# Sunhill Montessori Nursery

**Unique reference number (URN):** EY463845

**Address:** Grantham Close, Royston, SG8 5WY

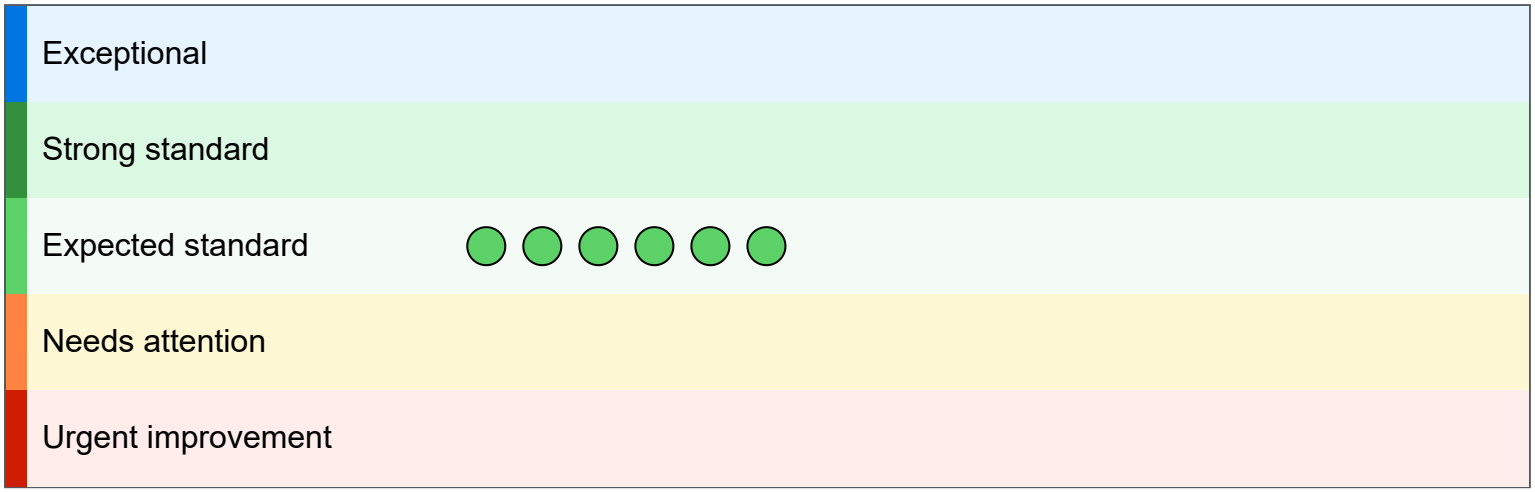
**Type:** Childcare on non-domestic premises

**Registered with Ofsted:** 05/06/2013

**Registers:** EYR, CCR, VCR

**Registered person:** Sunhill Daycare (Europe) Limited

# Inspection report: 3 September 2026




## Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

**How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

# Expected standard

## Achievement

**Expected standard**

All children are suitably prepared for the next stage of learning, including school. In each room, children build skills sequentially so that they are prepared for their transition to the next room in the nursery. For example, babies confidently crawl and develop their early walking skills. They climb, jump and ride tricycles in the toddler room and progress to running and lifting the resources that they choose in pre-school. Typically, children are happy and enjoy their time at the nursery. They have a variety of activities and resources to explore. They are supported by practitioners as they navigate the garden, climbing, riding bicycles and developing their mark-making skills. Toddlers especially enjoy the stories that are read to them. They listen attentively and join in to identify the animals that they recognise or the words of the story that they know. Toddlers are encouraged to use and develop their verbal communication skills and are given the time to express themselves.

Children learn to recognise how to keep themselves safe, they manage any allergies independently as they find the appropriate coloured plate and name sign. They are inquisitive, keen to complete tasks and solve problems for themselves. Young children concentrate well on tasks. This shows they are building their confidence, independence and self-esteem in readiness for future learning.

All children learn to communicate effectively. Older children are keen to share their preferences and interests. Young children join words together to build simple sentences, such as when they talk about what they see in the picture during story time. Older children talk to their friends about the towers and structures that they will build.

## Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

**Expected standard**

In general, practitioners model clear expectations and build positive relationships with children, which helps children understand routines and behave appropriately. Practitioners take time to get to know new children.

Practitioners intervene effectively, such as when young children feel overstimulated and need support to manage their behaviour. Where children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, leaders seek guidance from external professionals about strategies for support.

Practitioners are positive role models. They recognise when children struggle to communicate how they feel. Appropriate strategies are consistently used to build children's self-esteem. Practitioners support younger children effectively through a key-person system, helping them feel secure and ready to take part. As a result, children engage in learning confidently and show a growing sense of emotional wellbeing. Older children take on responsibilities and tasks, and this helps them to develop a sense of belonging and pride in the nursery.

Leaders monitor and actively encourage regular attendance and punctuality. Clear systems and practices are in place to address any delays in children's arrival. Leaders explain to

parents the benefits of children's regular attendance in relation to their learning and development. This helps children to develop positive attitudes to learning in readiness for the move to school.

Practitioners form warm, trusting relationships with children. There is a tailored settling-in process to help children feel secure. Babies turn to practitioners for comfort and reassurance, quickly adapting to new practitioners in the room, demonstrating confidence in their surroundings.

## Children's welfare and wellbeing

**Expected standard**

Practitioners promote children's welfare and wellbeing successfully. Children build their skills consecutively. For instance, toddlers hold spoons and begin to feed themselves. Older children serve themselves from large dishes, and the oldest children help to clear their dishes and tidy away once they have finished eating.

Key persons, along with all practitioners in the rooms, know the children well, and they form meaningful bonds, responding to children's needs attentively. The youngest babies are generally content during their play. They are quickly comforted and settled by their trusted adults. Leaders ensure that practitioners working with babies are trained appropriately to understand and meet their needs.

Practitioners are deployed well in the rooms and outdoors. This means that they can be attentive to the needs of the children and support them to ensure their emotional wellbeing.

Practitioners implement hygiene practices consistently. Overall, children become independent, such as feeding themselves and meeting their self-care needs. They show that they feel safe and secure in their surroundings, settling to sleep with ease after lunch through well-structured routines. Children generally learn about healthy choices but this is not explicit. Practitioners do not provide consistent opportunities for children to develop an understanding of what their bodies need to grow, including the need for rest, hydration, healthy food and regular exercise.

Leaders follow the setting's policies consistently in relation to concerns about health, accidents and incidents. This means that they maintain appropriate oversight when incidents occur.

## Curriculum and teaching

**Expected standard**

The curriculum is designed for children to build on prior knowledge. Photographs of children's families support their emotional security, promote discussion and children's communication skills. Some practitioners talk to children about their family, helping them to develop their personal, social, emotional and language development.

Typically, practitioners can identify children's next steps. Many of the children have recently changed rooms, however, the transition process from room to room is not yet consistent. Staff do not consistently share information to enable swift progress at times of transition. More experienced practitioners are confident in their ability to teach and support children to ensure their progress.

Some practitioners use play as opportunities to teach, however, this is not consistently demonstrated by all members of practitioners, and this means that learning opportunities are not consistently maximised. For example, leaders recognise when toddlers move, climb and jump to be opportunities where practitioners can use commentary to teach and develop their language skills. However, occasionally, some practitioners do not always help children to build their communication and language skills at these times. There is still further work to fully embed high-quality practice consistently across the setting.

## Inclusion

**Expected standard**

Leaders identify children's learning and development needs. They have experience in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Practitioners seek support and implement advice from an appropriate professional. This is further strengthened by their completion of relevant training, which enhances their confidence and practice when supporting young children.

Information from parents and carers is gathered before children start and is used effectively to identify children's starting points. Practitioners complete assessments and monitor children's progress.

Leaders and practitioners have a close working relationship with parents. This enables them to discuss and identify any barriers to children's learning. Leaders have thorough oversight and knowledge of child development, which allows them to identify what is appropriate behaviour for children's age and stage of development.

Leaders and practitioners understand children's needs. They consider how additional funding will support learning and development and ensure that spending is closely linked to children's learning and development targets. There is a rigorous process that leaders follow to ensure that impact can be monitored and evaluated.

Leaders and practitioners are prompt to seek the support of professionals when they identify that children might need additional external support. Practitioners assess children's individual needs and identify appropriate strategies and resources that help to remove any barriers to learning that children may face.

## Leadership and governance

**Expected standard**

Leaders know the children and families they work with well. They have created an environment where parents and carers communicate with practitioners and readily share their feedback about the quality of childcare that they receive. This benefits children's wellbeing and development and allows for free and open discussions when required. Leaders have established positive working relationships with other agencies and professionals. This helps to provide swift support and intervention for children who face barriers to their learning.

Recruitment processes are robust and practitioners feel that leaders are attentive to the professional development requests that they make and when they seek support in other areas.

Leaders are reflective, reviewing accident and incident records to enhance how they risk assess the environment to keep children safe. Leaders have a clear vision for the setting to enable children to make the best possible progress. They recognise the importance of ongoing practitioner monitoring and training to support their understanding of special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures that knowledge and practice is of a high quality. However, this is not yet embedded across the setting. The full impact of practitioners' development is yet to be seen.

## Compulsory Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

**How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Compulsory Childcare Register**

When we check if settings meet the Compulsory Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

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## Voluntary Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the voluntary part of Childcare Register.

**How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register**

When we check if settings meet the Voluntary Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

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## What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children are familiar with the routines and expectations of practitioners and behave well. Practitioners support children's positive behaviour sensitively. They role model positive interactions for younger children to help them to learn how to build friendships and play collaboratively. Older children do this confidently, demonstrating a real sense of belonging at the nursery. They confidently talk about the activities they enjoy at nursery and are naturally inquisitive and keen to find out about others.

Children become independent from a young age. Babies move around the room in a variety of ways. Practitioners use their knowledge of the children to help them to overcome any barriers to their learning. They calmly provide support and encouragement when needed, and this helps babies to settle quickly and develop new skills. Toddlers and older children know how to keep themselves safe, confidently following the nursery allergy procedures as they prepare for lunch.

Practitioners recognise when children may need support and have systems in place to intervene swiftly and effectively. This helps children to develop the ability to manage their own emotions and feelings. The positive interactions from practitioners mean that children thrive and are well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their learning.

There are opportunities for children to build on their learning at home. Leaders have created resources for children to share with their parents and carers. This supports children to have consistency between home and the setting. Leaders welcome parent feedback and support them to maximise children's attendance. Parents feel included in their children's learning and development.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery. Those who face barriers to their learning generally thrive, as practitioners provide exciting learning opportunities based on children's unique interests. Children develop their concentration and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. All children benefit from using resources that engage and interest them. Younger children explore sensory resources in a variety of ways. They explore how the cornflour behaves as the toy animals travel through it in the tuff tray. Older children explore activities confidently, choosing what they want to play with and working together. For example, when they construct ramps and platforms in the garden.

Practitioners recognise children's achievements, respond to their interests and support their individual needs. This creates a safe, welcoming and engaging environment where, typically, children are well supported to succeed.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective and impactful teaching and interactions with children are embedded to ensure the best possible outcomes for children.
- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently share information when children transition to ensure maximum progress.

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## About this inspection

The inspector spoke with parents, leaders and practitioners and viewed written feedback from parents during the inspection.

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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**Inspector:**
Claudia Lambert

# About this setting

**Unique reference number (URN):** EY463845

**Address:**
Grantham Close
Royston
SG8 5WY

**Type:** Childcare on non-domestic premises

**Registration date:** 05/06/2013

**Registered person:** Sunhill Daycare (Europe) Limited

**Register(s):** EYR, CCR, VCR

**Operating hours:** Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 07:30 - 18:30

**Local authority:** Hertfordshire

# Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 3 September 2026

## Children numbers

### Age range of children at the time of inspection

# 0 to 3

### Total number of places

# 87

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## Our grades explained

**Exceptional** 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

**Strong standard** 🟢

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

**Expected standard** 🟢

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

**Needs attention** 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

**Urgent improvement** 🔴

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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