

Inspection of Sunbeams Pre-School

Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1NA

Inspection date: 11 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff welcome children warmly to this friendly pre-school. They chat to parents, gathering vital information about children's moods and the time they have spent at home. Staff use this information to provide nurturing care and support for all children. As a result, children arrive happily, engage well in play and enjoy the time they spend at the setting.

Staff have a robust understanding of the needs of all children in their care. They conduct home visits prior to children starting. This enables them to gain a deep understanding of children's early experiences. Staff use this knowledge to create an environment and plan learning opportunities that children may not otherwise receive. For example, the provider has worked hard to establish an exciting garden area. Children delight at having continuous access to outdoor play opportunities where they grow plants, explore water play and can be physically active.

Children are kind and polite. They demonstrate good manners, thanking their friends for their help in tasks and sharing resources well. Staff promote these behaviours consistently well. They facilitate regular group play where children are encouraged to cooperate and work as a team. For example, children prepare their snack together, selecting different healthy fruits to eat. They pour drinks for their friends and pass plates and cups around, ensuring everyone has something to eat.

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

- Relationships between staff and parents are strong. The provider establishes highly effective methods of two-way communication. This allows staff and families to share vital information about children's routines. Parents receive continuous updates on children's progress via an electronic system. They are complimentary about staff and the high level of support they provide for the whole family. Parents acknowledge the positive impact this has on children's well-being.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in the pre-school. The nurturing key staff have a deep understanding of children's specific needs. They share their knowledge with each other so all staff are aware of children's needs and abilities. Staff liaise closely with other professionals, gathering ideas and strategies to enhance the care they provide. This ensures all children make good progress from their starting points.
- Managers complete regular appraisals and supervision sessions with all staff. This helps to identify areas for development and monitor well-being. The well-qualified team of staff embrace opportunities to extend their knowledge. For example, they complete numerous online and face-to-face training courses. However, current methods of ongoing support are not yet sufficient to enable all

staff to make sustained improvements to their practice.

- Children demonstrate high levels of confidence. They interact well with visitors, engaging them in play and chatting to them about their favourite activities. Staff develop strategies that support children to develop a sense of pride in their achievements. For example, children delight in showing their parents their personal accomplishments that are displayed on the 'wow' board. They are eager to place their artwork on their individual noticeboards for all their friends to admire.
- Staff provide daily opportunities for children to engage with one another in a group. These sessions help prepare children for the routines of school. For example, they encourage children to listen to others and focus for appropriate periods of time. However, on occasion, group story sessions are not effective because they do not take into consideration the differing ages and needs of children involved.
- Staff support children's critical thinking skills particularly well during activities. They allow children to take the lead and explore resources in their own way. Staff encourage children to discuss their ideas and allow them plenty of time to respond to their thought-provoking questions. For example, when making modelling dough, children select their own ingredients. Staff encourage them to discuss the effects that changing the quantities of flour and water may have on their dough. They allow children to follow their ideas and see for themselves if they are correct.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance current methods of supervision to support all staff to deliver a consistently high standard of teaching during all interactions with children
- continuously evaluate practice, in particular group sessions, ensuring that they meet the needs of those children in attendance.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY100973
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10355207
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	23
Name of registered person	Taylor, Katherine
Registered person unique reference number	RP511297
Telephone number	07814 041 457
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2018

Information about this early years setting

Sunbeams Pre-School registered in 2002. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday in term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Antonia Campbell

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 considered the views of parents by speaking to several parents during the inspection and reviewing feedback letters.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability of all staff.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children during activities.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector and the manager completed a joint observation of an activity to assess the quality of teaching.
- The inspector held discussions with staff about the monitoring of learning and development in the setting and tracked the progress of several children.

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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