

Inspection of St Nicholas Nursery

Bennetts End House, Eastwick Row, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 4JQ

Inspection date: 23 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
--	------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children particularly thrive in the outdoor area and eagerly acquire and share their knowledge about the natural world. They hunt for bugs and woodland creatures in the garden. Staff encourage them to match pictures and identify creatures that they can see in the woodland. Children discuss the different creatures they find. For example, they explain that a fox is 'red' or 'brown', and practise the noises they might make. Other children find a picture of a bee and correctly identify that bees make a 'buzz' sound. Children discuss different habitats and identify animals who live in other parts of the world, such as polar bears. They look at a globe and discuss where polar bears may live. They are developing skills to support them in their future learning, such as when they move to school.

Babies make good progress at nursery. They learn to walk on uneven ground in the garden, exploring the areas around them, and ride bicycles to support their core stability. Staff help babies to investigate as they work out that they can tap a light box to change the colours and make the lights flash. This helps the babies to learn how their actions can make things happen and engages their interest.

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

- Leaders have secure oversight of the nursery and provide effective support to staff. Staff report that they have access to all the training that they would like and that they feel well supported. Leaders focus on promoting staff well-being, and this is appreciated and acknowledged by staff. Leaders monitor staff practice and have a good understanding of what is being delivered in each room. However, they recognise that, at times, staff do not follow the overall curriculum intentions by reshaping child-led activities to sharply focus on all children's individual needs.
- Staff understand what they want children to learn next and have good awareness of their progress over time. However, they do not always use this knowledge effectively to drive children's most rapid progress. For example, they do not help some children to persevere at activities, even though they have identified that particular children need support to develop their concentration skills.
- Children show high levels of confidence. Staff encourage them to take managed risks to develop their independence. Children spend time playing hide and seek in the outdoor area. Staff use reminders of the rules. For example, when staff call 'one, two, three, come to me' children know to return. Staff encourage children to follow their own ideas as they choose to make a pirate ship with pallets. They design and build the structure using real tools, with close adult supervision.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents praise the care and attention that

staff provide for their children, including any who have specific needs, such as allergies. Parents appreciate the communication that they get from the nursery staff and enjoy the suggested activities that are sent home. For example, staff share ideas for nature hunts to extend outdoor activities that take place at nursery. Children benefit from a secure key-person system and continuity between home and nursery.

- Staff support toddlers' speaking and listening skills as they play with mud and flowers. Staff name words such as 'mud' as they sprinkle it through their fingers and repeat words to help toddlers broaden their vocabulary. Staff encourage children to repeat the words of different colours when they show them flowers. Staff use words such as 'squishy' when they explore dough and children copy them. Children follow instructions to roll dough and sing 'roll, roll, roll'. They copy staff as they touch the dough to their cheeks to explore if it is cold, shivering to show their understanding of the word.
- Staff are encouraging and supportive of children. As a result, children are interested in learning and enjoy taking part in activities and experiences that help them to develop. For example, children explore books through lively story times with staff, but also readily investigate books on their own. They turn the pages and read familiar tales to themselves, returning to their favourite stories again and again.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have a robust understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and or neglect, and are able to clearly explain how to take action to protect children. Staff attend regular training to help them to recognise a range of concerns and to make sure that they are aware of any local safeguarding issues. They are thoroughly aware of how to refer any concerns that they may have about adults who work with children, and give the safeguarding of children high priority.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff further to sharply focus on their knowledge of what children know and can do, to help them adapt activities as needed to promote children's best possible progress.

Setting details

Unique reference number	129392
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10234148
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	74
Number of children on roll	72
Name of registered person	Sunhill Daycare (Europe) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP519019
Telephone number	01442 253488
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2016

Information about this early years setting

St Nicholas Nursery registered in 1992. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff, 12 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 7.30am until 6.30pm, all year round. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Naomi Brown

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The deputy manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022