

Inspection of Southgate pre-school

The Childrens Centre, Steward Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 2PW

Inspection date: 20 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff provide a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment for children that values each child individually and provides them with a sense of belonging. Children arrive at the pre-school excited. They are quick to leave their parents and eager and keen to begin their day. Staff use their ongoing professional development and work closely with the local authority to broaden their own knowledge. As a result, they create a high-quality learning environment that is carefully tailored to meet the needs of all children. Resources, both indoors and outdoors, are thoughtfully selected, which enables all children to become fully engaged in their learning from the moment they arrive.

Staff have high expectations for children's independence, resilience and confidence. Children pour their own drinks and cut up their own fruit at snack time. Staff provide opportunities for children to take safe risks, such as climbing and balancing on tyres and jumping from them. Children show pride in their achievements, expressing delight and confidence in their abilities as they comment, 'I'm going to jump so far' and 'I did it.'

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Staff seek out their own training and work in partnership with other professionals and parents to meet individual children's needs to ensure that they have the knowledge to help children make the best progress they can.

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

- Children's behaviour is good. They play well together, share and take turns appropriately. When disagreements occur, staff intervene effectively, helping children to understand how their actions affect others. Staff support children to resolve conflicts positively. As a result, children develop the skills needed to build friendships.
- Children benefit from a stimulating outdoor environment that offers a wide range of learning experiences and the opportunity for children to develop their gross motor skills. Children demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm as they explore the garden, experimenting with cooking in the mud kitchen with fresh herbs that staff supply. They confidently engage in activities, such as swinging, rolling vehicles down guttering, running and joining staff in imaginative play, for example 'hunting for bears'. The pond allows a safe area for children to explore wildlife. They count how many tadpoles they can see, how many legs they have and comment on how big they have grown, as staff cleverly bring mathematical learning into the natural world.
- Routines are well established at the pre-school. Staff use a bell to signal transitions throughout the day, supporting children to move smoothly between

activities. Children demonstrate an understanding of expectations. They wash their hands before lunch, help to tidy away resources when required, and line up when it is time to come indoors. This supports all children to know what will happen next.

- Staff are deployed effectively to ensure that children are supervised safely at all times, both indoors and outdoors. Regular communication between staff ensures that staffing arrangements consistently meet the needs of all children at all times.
- Overall, staff support children's communication and language development effectively. They read stories, sing songs, model language and pose questions for children to answer. However, staff do not consistently make the best use of opportunities to extend children's vocabulary, and there are occasions when children are not given sufficient time to respond to questions before staff move on. As a result, some children do not always have the opportunity to develop their thinking skills or broaden their vocabulary.
- The key-person system is robust. As a result, children form strong attachments to staff, which makes them feel safe and secure within the setting. Staff demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the children in their care, which enables them to meet children's individual needs effectively.
- Parent partnership working is a strength. Parents speak positively about the pre-school. They feel well supported and know who their child's key person is. Parents comment that staff are lovely and very helpful. Staff provide parents' evenings, newsletters and make time to talk to parents to ensure they are well informed about their children's learning and development. Parents say that they feel fortunate their children attend the setting.

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:

- develop staff's knowledge of how to extend children's communication and language skills to enable all children to broaden their vocabulary and promote their thinking skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2713903
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10392266
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	47
Number of children on roll	60
Name of registered person	Southgate Pre-School CIO
Registered person unique reference number	2713904
Telephone number	01284 703181
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Southgate pre-school registered in 2023. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Vanessa Hancock-Sharman

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and talked about their curriculum and what they wanted their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children spoke to/communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation and held a discussion.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of the staff working at the pre-school.
- Parents shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support 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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