

St. Nicholas Play Centre

Pilgrims Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 4PT



Inspection date

29 July 2015

Previous inspection date

3 August 2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Staff provide an exciting range of activities and learning opportunities. These are firmly based on children's interests and complement the knowledge and understanding that children gain in other settings. Younger children aspire to be like the older ones and this gives them motivation to try new things.
- Children's confidence and skills are extremely well promoted through a broad choice of activities. Staff and children have formed a play association. Children participate in meetings where they have their say on new equipment and activities. Furthermore, children decide on, and help to organise fundraising.
- Staff have high aspirations to continually deliver good quality learning experiences for children. Accurate monitoring of the activities through robust observations and evaluations enable them to incorporate all children's interests.
- Staff undertake regular in-house training, which ensures that they have a good knowledge of current legislation and guidelines. They have a robust safeguarding procedure, which ensures that children are kept safe while in the setting. Good supervision and appropriate interventions from staff enable children to respond appropriately and resolve conflict responsibly.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Children under the age of five years who are accompanied by an adult do not always receive the same high levels of learning opportunities as unaccompanied children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- expand the good levels of teaching and learning opportunities to fully include those children who are accompanied by a parent or carer.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to and interacted with a selection of staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at the indoor and outdoor environments, resources and equipment provided and how effectively they are used to support children's play and learning.
- The inspector examined a selection of information and documentation relating to the suitability of adults, and children's safeguarding, welfare and progress.
- The inspector observed practice and discussed staff's performance and monitoring with the senior member of staff.
- The inspector spoke with a selection of parents to gain their views.

Inspector

Susan Parker

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Staff plan and provide high-quality activities which complement the Early Years Foundation Stage effectively. They obtain information from children and their parents or carers about what they like and can do. The open-access ethos of this setting supports children's choice to freely attend the play centre, be part of the decision making and take ownership for their actions. Children show confidence as their views and opinions are valued and they eagerly take on responsibilities. Children who are under the age of five years attend with an adult. They have access to most of the activities and resources that are appropriate for their age and ability. However, on occasion, these younger children do not receive the same high levels of learning opportunities as the older, unaccompanied children. Children skilfully use a range of equipment, resources and learning opportunities which are largely focused on their prime skills of communication, personal, social and emotional development and their physical skills. This supports the key skills needed for the next stage in their learning, including full-time school.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is outstanding

The welcoming and vigilant staff provide a friendly and interesting environment where children learn how to manage and identify risks safely. Children learn very good skills, which enable them to protect themselves and to understand about leading healthy lifestyles. Care practices are outstanding. Children display excellent levels of behaviour. They manage this themselves through actively participating in the development of their own rules and expectations. Children demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They cooperatively follow a set of social rules and expectations and also help regulate these. This results in children displaying respect for the setting, resources, staff and each other. They are competent in managing their own personal independence and social skills. Children are very motivated to be a part of the play centre and have access to the exciting activities on offer. Links with parents ensure that children's care routines and well-being are consistently supported. All staff are fully conversant with the safeguarding procedure. They are confident in describing the action they would take if they had any concerns about children's health, safety or welfare.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is good

Senior members of staff oversee the manager and other staff members. Staff are well supervised and ongoing training is given, which ensures that they meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements to a good standard. Staff are employed through a robust recruitment and induction process. They are monitored and supervised by senior staff members on a regular basis. Practical team meetings are held at the start and end of every session. This enables staff to evaluate the quality of their practice and keep the activities fresh and exciting. Risk assessments are thoroughly carried out and any hazards are addressed as soon as they arise. Developments made since the last inspection have significantly improved links and consistency with local schools and settings.

Setting details

Unique reference number	146467
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	874909
Type of provision	Out of school provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	5 - 14
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	85
Name of provider	Stevenage Borough Council
Date of previous inspection	3 August 2010
Telephone number	01438 722753 or 01438 242313

St. Nicholas Play Centre was registered in 1974. It is an open-access scheme for children, run by Stevenage Borough Council. The play centre employs 10 members of childcare staff. The play centre opens all year round. Sessions are on Monday to Friday from 9am until 12.30pm and from 1.30pm until 5pm during school holidays. During school term time, sessions are from 3.30pm until 6pm. Sessions on Saturday are from 9am until 12.30pm and 1.30pm until 5pm. Staff have a general duty of care but parents retain responsibility for their children at all times.

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