

Sunbeams St. Nicks

59 Canterbury Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 4LJ



Inspection date

27 April 2016

Previous inspection date

2 March 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Leadership is exceptionally strong. The management and staff are committed to continuous improvement. They critically evaluate their practice using, amongst other methods, personal reflection logs. Staff use a wealth of highly effective strategies to obtain the views of parents and children, which make a significant contribution to ongoing improvement and self-evaluation.
- The exceptionally competent, well-qualified staff have an astute understanding of how children learn and they accurately assess their development. This helps them provide a range of highly stimulating experiences that meets children's individual needs and offers unique levels of challenge that inspire them to learn.
- Staff work in a commendable manner with parents. The parents' forum meets regularly with staff to review areas of play and learning to promote further improvement. In addition, staff provide innovative home-learning packs and ideas for parents which considerably help to extend children's development when at home.
- Children play a key role in making choices about their day. They make decisions regarding the resources to be set up in several areas in the provision. They have excellent opportunities to express their opinions, guide their own learning and be involved in the provision. They proudly choose which items to attach to their personal display boards.
- Staff provide extensive support to parents and children during settling-in periods. For example, staff welcome families to stay-and-play sessions and visit children in their own home. Children quickly form remarkably trusting relationships with their key persons and other staff. They are exceptionally confident and enthusiastic.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- build further on the excellent opportunities provided for children to explore technology and find out how things work, challenging their progress even more.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the co-owner and discussed their findings.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and co-owner. She looked at relevant documentation, such as the provision's self-evaluation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the provision.
- The inspector spoke to some parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Lynne Talbot

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff give child protection a high priority in all areas of practice to help them keep children safe. The management team applies an insightful programme of performance management which contributes significantly to the exceptionally strong quality of practice. For example, peer observation is used highly effectively to inform and drive a sharply focused training plan. Staff are deeply committed to their own professional development and attend a vast range of training courses. They identify and display personal targets for improvement. Procedures for staff recruitment and induction are particularly strong. These help maintain the superb staff practice.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Teaching is inspirational. Staff provide an environment and activities which significantly enhance children's eagerness to learn. For example, children excitedly sing and dance during the weekly French session. They benefit from specially designed programmes and individual activities with the staff specialist. These help enhance their communication and language development significantly. Staff consistently support children's independence in their learning. For instance, children follow a sequence of pictures to make their own dough, adding glitter or colour as they choose. They also experiment with texture in paint and glue, such as adding oats or salt. Staff help children think critically and support them to make rapid progress. The manager has identified further ways to continue challenging children, such as offering even more exciting activities to enable them to carry on finding out about how things work, extending their already excellent opportunities to use technology.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Staff offer rich and imaginative experiences for children, both indoors and outside. The exceptionally stimulating outdoor area gives children abundant opportunities for active play. Children freely explore a wealth of natural materials. They search for items to make a 'jungle' for their model animals and develop a natural wooded copse into a 'cave' or 'fairy castle'. Staff incorporate innovative ideas for children to learn about the world around them. One of these ideas is an environmental programme. Children develop their own action plan to collect water, think about the use of electricity, pick up litter and look at biodiversity. Children learn about the benefits of exercise. Some of the opportunities that support this are daily activity groups, such as ballet, yoga and keep-fit sessions.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

Children become totally absorbed in their self-chosen play and work exceptionally well with others. For example, they decide to build a boat using crates, a tarpaulin and lengths of timber. They talk through their ideas and consider how they can attach the pieces together. Children show exceptional perseverance as they work through their project. The management team completes astute reviews of children's progress, in order to highlight and address any weaker areas in their learning. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language, make rapid progress in their learning. They are exceptionally well prepared for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY243400
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	848327
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	29
Number of children on roll	37
Name of provider	Katherine Taylor
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2011
Telephone number	07814 041457

Sunbeams St. Nicks was registered in 2002. The provision employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2, 3, 5 or 6 and one holds early years teacher status. The provision opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions on Monday and Tuesday are from 9am to 3.05pm. Sessions on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are from 9am to midday. The provision provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It also provides care for children who speak English as an additional language.

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