

St Helens College Nursery and Creche

Unique reference number (URN): 323089

Address: St. Helens College, Brook Street, ST. HELENS, Merseyside, WA10 1PZ

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 01/01/1986

Registers: EYR, CCR, VCR

Registered person: St Helens College

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- **Not met:** The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

All children make excellent progress. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those known to other agencies, such as children's social care, and those who face other barriers to their learning. All staff have a thorough understanding of child development, and they track children's progress meticulously, particularly children's speech and language development. Children are exposed to a wealth of songs, stories and conversations that support them to become confident communicators. This provides a secure basis for learning in all areas.

Children of all ages develop confidence and a positive attitude towards their learning. Older children recall previous learning as they plant carrots and remind staff that they will need water to help them to grow. The setting consistently encourages children's independence. Even the youngest children feed themselves, and older children manage their own self-help skills. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning as they move rooms or transfer to school.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Strong standard ●

Leaders monitor attendance and respond swiftly to any barriers to attendance that families may face. Close partnerships with parents and carers mean that parents are confident to approach staff if they feel that they would benefit from any support. Leaders have recently extended their offer to ensure children can attend more frequently, and this has impacted positively on children's progress.

Children's laughter fills the air as they access the well-planned environment. Staff use children's interests to create experiences that capture children's engagement. Children use the resources available to extend their learning. For example, they confidently find the watering cans to access water to add to their planting activity. Children persevere when things get tricky, such as when threading onto thin spaghetti. Staff adapt group sessions so that all children can join in and enjoy these times. They use resources such as sensory toys to help to capture all children's attention and to support high levels of engagement in learning.

Children's behaviour is consistently positive. Staff consistently embed a calm approach and act as good role models for the expectations that they set. They teach children how to take turns and model this as they play with them. Children demonstrate kind behaviours as they invite each other into their play and eagerly help each other to complete tasks, such as opening the water butt. Staff embed consistent routines and expectations that children know and follow. They identify children who may require extra help to follow these routines. They provide visual cues and do not rush children, giving them time and support before moving on to the next task. This helps all children to feel emotionally prepared for what will happen next.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Staff prioritise building secure attachments with children. They consistently demonstrate a caring, nurturing approach. As staff change babies' nappies, they show them the nappy then sing as they are being changed. Staff are astute to children's varying emotions. They understand when children may need an extra cuddle or reassurance. This helps children to feel happy and settled in the nursery with staff who promote their wellbeing.

Children's health and wellbeing are supported impeccably. Staff teach children about the importance of good oral health. Children recall that too much sugar can cause cavities. Parents and carers say how this has helped children's understanding of healthy lifestyles. For example, they tell their families that they do not want too many sweets as this is not good for their teeth. Children enjoy the time that they spend outdoors, running and climbing. Staff use stories well to teach children about the impact of physical exercise on their bodies. For example, children enact roles of characters running fast outdoors. They talk to staff about the change in their heartbeat and why this happens after running.

Children are taught from an early age the importance of following rigorous hygiene procedures. Babies eagerly go to the sink to wash their hands after having their nappies changed. Older children remember to wash their hands before mealtimes and after wiping their noses. Children's wellbeing is consistently promoted by staff, and children learn about the importance of healthy habits and choices.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have successfully embedded an aspirational curriculum. This is well sequenced and builds on what children already know and can do. This supports children to make excellent progress from their starting points. Leaders are ambitious for what all children, including those with any barriers to their learning, can achieve. Staff are extremely skilled at implementing the curriculum. For example, they use robust assessment procedures that allow leaders to consistently reflect on the impact the curriculum has on outcomes for all children. They adapt teaching appropriately to support all children who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Leaders have plans to develop the curriculum even further and are clear about how to achieve this.

Staff demonstrate skilled teaching. They understand the small steps of knowledge that children need to learn and know in what order this should happen. Staff skilfully adapt their interactions to ensure that activities build on children's skills and knowledge over time. There is a clear focus throughout the nursery on supporting children's personal, social and emotional development. This helps children to settle quickly and to be ready to learn. Staff know what they want children to learn from the experiences that they provide. They use children's interests to spark curiosity and exploration. Children become confident in their physical abilities as they skilfully climb and balance on play apparatus outdoors. Staff support children to be active in their play. For example, following a story about the 'Bear Hunt', children actively act out scenes from the book. They become immersed in their imagination as they pretend to 'squelch' and 'stomp' through mud.

Staff seamlessly integrate mathematical learning into engaging activities that capture children's interests. For example, staff encourage children to explore capacity during water

play and skilfully introduce the concept of time. Children competently use mathematical language in their own play as they count and describe the size and shape of items.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders embed an inclusive, nurturing culture at this nursery. They ensure that every child is able to learn and achieve their full potential. They make strategic decisions to ensure that any additional funding is used to benefit children's progress greatly. Leaders understand and prioritise their responsibilities to ensure children's individual needs are identified and supported swiftly. For example, they ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities get early intervention and receive a bespoke step-by-step intervention plan. Barriers to learning are reduced and children make rapid progress.

Leaders have established excellent links with parents and carers. Parents feel valued, included and respected. Parents commend staff on their unwavering support for inclusion. This goes beyond support for their child, as it encompasses support for the whole family. Families benefit from support with embedding routines and agreed strategies at home. These consistent procedures help all children to thrive and make progress alongside their peers, including children who are known or have previously been known to children's social care. Leaders work well with external childcare professionals to ensure that all children are included in every aspect of nursery life. For example, staff use sign language and visual aids and adapt the physical learning environment to ensure that it is truly inclusive.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

The established, inspirational leadership team drives consistently high standards across the nursery. Leaders are relentless in their vision to provide every child with the very best experience. They frequently analyse the setting's strengths and areas for improvement to ensure the best education and care for all children, including those with any barriers to their learning.

Leaders ensure that their vision for high expectations and excellent standards is truly understood by all staff. They maintain a clear oversight of practice throughout the nursery and ensure that all staff receive targeted and effective professional development opportunities that positively impact on their knowledge and skills. Staff take pride in what they do and are equipped to meet children's needs effectively. For example, through their everyday interactions, they skilfully encourage children's communication skills as they pose questions that allow children to think and respond. They introduce new concepts, such as floating and sinking objects in water. Staff support children's language skills consistently well. They ask them meaningful questions and introduce them to a wide range of vocabulary.

Leaders have a clear awareness of the community and the support that is available for parents and carers. Parents eagerly say how supported they feel through the advice and guidance that leaders share. This has a very positive impact on children's development and wellbeing, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

Compulsory Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Compulsory Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Compulsory Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
 - Not met
-

Voluntary Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the voluntary part of Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Voluntary Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
 - Not met
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What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at this welcoming and inclusive nursery. Staff take time to get to know children and their families and truly value children as unique individuals. Partnerships with parents and carers are a real strength of the nursery. A deep sense of togetherness, belonging and care is what makes this nursery so special. Children feel happy and safe and are ready to learn.

Children thrive in the care of the experienced, consistent staff. Babies become confident and sociable as they play alongside each other. They quickly learn the names of their friends

and build trusting relationships with staff. Babies become enthralled while exploring their senses. They cannot contain their excitement while choosing songs to sing. Staff build on babies' interest in singing by teaching them actions and how their voices can make different sounds.

Older children thoroughly enjoy story time with staff. They eagerly join in and engage as staff read in a way that excites children and supports their anticipation. Children skilfully recall words that they have learned from the story. Staff support children to build their language skills through purposeful conversations. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make significant progress from their individual starting points.

Leaders understand the importance of teaching children to be proud of who they are and where they come from. They teach children that it is okay to be different. For example, they talk to children about different cultures and beliefs. This helps children to learn about similarities and differences between themselves and others. Furthermore, staff take children on trips in the local community. Children relish these experiences and eagerly recall visits to the local library. This further supports children's understanding of their community and the diverse world we live in.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain their work to ensure continued improvement and high standards. They should focus on creating a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences for all children, including those who may face any barriers to their learning or wellbeing.
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About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders, practitioners, children, parents and carers.

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.

Inspector:

Rebecca Weston

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): 323089

Address:

St. Helens College
Brook Street
ST. HELENS
Merseyside
WA10 1PZ

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 01/01/1986

Registered person: St Helens College

Register(s): EYR, CCR, VCR

Operating hours: Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday : 08:45 - 17:30,Friday : 08:45 - 16:30

Local authority: St Helens

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 3 March 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

0 to 4

Total number of places

64

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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