

St. Nicholas Play Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

146467

Inspection date

03/08/2010

Inspector

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Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St Nicholas Play Centre is an open access scheme for children, held on a Stevenage Borough Council site in Pilgrims Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. St. Nicholas Play Centre opened in 1974. The setting has the use of a hall, a separate art and craft room, an office, a kitchen, suitable toilets facilities and a very large outdoor play area. The setting serves the local community.

The Play scheme may care for no more than 40 children from five years to eight years at any one time. The Play scheme is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children under the age of five years must be accompanied by an adult.

There are currently 62 children from five to eight years-old on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

During school holidays, the centre is open Monday to Fridays from 9.00am to 12.30pm and from 1.30pm to 5.00pm. During school terms, it is open from 3.30pm to 6.00pm. Saturday it is open from 10.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm

There are seven staff who work directly with the children. The majority of the staff hold a suitable childcare qualification and have experience working with children. Play workers have a general duty of care but parents retain responsibility at all times.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's needs and interests are well supported by staff enabling them to participate fully in all activities. The setting has developed good partnerships with parents and some members of the local community. Information is shared effectively through brochures and by email as well as verbally. This ensures that all users are well informed about the service the setting provides, enabling them to provide consistent care and activities that successfully promote children's welfare and learning. The manager and staff are motivated and have a positive approach to self-evaluation. They have developed effective systems to support the continuous review of their work, enabling them to successfully obtain and act on the views of its users.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further children's attitudes towards adopting good hygiene practices

- develop further partnerships with the local community in order to improve the outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Managers and staff operate robust safeguarding procedures. These are reviewed regularly and the good induction procedures for staff ensure that the setting's responsibilities are clearly understood. Stringent checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children and all visitors are clearly identified. Thorough detailed risk assessments and daily checks ensure that hazards are minimised. Good daily practice, such as the provision of some nutritious snacks and helping children to adopt good understanding of risk, means that children's welfare is promoted. However, not all children routinely adopt good hygiene practices.

The manager and staff have a clear vision for the future and are continually making improvements to the service they provide. Parents, children, staff are fully involved in the setting's evaluation, and comments made by parents and children are very complimentary. Feedback is taken positively and the manager prioritises actions, introducing changes and reviewing the impact of these. Staff are supported in attending further training and gaining qualifications. This helps create a positive learning environment, where both children and staff are supported in reaching their potential. Resources are used well to promote children's learning and development. For example, lighting to the outside area increases children's time in the large outside area in the dark winter months. Parents, children, and staff have developed a growing area where the children can learn about nature. They grow their own fruit, vegetables, and plants. This encourages them to develop a positive attitude towards healthy eating.

The staff promote inclusion and have a good understanding of equality of opportunity. They make sure that they obtain as much information as they can about each child's background, cultures, and beliefs and encourage children to recognise and respect differences. Children's self-esteem is promoted, as they are fully involved in the improvements made to the setting. They designed the garden area and even helped fill the new sandpit. These opportunities enables children to feel welcome and valued.

Good communication with all parents, including those who speak English as an additional language, results in good partnership working. Parents receive thorough information about the setting through brochures, posters and verbally. The setting works well in partnership with other professionals and the local community, however, links with the children's schools is not as successful. Children have formed a good relationship with the local sheltered housing, enabling children to gain an understanding and form relationships with older members of their community.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The environment is warm, welcoming and accessible, enabling children to make independent choices. Improvements to resources and to the premises are ongoing. For example, the parents association and grants have enabled staff to purchase further equipment, which promotes the positive experiences for the children. CCTV has been introduced for safety, and the outside lighting has enabled children to continue their play and exploration of the outside area safely. Children's communication is promoted as they chat with each other and staff; they see the written word all around in the form of notices. These are often accompanied by picture clues to help guide children and adults who do not read well. Children learn about number in choosing how many children are needed for team games, predicting how many buckets of sand it will take to fill a container. Children learn about the world around them by exploring aspects of nature, growing and tasting their own fruit and vegetables. They have formed close bonds with older members of the community in a neighbouring sheltered housing scheme. Older children often play football with members of the local police force.

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well supported in achieving because staff have a secure understanding of how children learn. Provision of interesting, hands on experiences maintains the children's interest. Staff observe children as they play and use this information to develop the planning of activities. This enables staff to respond appropriately to children's developmental needs and adapt planned activities as required to ensure inclusion of all children.

Staff involve parents and children in the planning. For example, the children designed the garden areas and sandpit, which have been installed to their exact specifications. This promotes children's feelings of self-esteem and belonging.

Children's feelings of security are promoted as they develop secure relationships with the staff and with children of different ages. Older children are fully aware of the behaviour boundaries and often help younger children to understand them. Staff promote a consistent approach to behaviour management that enables children to feel secure and develop their understanding of appropriate behaviour. They show care and concern for each other, sharing resources, listening and taking turns on equipment. Staff act as good role models and encourage children to work together to sort out any issues. Children respond positively and demonstrate a good sense of responsibility for their behaviour. Children's good behaviour shows that they feel safe. They are confident and therefore are actively involved in their learning, developing positive attitudes to trying new things.

Children have opportunities to develop their creativity and imagination as they use the decking area near the sandpit as a stage. The introduction of the sandpit has been a great success as it invites very young children to visit the play scheme along with their parents, grandparents, or carers. Introducing them to some very challenging experiences in a safe and well-organised environment.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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