

Inspection of St Andrews Playgroup

St Andrews Hall, Grimshill Road, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4LH

Inspection date:

5 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive in this nurturing playgroup. All children make excellent progress in their learning and development. Staff are enthusiastic and know each individual child impeccably well. Children settle with ease. They join in with a range of exciting experiences. Children benefit from excellent support from staff, who understand each child's interests and unique ways of learning.

Leaders and staff build a community approach that is inclusive to all, creating an inspiring curriculum through which children thrive. The curriculum deepens children's understanding by building carefully on previous learning, and it creates challenge. It currently has a focus on children's communication skills, as well as their personal, social and emotional development. The quality of teaching is superb. Staff empower children to use their skills to think, investigate and develop their curiosity and interests. Children are highly engaged and show a real passion for learning. For example, when children showed an interest in dominos, staff spent time explaining the game and modelling how to play. By the end of the game, children were showing what they had learned, and they could play independently.

Children have high levels of well-being, and their behaviour is excellent. Staff empower children to make the right choices and act as superb role models. Staff are incredibly consistent with how they expect children to behave and deal with small conflicts. Children learn skills that will support them in future social situations, and they are developing friendships.

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

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported extremely well. The passionate and knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator, who is also the manager, builds close and professional relationships with parents, carers and other agencies. Individualised plans for children with SEND are regularly reviewed and discussed with parents. Staff communicate well about all children, ensuring the environment and activities provided are inclusive for everyone.
- Staff ensure that children learn about life in modern Britain and the fundamental British values. This is skilfully embedded across the setting and understood by all staff. For example, staff embed 'golden rules' to support children in making the right choices. Furthermore, they support children to recognise and communicate their feelings, such as giving their opinions and using voting systems. For example, they held votes to help make decisions about what ice cream to buy from the shop. Children demonstrate high levels of respect for others.
- Staff are highly skilled in supporting children's communication and language, including for those who speak English as an additional language. Staff spend

time learning key words in children's home languages to help them settle and to support their well-being. Staff are consistent in engaging children in meaningful back-and-forth conversations. Books and singing are an integral part of the day. This is further embedded as children take trips to the library to borrow books of interest. Children use their knowledge about characters from books as they play with props.

- The whole staff team has developed remarkable relationships with parents and their extended families. Parents and grandparents are highly complimentary of the playgroup. They are provided with regular feedback and feel part of their child's learning journey. Next steps in development are shared with parents, and their input is valued and respected. Parents comment that they can see how much their child has progressed since being part of the playgroup 'family'.
- There is an excellent key-person system, which is established from the very beginning and supports the development of relationships. Settling-in visits are devised based on the needs of the children and their families. Staff and the manager respect that each family will have various experiences and need different support when leaving their children. This helps children to feel safe and secure when they first begin to attend, and it supports children's emotional well-being and trust fully.
- Staff are extremely proud to be a part of this exceptional playgroup. They speak highly of the 'hard-working and committed' manager. The manager takes time to listen to staff. Together, they think of ways that they can improve their outstanding provision further. They work collaboratively with other local settings to provide staff training and to share exemplary practice. Staff are motivated to provide the finest education and care for children. This is clearly evident in their practice.
- Staff and children embrace the celebrations of various cultures and religious events, embedding a deep and meaningful respect for the diversity of all people. This is reflective of the various cultures and beliefs of the children who attend. Staff take time to get to know about the important traditions and celebrations of each family. This is then shared in the playgroup. Furthermore, children get the opportunity to 'show and tell' something that is important to them. This develops children's character as they learn about each other, including their similarities and differences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY358047
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10323462
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	24
Name of registered person	St Andrews Playgroup Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP904791
Telephone number	07776425512
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2018

Information about this early years setting

St Andrews Playgroup registered in 2007. It operates in Whitstable, Kent. There are six staff, including the owner, who work with the children. Five staff hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3. One member of staff holds an early years qualification at level 6. The playgroup is open on Monday to Thursday, from 8.45am until 2.35pm, during term time. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three-, and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelly Southern

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 manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation during snack time.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and grandparents 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.

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