

St. Nicholas Playcentre

St. Nicholas Park, Pilgrims Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4PT



Inspection date	21 November 2018
Previous inspection date	29 July 2015

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Not Applicable	

Summary of key findings for parents

The provision is good

- The playcentre is extremely well led and managed. Staff are very experienced in working with children on open access playschemes. The daily sessions run very smoothly. Staff provide an inclusive and welcoming play environment for children and their families, who thoroughly enjoy their time there.
- Children of mixed ages attend the playcentre and they learn from each other. Older children are very willing to support younger children, which has a positive impact on their emotional well-being. Children behave very well.
- Parents enjoy friendly relationships with staff and this contributes to children's enjoyment of the playcentre. Parents are very welcome to stay with their children, and staff encourage them to be involved in their children's play. Parents speak very highly of the staff at the playcentre and appreciate the support they receive.
- The wonderful outdoor area gives children a wealth of opportunities for physical play. Children enjoy exploring the mud kitchen, sensory garden, water and sand play resources, and superb range of equipment for swinging, sliding and climbing.
- The playcentre works well in partnership with other professionals and the local community. Children have formed good relationships with people from the local sheltered housing, enabling them to get to know older members of their community. They enjoy sharing their life stories and interesting artefacts from years ago.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not always make the most of opportunities to help children learn about the importance of making healthy choices about the food they eat.
- Staff have not fully considered how to provide children with opportunities to rest and relax comfortably.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- make the most of opportunities for children to gain a deeper understanding of healthy food choices
- review and improve the organisation of the environment to provide children with opportunities to rest and relax comfortably.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke with staff and children during 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 and welfare.
- 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

Jacqui Oliver

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

The playcentre is led by a highly enthusiastic manager and staff team who are fully committed to providing high-quality care and education for children. The manager effectively supports staff to understand and develop their roles through regular meetings and continuous professional development. Safeguarding is effective. The manager and staff have a very good knowledge about their responsibility to protect children. Recruitment procedures are robust, and all staff undertake checks to ensure they are safe and suitable to work with children. Staff are vigilant about the security of the premises. For example, CCTV has been introduced, and the outside lighting enables children to continue their play and exploration of the outside area safely. The centre manager and staff have regular discussions to evaluate their provision and highlight areas for further development. Parents and children's views are taken into account in developing the programme and there is an emphasis on responding to children's interests so that they enjoy the play activities on offer.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Children's enjoyment is well supported through a good balance of fun play experiences, both inside and outside. Staff help children to make good progress and gain skills that complement their learning in school. They ensure children have time to explore their ideas and follow their interests. For example, they show very good concentration and involvement as they make models with used materials. Children imaginatively use boxes to make a car, complete with a steering wheel, convertible roof and seat belts. Children's social skills are developed well. They talk happily to their friends and staff. Staff listen carefully to what children say, showing genuine interest in their thoughts and ideas. Staff are very well deployed, ensuring that children are well supported in their play and learning. Children are encouraged to develop their number skills, such as buying snacks from the tuck shop.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children are happy as they confidently move around the playcentre, making choices about what activities they would like to take part in. There is a wealth of age-appropriate toys and equipment. Children are well behaved. Staff act as good role models and encourage children to work together to sort out any issues. Relationships between the children of different ages who attend the club are strong. Staff effectively teach children to keep themselves safe and to be aware of risks. For example, children learn to follow the safety rules on the outside play equipment. Children learn about the world around them by growing and tasting their own fruit and vegetables. The playcentre staff ensure that every child receives an enjoyable experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	146467
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10063522
Type of provision	Out-of-school day care
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Age range of children	5 - 14
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	776
Name of registered person	Stevenage Borough Council
Registered person unique reference number	RP908607
Date of previous inspection	29 July 2015
Telephone number	01438 722753

St. Nicholas Playcentre registered in 1974 and is managed by Stevenage Borough Council. The playcentre employs six staff. Of these, four hold appropriate qualifications from level 3 to level 6. The playcentre is an open-access scheme for children aged five to 14 years. The playcentre 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. Children under the age of five may attend providing an adult accompanies them.

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