

Inspection of St Nicholas Preschool

North End Bowling Club, Beresford Road, Portsmouth PO2 0NG

Inspection date: 30 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children exhibit good levels of confidence. They do this when they voice their opinions in small groups and dance energetically to favourite songs. Children happily collect preferred toys to enrich their play. Children are imaginative. They spontaneously link small blocks together to make telescopes and talk about unusual creatures that live in the sea, such as cuttlefish.

It is important to staff that all children achieve their full potential. With this in mind, they carefully plan a suitable range of learning experiences. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good levels of progress across the curriculum.

Staff continually help children build on their good language skills. They talk to children about different features of the outdoor environment. This is evident when they encourage children to describe how the outside of a conker feels when they hold it in their hands.

In response to the recent COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, staff altered arrival procedures. Parents no longer enter the pre-school room with children. However, children form strong bonds with their key person, they provide a warm welcome and this helps them to feel safe. Children cheerfully enter the room and relax into play. Children are consistently kind to friends. They work together to complete tasks and talk to each other about their own families.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff support children very well to use their social skills. This is obvious when they show children how to make play dough. Children vigorously stir the ingredients before passing the large bowl to the child sitting next to them. They are patient and happy to wait their turn. Children use their physical skills as they push the wooden spoon through the thick mixture. They listen carefully and follow instructions until they successfully complete the task.
- Staff build strong partnerships with parents, who speak affectionately about their child's time at pre-school. Most parents comment on the improvement they notice in their child's speech since they have been coming to pre-school. Staff offer parents advice and guidance. For example, they provide ideas about how to make nutritious lunches and guidance on toileting.
- Children thoroughly enjoy working alongside staff, who are always sensitive to their needs. Staff speak gently to children and encourage them to attempt tasks, even if they need a little bit of adult support. Children independently squeeze out paint onto trays, thinning it out with water. Staff support young children to carefully cut pieces of fruit. Children develop their early mark-making skills. They

do this when they decorate apple segments and use them as stamps on sheets of paper.

- Over time, staff carry out precise assessments of children's knowledge. They use this information to plan activities and help all children make very good progress in their learning. However, staff do not consistently collect accurate information about children's development and home life, from parents, when children first start pre-school. This means that there is a slight delay in staff being able to build on what children know and can do.
- The experienced manager seeks out a range of training opportunities, to help staff build on their professional skills. Staff choose courses that help them support children in their key groups. For instance, staff attended a course that focused on supporting children to use their imagination. In response to the training, staff increased smaller construction resources they thought would appeal to children. Children enjoy inventing new and interesting objects.
- Staff establish strong links with professionals involved in children's care. They seek support on a variety of topics, including communication issues and behaviour management. Staff listen to other childcare professionals and follow their advice. They recognise that this additional support is beneficial for children and helps them to make good progress in their development. Staff also foster close links with local schools. They talk to teachers about children who are moving on to school in the autumn term. This is so they can help them make a smooth move into the school environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager, who is the designated safeguarding lead, holds regular supervision meetings with her team. In these sessions, staff talk about the welfare of children. They are aware that children respond in a range of ways if they experience trauma or upset in their lives. This is why they monitor children's behaviour, so they are alert to any issues. The manager frequently shares new, relevant safeguarding information with her team. All staff know how to report concerns about children's welfare to professionals in the local safeguarding partnership, in order to protect children from harm.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- gather more detailed information from parents about what their children already know and can do when they first start at the setting.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY560282
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10194125
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	23
Name of registered person	St Nicholas Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522942
Telephone number	02392426152
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

St Nicholas Preschool is located in Portsmouth. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 3pm, term time only. The setting employs nine members of staff, eight of these work directly with children. The manager and the deputy manager both hold a level 3 childcare qualification and five members of staff hold an appropriate level 2 qualification. The setting accepts early years education funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Julie Bruce

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector linked up to complete a learning walk. The manager spoke about the curriculum and what staff wanted children to learn.
- The inspector and the manager jointly observed an activity. They talked about interactions between staff and children.
- Parents shared their views about the early years setting with the inspector.
- The inspector invited the manager to attend a leadership meeting. They discussed a range of issues and the inspector checked relevant documentation.
- Staff talked to the inspector about the learning and development of individual children and how they intend to help them make further progress.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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