



Sandcastles Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106024
Inspection date	21 September 2006
Inspector	Sara Bailey
Setting Address	Barrington Street, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6QR
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Registered person	Sandcastles Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory. 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?

Sandcastles Pre-school in Tiverton, Devon registered in 1992. It is set in a large pre-fabricated building on the Castle School site. There are three large playrooms, a kitchen and an entrance hall. There is a fully enclosed play area outdoors for the pre-school to use. It is registered to take 30 children aged three to eight years. There are currently 57 children on roll at the pre-school, 48 of which receive funding for nursery education. There are nine staff members, five of whom hold level three qualifications and two with level two qualifications. The pre-school is open from 9:00 until 15:30 Monday to Friday, offering wrap around care from 08:00 - 9:00 and 15:30 - 17:30 and a play scheme operates during school holidays 08.30 - 17.30. There are 35 children on roll. The group supports children with learning disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The group are supported by the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from most aspects of their health care being positively promoted. For example, most staff hold valid first aid certificates, medication is stored, administered and recorded appropriately. However, there is no written, parental consent for seeking emergency medical treatment which compromises children's care. Children are encouraged to wash their hands after messy play, using the toilet and before eating. However, there is some risk of cross infection with hand washing procedures.

Children's nutritional development is compromised as healthy eating is not sufficiently promoted. Although parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks and lunch boxes through requests in newsletters and the sharing of informative leaflets, some children are not having any fruit or vegetables. Staff are not positive role models or pro-active at initiating changes in their diet. Children do have easy access to their individual drink beakers provided from home but this is often squash. Milk and water is not adequately promoted.

Children enjoy daily physical development, both inside and outside. They participate enthusiastically with weekly dance sessions led by a ballet teacher and PE sessions in the school where they also practice undressing and dressing in preparation for school. They develop their co-ordination well, through opportunities to explore how their bodies move. For example, they dance on tip-toes, wave flags and watch the patterns they make as they dance. Children develop their fine motor skills through the use of tools such as glue spreaders, pencils and paint brushes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally safe within the setting as staff supervise both inside and outside appropriately, use safety gates to prevent children accessing the kitchen and are alerted to visitors through an intruder alarm on the main door. However, risk assessments have identified potential hazards but they are not promptly addressed. For example, the flooring is a tripping hazard and fire guards have been pulled away from their wall fittings. This compromises children's safety.

Children easily and safely access a range of toys and equipment in each room. Children benefit from having all of their messy play activities in one room where they can be adequately supervised with scissors, sand and water. However, sand is not always swept up which is a slipping hazard to children and staff, especially those with inappropriate footwear.

Children's welfare is safeguarded most of the time as the majority of staff have sufficient knowledge of child protection issues. However, although all staff are aware of signs of abuse they are not all confident about correct procedures to follow in the event of being concerned about a child. The child protection policy does not include allegations made against staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and settled at the pre-school. Children aged three and four years are joined at the beginning and end of the day by older children who attend the school. The breakfast club, after school club and holiday playscheme have an emphasis on fun activities such as craft, outdoor play and playstation.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children benefit from a structured daily routine which incorporates much free play both inside and outside. They participate eagerly in all group activities where they confidently speak out and are involved. For example, at circle time they discuss the date, weather, look at numbers and listen to stories. They enjoy planned activities which are fun and have a clear learning intention. For example, children take it in turns to follow directions to undress a doll, bath, feed and re-dress it, they then introduce themselves to the doll 'my name is...'. Staff are well deployed to support all activities and encourage children to share and interact as they play. For example, timers are used to illustrate children's time with a popular toy before passing it on, children are followed through from the beginning to the end of an activity, from putting on the apron to putting their work into their drawer. This enables children to develop effective self-control, make positive relationships, share and learn independence.

Children show a love of books and stories. As well as listening well at story time, they self select books and read them to each other. Children enjoy making marks with pencils and are beginning to write their own names through regular opportunities to develop their skills of holding pencils, tracing and using fine paintbrushes to create intricate paintings. Children learn about sounds and letters through discussions about names and words. For example, children have individual name cards which are displayed, they sound out the name of daily helpers and children are beginning to correctly identify not only their names but those of their peers. Children learn about numbers through everyday experiences. They explore how small numbers put together make the date, they count, recognise numerals and use their fingers to understand the basics of addition and subtraction.

Children use their imagination really well in the home corner with basic props. They enjoy dance sessions where they respond well to direction. For example, they line up beautifully, stop when told to and dance to music, waving flags or scarves. Children's behaviour is managed consistently by all staff who skilfully distract individuals from inappropriate behaviour. Children are praised and encouraged which builds their self esteem and encourages them to explore. Children freely access the computer, create intricate models with Lego and follow simple patterns. For example, children make pictures of people from pre-cut pieces of paper in different shapes and colours which are discussed. Although the activity is adult -directed, staff are aware of how to extend activities for the more able child.

Children's progress is recorded through some observations which are used to complete assessments. However, some staff have limited knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum so stepping stones records show limited evidence of how staff have made that assessment .

For example, there are ticks rather than examples of progress. However, each child has a termly report which includes all of the six areas of learning and this gives a global assessment of where each individual child is and identifies learning targets for the future.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are really settled and well behaved due to the consistent, positive strategies used by staff. For example, children enjoy being the daily helper as they are made to feel important, staff praise and encourage good work and good behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour is managed calmly and effectively with praise for complying with rules. Children are enthusiastic to help pack away toys and immediately respond to requests to line up or sit on the carpet. They help each other, share and show consideration to their peers. Staff are positive role models. They show respect and consideration to children.

Children's individual needs are well understood and met effectively through a key worker system, observations and on-going information sharing between staff. Children with learning disabilities are well supported and when needed, help from outside agencies is sought to further support children. Those children who speak English as an additional language are gently encouraged to participate in the bigger group and assisted to communicate through pictures and staff are learning key words in their home language. Children learn about diversity through a range of toys and resources. For example, topics include learning about other countries and cultures, there are welcome signs in different languages, posters promote positive images of different skin colours. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from staff and parents sharing information on a daily informal basis as well as termly reports linked to the stepping stones. Information about the setting is readily available to parents and includes information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, the complaints policy is out of date and the incorrect contact address for Ofsted is provided to parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from effective staff deployment which ensures children are well supported in their play both inside and outside. Children are grouped appropriately to meet their individual needs, for example, there are times for everyone to be together and times when two smaller groups are formed, each spending time in either the messy play room or main activity room. Children benefit from a structured daily routine which makes them feel secure. Staff are consistent across all aspects of care as they work in both the pre-school and wrap-around-care. The staff team are made up of qualified and experienced staff who are suitable to work with children or having their criminal record checks processed which means they are not left unsupervised with children. However, some documentation is not in place or updated. For example, there is no written parental consent for seeking emergency medical treatment, the complaints policy is

out of date with the wrong contact details for Ofsted and the child protection policy does not include allegations against staff. This compromises children's care.

The leadership and management is good. The manager is a positive role model for the staff team. There is a strong, committed team which is well motivated. Individual staff are well supported and attend a variety of training which is cascaded to the whole team. Regular staff meetings ensure children's individual needs are understood and met. Children are cared for in an inclusive environment in which every child matters. The manager is effective at monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education and seeks help and advice when needed to further improve the outcomes for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was agreed to address one recommendation relating to Standard 7:Health. Medication records now include parents signatures which improves children's health care.

At the last Nursery Education inspection it was agreed to address two key issues relating to assessments and planning; opportunities to practice learning in meaningful situations, particularly calculation. Both have been appropriately addressed. Assessments are used to influence short term planning and extension activities are considered to challenge the older, more able child. This means their individual needs are met. Children learn through everyday experiences and meaningful discussions. For example, they calculate during story time, counting images and working out how many are left if one is taken away. They use their fingers to add and subtract and see visual calculating.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted. On 12 September 2005 a concern was raised that children were allowed to play unsupervised on the school field. Parents were also seen to have collected children directly from the school field. These concerns relate to National Standard 6:Safety.

A childcare inspector made an unannounced visit to the pre-school on 19 September 2005. The inspector made observations, reviewed relevant documentation and discussed the complaint with the person in charge.

As a result of the investigation two actions were set under National Standard 6:Safety.

The provider has satisfactorily carried out the actions and remains qualified for registration.

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):

- obtain written parental consent for seeking emergency medical treatment, ensure the complaints policy is updated and contains the correct address for Ofsted; develop the operational plan
- promote and improve healthy eating for children
- further develop risk assessments to ensure identified risks are addressed promptly, for example, the fire guards, flooring and footwear
- ensure all staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures and include allegations against staff in the child protection policy.

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):

- ensure all staff develop their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and stepping stone records show evidence of accurate progress of children's development with dates and examples.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk