



Sandpiper Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 119514

Inspection date 16 May 2006

Inspector Lisa Paisley

Setting Address 105 Kingfisher Close, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, Essex,
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Telephone number 07891078032

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Registered person Sandpiper Pre-School

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sandpiper Pre-School is run by a committee. It opened in 1980 and operates from a community centre in Shoeburyness, Essex. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 19 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 13

receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school will support children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff. Two staff currently hold early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where good hygiene practices are maintained. Children learn about suitable hygiene routines through washing their hands appropriately, such as after using the toilet and before eating. Children have access to antibacterial liquid soap and paper towels, ensuring the potential risk of cross infection is minimised. All staff are first aid trained, this results in children receiving good care and attendance in the event of an accident or administering medication, for example a child being sick.

Children's awareness of the benefits of healthy eating is promoted well at snack time as children and families are encouraged to bring in healthy snacks. They learn why some foods are better for our bodies than others through daily discussions and planned topics. Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the session and children are able to help themselves independently. Good written records are maintained by staff for each child, ensuring their individual health and dietary requirements are met.

All children enjoy suitable opportunities to engage in physical activities that support their whole body movements. Children use a good range of tools and equipment to promote their fine hands skills, such as threading activities, magnetic games and puzzles. As a result, children are making effective progress in all aspects of physical development and their skills are challenged appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The provision is warm and welcoming to children, there is a selection of children's artwork and posters displayed. Good measures are in place to ensure that risks to children's safety, both indoors and outdoors, are minimised. For example, clear arrival and departure procedures, ensuring children are safe while at the pre-school. Clear and effective written safety procedures are in place which are consistently applied by staff, such as the lost child policy. Formal risk assessments are effective in ensuring that potential hazards to children are minimised, for example low-level sockets and radiators are safe. Staff have a very good awareness of how to organise space, furniture and equipment effectively, enabling children to move freely with independence between activities and different play areas, ensuring children feel confident within the setting and are safe and secure.

Children benefit from using a good range of toys and play equipment which are maintained to a good standard. Children enthusiastically select their own play resources which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Resources and play equipment are organised at child height, allowing children to self-select promoting their independence and choice. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through regular fire drills and by gentle reminders from staff, for example sweeping up the sand.

Children are well protected by staff who have a good awareness of child protection procedures and know how to put these into practice to safeguard children's welfare. Staff inform parents of their role and responsibility in protecting children, reassuring parents of their child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting and are very happy and settled due to staff relating to them sensitively and providing a range of activities which are interesting and stimulating. Staff have developed warm and effective relationships with the children, enabling them to feel secure and develop a strong sense of their own self-worth. They participate in a good range of creative activities, such as sand, cornflour, planting seeds and play dough. A range of themed resources allow children to develop their role play, for example, the home corner and the restaurant.

The group has obtained the 'Birth to three matters' framework and they have taken suitable steps to implement, however, this needs to be further developed to improve the quality of care and play experiences for young children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use the Foundation Stage curriculum extremely well to plan a balanced range of activities to promote the six areas of learning. Staff have a very good understanding of how children learn and are very skilful at open ended questioning to extend children's learning opportunities. Planning is detailed and comprehensive, covering the six areas of learning, focused activities include evaluation and differentiation ensuring children are appropriately challenged. Children's developmental progress is recorded through Southend's early years profiles and their developmental progress informs planning.

Children are keen to participate and are eager learners in the broad range of activities provided. They are encouraged to independently select resources and initiate their own activities and games. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other upon arrival. They work well together and understand the importance of co-operation during group activities. For example, children negotiate with each other and agree turn taking when engaging in role play and making sandwiches. They are very confident and skilled speakers, using words effectively and a range of vocabulary to convey their experiences both real and imaginary. More able children are able to phonetically sound out their own name and other single words. They have access to a range of age appropriate books and are

confident users when looking at books. Children have access to a good range of mark making tools and materials, both formal and informal, for example, the travel agents and writing invitations to friends inviting them to share their snack. Children have a good understanding of early maths through everyday routines and discussion, for example, 'The Hungry Caterpillar' at story time. Free play with dough and structured cooking activities teach children about weight and measuring. Puzzles of varying difficulty help children with shape and space. Children make a spiral from a circle, by cutting, with help from staff.

Children have very good opportunities to find out about the natural world and enjoy exploring their environment, for example, completing the weather board during registration and planting seeds to watch and record their progress. They are developing a sound awareness of the uses of information technology in everyday life and are able to operate equipment such as, the computer, cash machine and telephones. Children talk with interest about their own lives and learn about the work of people in the community. Children's imaginations and free expression are promoted through a wide range of activities such as, playing musical instruments, singing, painting and role-play. Children's physical skills are sufficiently promoted, however, the outdoor play could be further developed to extend children's play opportunities outside. Children develop small motor skills as they use tools for cooking, mark making and sand and water play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the setting which helps them to feel happy and secure. Children benefit from having access to a wide range of play resources which promote positive images of diversity and from participating in activities which promote their awareness of different festivals and cultures. For example, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Easter and Mother's Day. Children have suitable opportunities to learn about themselves, other people and the world around them through planned activities and visitors to the setting, for example, the wildlife sanctuary and the insect lady.

Children settle well at the provision as staff work well with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Staff seek information from parents before a child starts at the pre-school regarding their interests and abilities. This enables staff to build on and develop children's previous knowledge, understanding and skills. Children are very well behaved due to the staff's very good understanding of managing children's challenging behaviour positively and with confidence. Children are well supported by staff who use praise and encouragement to promote children's self-esteem. They develop a positive sense of sharing and respect for one another and they increasingly take responsibility for their own actions. For example, on completing a puzzle one child said to the other 'that's beautiful'. Their understanding of right and wrong is promoted well and sensitively by staff through gentle reminders to care for their environment, the equipment and each other.

Partnership with parents and carers is good, this contributes positively to the well-being of all children in nursery including those in receipt of nursery education.

Children benefit from their parents being actively involved in their learning. For example, all children have a homework pack which provides activities for parents and children to complete at home. New parents receive a prospectus and newsletters are sent out informing them of regular events in the pre-school. This results in ensuring parents are fully informed with regard to their child's developmental progress, topic work and any events or celebrations.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is supported by the secure organisation at the setting. Children are able to move freely and independently around the setting accessing a range of activities which support their play and learning. All the required documentation, records and policies and procedures are in place. However, some minor amendments are required to ensure policies consistently meet the National Standards, this includes developing an operational plan.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The manager is enthusiastic and committed in her approach to providing children with good early years care and learning. She ensures staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, providing them with clear messages and support. Staff have yearly appraisals in which training needs are identified. The manager and a staff member are due to attend training to update their early years qualification. The pre-school currently receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and the Early Years Partnership in continuing to improve the quality of care and education offered.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection there was one recommendation, the pre-school was required to ensure risks to children have been minimised. Potential risks to children have been minimised by removing the prickly plants from the garden and ensuring all low-level sockets are covered.

At the last education inspection there was one key action, the pre-school was required to extend the range of IT equipment and resources. The pre-school have a good range of information technology equipment and resources in place, resulting in children having greater opportunities to play and develop their understanding of information technology.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since the last inspection. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The

complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure documentation consistently meets the National Standards this includes implementing an Operational plan.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review and extend children's opportunities for them to use the outdoor area.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk