

Inspection of St Albans Steiner Kindergarten

Fleetville Community Centre, Royal Road, Hatfield Road, ST ALBANS, Hertfordshire
AL1 4LQ

Inspection date: 30 November 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 develop strong nurturing relationships with staff at this warm, welcoming kindergarten. They separate from carers well and are keen to explore the many activities available to them. Children have a positive attitude to learning and display high levels of enjoyment and curiosity. They find creative way to use the many natural resources. Children carefully gather objects in a basket and talk about it being Egyptian treasure that they have found in a pyramid. Other children choose to dress up and make up games based on their experiences. They know how to discuss and negotiate as they work out what characters they will be. Children play together very well and strong friendships are being made. The behaviour of all children is excellent.

The highest priority is given to children's health and well-being. Children enjoying spending time outdoors. They are active as they work their ways round obstacle courses and uses balance bikes. Children have healthy diets. They learn about ingredients in food as they make bread. Children enjoy kneading the dough and talk about what shapes their bread roll will be. Snack times are relaxed and highly social occasions. Children are thoughtful and caring as they invite visitors to join in.

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

- The experienced manager and staff team have a clear vision for what they want children to achieve. The curriculum is based on the Steiner educational principles. They strive to ensure that all children develop a love of learning and develop strong independence and good communication skills. Staff plan the curriculum well, taking each child's needs into consideration. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress.
- Children benefit from a language-rich environment. Staff engage children in conversations and understand the importance of giving children time to think and respond. Children enjoy joining in with singing and storytelling. All children, including those who speak more than one language, have excellent communication skills.
- Managers and staff build strong relationships with families. They gather essential information about what children can already do, when they first start to attend. Staff identify what children need to learn next to support their ongoing good progress. The manager seeks support from other professionals whenever there are concerns relating to gaps in children's learning.
- Children have many opportunities to develop and practise skills that support their future learning. They use their hands to knead dough and hold pencils with skill and expertise. Children count with a purpose, such as how many children and adults are present. Staff extend their learning as they help them add the

number of children and adults together to make a total number.

- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents have the utmost praise for the kindergarten. They say their children are flourishing under the care of the staff and they are developing good language skills. Staff listen to parents, value their input and see them as partners.
- Children are excited to take part in activities, such as building train tracks. They eagerly express their ideas and work together very well. Overall, staff engage well with children as they play and look for ways to build on the learning they see happening. However, at times, some staff do not always challenge and support children to further extend their learning and thinking skills.
- The highly qualified manager has a rigorous system in place to support and monitor the development of staff. She observes their teaching skills and generally looks for ways to support staff to improve. They have regular staff meetings to reflect on their practice and identify what areas they want to develop further. Staff talk positively about the professional development opportunities they undertake.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff give high priority to children's safety and well-being. Staff understand the safeguarding policies and procedures. As a result, they are confident in what they must do, should they have any concerns about children's well-being or the conduct of their colleagues. Staff are also aware of wider safeguarding issues, such as how families may become exposed to extremist views. Strong recruitment procedures ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. The manager provides new staff with a thorough induction; this includes safeguarding and child supervision responsibilities.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- continue to support all members of staff to develop their understanding of how to extend children's learning through play activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123589
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10234126
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	15
Name of registered person	St Albans Steiner Kindergarten Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP519056
Telephone number	07712 104510
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2016

Information about this early years setting

St Albans Steiner Kindergarten registered in 1982. It is recognised by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and follows the Steiner education principles. The setting employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The setting is open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am until 3pm and from 8.30 until 1pm on Friday, during school term time. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Jill Hardaker

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 manager and has taken that into account in her evaluations.
- The inspector and manager looked around the kindergarten and talked about how the curriculum is planned and implemented.
- The inspector observed the quality of education and assessed the impact this has on children's learning and completed a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The manager and the inspector met to discuss the leadership and management of the kindergarten. The inspector looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability checks carried out on staff and trustees and safeguarding and complaints procedures.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents, staff and children 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