways to further develop their skills so that they do not become bored or disinterested. They are given additional tasks that they enjoy, such as setting up tables and laying out breakfast for their peers. This helps them to build on their growing independence and encourages a real sense of belonging at the setting. Without doubt, the wide range of well thought out and stimulating activities coupled with the excellent support from staff enables all children to become highly confident and competent learners.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children's health and well-being are of utmost importance and staff work extremely hard to ensure that all children feel safe, secure and well cared for. Children settle in quickly. For those coming into their first experience of day care, a settling-in book is provided for parents to share with their children. This has pictures of the setting, the toys and activities and the staff, so that children can look forward to starting. The majority of children come from the creche owned by the same provider, and the transition from this setting to the next is managed by providing children with regular visits and ensuring that their key person from the creche is able to work at the kindergarten for the initial few weeks. As a result of this sensitive practice, children are relaxed and happy within a very short period of time. Information for all children is collated on the registration forms to ensure that staff are aware of children's likes and dislikes, any special requirements and key information prior to them starting. Dietary or medical needs are fully discussed to ensure that all activities are safe and suitable for each child. Where special requirements are

identified, staff work in partnership with other professionals and parents to ensure that a consistent approach is taken. For instance, staff work with special educational needs co-ordinators to assess children's behaviours and abilities. This helps to ensure that precise and focused support is offered. As a result, all children, including those with additional requirements, make extremely rapid progress. Parents comment that their children come on in leaps and bounds as a result of this approach and praise the staff for helping their children to catch up with their peers.

Staff are also extremely good at helping children to prepare for school by discussing their move, new uniform and the school they will attend. Reception class teachers visit the children in the setting and provide them with their first reading books, which staff then read with the children, building a sense of shared excitement about the learning that will take place in school. As a result of this excellent practice, children are excited about the prospect of moving on.

Children are kept safe. All exterior doors are kept secure to prevent unwanted visitors from entering the premises and staff are exceptionally vigilant, ensuring that any hazards, such as spilled water, are promptly minimised to prevent accidents. Children have a very mature understanding of how to contribute to their own safety. They understand the importance of closing the door to the outside area during windy weather and why they have to walk not run indoors. They also know how to respond swiftly during a fire drill as these are regularly practised and discussed. Regular outings provide children with an excellent understanding of community safety. This is further developed through activities such as 'people who help us' where children learn about the role of the lollipop person, the police and fire service. They make their own zebra crossing for the setting and then visit one in the area to see how to cross roads safely. They enjoy a visit to the fire service and have the chance to try on officer's hats and sit in a police vehicle. This interactive approach helps children to really engage in their learning and remember the advice they are given. Children receive encouragement and praise from the staff throughout the day, which effectively builds self-esteem and promotes good behaviour. Children behave particularly well, showing care and concern for each other and taking an active role in the smooth running of the setting. They enjoy taking their turn to be a 'special helper' and setting the table for meals, passing out cups to their friends and helping to clean away. Children know it is kind to share and that they must not hurt each other. Small squabbles are promptly dealt with to prevent them escalating. This helps to contribute to the harmonious atmosphere which runs through the whole setting. Children's self-care skills are outstanding. They freely move around the setting, getting their coats and boots to go outside and going to wash their hands before meals. They learn how to dress themselves with staff assistance as they have regular swimming sessions at a local pool. Most children achieve their 10 metre swimming badge as a result of these regular sessions, developing confidence in water and learning how to swim under close supervision.

Children's good health is exceptionally well promoted. Active play is effectively encouraged both indoors and outdoors, with free access to the outdoor area and regular music and dance sessions. Children move imaginatively to music, learn about how the body responds to exercise and how to stretch and relax. Children are also provided with a wide range of home cooked meals. All food is freshly prepared on the premises, with lots of fresh vegetables coming from the settings own garden, which is tended to by the cook and the

children. Consequently, children have an excellent understanding of healthy options and where food comes from. This is further developed through enjoyable activities, such as blackberry picking, where children collect the berries and bring them back to make a crumble.

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

The setting is led by an inspirational provider and dedicated management team, who are fully supported by committed and professional staff. Children's well-being is at the heart of everything they do and the genuine care and warmth displayed by all, ensures that this setting has a fantastic atmosphere and energy. All staff are enthusiastic about driving the setting forward and are keen to try out new ideas and techniques. Training opportunities are fully embraced and staff are keen to share their new knowledge and implement their learning into the setting. For example, following a course on how boys learn, staff take onboard theories around the need to release aggression in an appropriate manner and a children's punch bag is purchased to provide an outlet for energy. This proves to be extremely popular with all children and enables them to settle more quickly to quieter activities. The setting also work positively with the local authority, taking on advice and keeping up-to-date with new legislation and best practice. They also work in partnership with other settings, sharing new ideas and inspiring others to consider positive changes for their children. For instance, staff from a neighbouring setting come in to see how well the free flow to outside areas works in practice. This excellent practice ensures that this setting also influences standards for care more widely. All required policies and procedures are in place, such as maintaining a daily register and ensuring all incidents are fully recorded and reported, where required. Self-evaluation is used extremely effectively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and to set future goals to promote continuous development. All staff contribute to this process, regularly evaluating their own practice and the effectiveness of the resources and layout of the rooms. Changes are made promptly to improve children's experiences. For example, the basketball hoop is moved from the patio to the lawn as staff recognise it is being under used, and planned activities are postponed while children take time to adjust to new routines. Outcomes for children continually improve as staff use reflective practice in this positive way.

Staff are well managed and supported by managers. Interaction with children is regularly observed and constructive feedback is given as staff observe each other to develop their already outstanding practice. This excellent approach enables staff to also reflect on how effective they are in delivering activities and helps to ensure that they are all continually developing their own skills for the benefit of children. The educational programme is also very well monitored. Managers and room leaders use effective tracking documents to ensure that children are covering all the areas of learning and to see whether children are meeting or exceeding the expected levels of development. Where gaps are identified, staff are quick to respond by providing focused activities to help children develop their skills. Further analysis of the tracking data is being considered to identify other ways to even better support children's swift development. This will include looking for any differences between groups of children to see if there is scope to consider other ways of working with children with English as an additional language or with groups of girls or boys.

Safeguarding procedures are fully understood and the setting has comprehensive written policies in place to underpin exemplary practice. The safety and well-being of children is effectively prioritised at all times, with all staff clear about the signs and symptoms that may indicate abuse. All staff are subject to robust recruitment procedures and are fully vetted before they work unsupervised with children. Staff are also extremely vigilant, making sure that children are safe as they play. Hazards are promptly minimised to prevent accidental injury and children are aware of the importance of acting in a safe manner. Full risk assessments are in place for all indoor and outdoor areas and staff also undertake thorough daily checks to ensure that toys and equipment remain fit for use. Staff are also constantly well deployed to ensure that children benefit from high levels of supervision at all times. They communicate with each other well, making sure that if they need to leave the room, another staff member is able to provide supervision. Consequently, staff are always aware of children's activities and quickly respond if they need assistance. Any visitors to the setting are required to sign in and are never left alone with children. Mobile telephones are not allowed in the setting to ensure that no images are recorded by anyone who has not been fully vetted. Children show that they feel safe in the setting. They know what resources are available and confidently move around to access the toys and resources they want. This encourages their independence and gives them a good sense of freedom. The resources take account of the needs of children who attend and promote an understanding of diversity, with toys and stories displaying a wide range of different backgrounds and abilities. Sign language is used and different languages, such as French and Spanish are incorporated into activities. This expands children's skills as well as making all children feel fully part of the setting. The setting welcomes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and effectively works in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure that any specific needs are promptly identified and addressed. This helps all children to reach their full potential.

Staff build superb relationships with parents and chat to them on a daily basis about their child's achievements and well-being. Any incidents or accidents are fully recorded and shared with parents so that appropriate care is followed up after children leave the setting. Noticeboards in the hallway provide parents with additional information about childcare issues and give suggestions for activities to do at home which complement the activities covered at the setting. This helps parents to support and develop their children's learning at home. Key policies and procedures are shared with parents, ensuring that they are aware of the standards to which the setting operates and provide details of how to make a complaint if they need to. Parents report that their children are extremely happy at the setting and 'never want to leave'. They confidently say they would 'recommend the setting to anyone' and that they have been 'astonished, delighted and impressed by the inspirational environment'.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	218488
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	915390
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	32
Name of provider	Southlands Nurseries Ltd
Date of previous inspection	14/01/2009
Telephone number	01782 626148

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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