

Sandford Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY252767
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Inspector	Sheila May Price

Setting Address	14 Blundell Sands Road, West Blundell Sands, Liverpool, L23 6TF
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Telephone number	0761 241 064 or 0151 924 5775
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Registered person	Sandford Pre-School
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sandford Pre-school, in Blundell Sands, has been operating since 1966 and is run by a voluntary organisation. It serves families within the local district and surrounding areas. The provision caters for children aged from two and half years to five years, and operates Monday to Friday from 09.15 to 11.45 term time only. The facilities are self contained. There is one large playroom with adjoining kitchen and toilet facilities. As there is no outdoor play area, children are taken out on a regular basis to local outdoor facilities.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 24 children on roll, of whom, 14 receive funding for nursery education. The provision employs five members of staff to work with the children. Of these, two hold relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn that it is important to brush their teeth regularly to prevent decay and proudly show the staff their clean white teeth with a happy smile. They wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, getting used to following good hygiene procedures. When the children have a snack they use a wipe clean place mat, which they have made themselves. Children drink water whenever they wish during the session, however, staff have yet to find a system that stops them drinking from each others cups which could lead to unhealthy cross contamination. There are suitable arrangements for dealing with medical emergencies and sickness, which are shared with parents. This ensures that children do not attend who might spread infection to others, and their needs are met should they fall ill or have an accident on the premises.

Although the children do not have facilities to play outdoors daily in the fresh air, they do have opportunities for exercise indoors. They develop awareness of the space around them and how to move safely, as they negotiate pathways around equipment and find a place to sit on the floor when gathered together in a group. They develop good control of small equipment when using crayons and paint brushes, piecing together jigsaws, making constructions and using bean bags and small balls for aiming and catching. They have adequate access to climbing equipment used once a week, but limited use of wheeled toys to push, pull, and pedal to develop strength and agility. Children explore how to move their bodies in different ways using control and balance through a variety of games.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are made welcoming to the children through colourful displays and there is good heating, lighting, and ventilation. Staff ensure that the front door is kept bolted during the session so children are secure and there is careful supervision of children during arrival and collection times so no one goes missing. Although there is no outdoor play area, there is a well written outings procedure and risk assessment in place to take children for walks to the nearby beach, park or local school playground.

The layout of the room and equipment is well thought out for children's safety and supervision. Children can access a good range of resources themselves which are organised in labelled boxes. Children learn to move about safely and not to run about except when space has been created especially for them. They are encouraged to pick up toys that are causing a tripping hazard. Regular fire practises are carried out, although these are not always recorded. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and child protection policies are shared with parents so that they know how to raise a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are enthusiastic about coming to the pre-school. Most enter with confidence and engage in an activity of their choice straight away. They sustain interest in self chosen activities for a considerable period of time and involve other children as they arrive. Children who are at first unwilling to leave their carer are comforted by staff who appreciate their needs well and

soon have them joining in. Staff understand that younger children sometimes need to bring comforters and allow them to discard these only when ready to do so.

Children readily take part in the daily routines and wait eagerly to tell their news to others. They listen carefully and respond with questions showing a desire to gain knowledge. Staff use good props, such as 'Larry the Lamb' to obtain children's attention, and then good eye contact and intonation to sustain their interest when telling a story. Children enjoy counting at registration time and proudly tell others how old they are, holding up three or four fingers to show how many years. There are many resources for children to explore creatively from art and craft materials to sand and water play. Children use their imagination well in the role play area, the construction area, and when making pretend cakes with the dough.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make steady progress towards early learning goals. The teacher has many years experience with the age group and uses her underpinning knowledge of child development well. However, she does not use the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance enough to help her organise her planning and assessing. This results in adequate curriculum coverage but little evaluation of how well children are making progress. Staff are similarly experienced but not well guided in how they should make best use of their time in the support of children's learning. This is because weekly and activity plans are not specific enough regarding intended learning outcomes.

Staff clearly get to know the children well and make informal assessments of their capabilities through their daily interactions, which they share verbally with each other and parents. This is, however, not systematically transferred to an ongoing record of children's progress towards early learning goals. As a consequence there is not a firm basis upon which to plan next steps for individual children. This mostly affects those who are more able, who are sometimes not being challenged enough to be creative and to solve problems.

Children develop language skills well. They have many opportunities to talk to each other and the staff as they play. They confidently relate their experiences to others at circle time. Some have developed a high level of negotiating skills which they use to resolve conflict. Staff develop children's vocabulary through topics and encourage them to classify and describe what they see. Occasionally staff do not extend children's narrative with enough open ended questions. Children like to read books and take part in most story sessions with enthusiasm. They practise handwriting skills and show an interest in writing their names. All funded children can find their name for self registration and some are familiar with the sounds and names of a number of letters.

Children learn to count during every day activities and to find the matching numeral on display or on worksheets. More able children are not encouraged enough to solve mathematical problems, such as estimating how many, sharing out, and finding out how many more or less in practical situations. Children play with different shaped and sized objects to gain an understanding of their properties and to make comparisons.

Children learn to use their senses to explore different materials, tastes, textures and sounds. They appreciate the passing of time through daily routines and observing changes in the seasons. Children are taken to the beach and the park to explore the outdoor environment, however there are no artefacts or natural objects kept in the pre-school for them to examine or draw

from first hand experience. Children are curious about computers and how things work, but the pre-school has few technical resources for them to use.

Children enjoy imaginative play, singing and moving to music. They explore shape, colour, and texture through a good range of materials, and practise different techniques during craft activities. Their ability to express their experiences and what they see in art and music is not being fostered well, because they are expected to copy an adult version rather than develop their own response.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a sense of belonging as they are individually acknowledged by the staff and sign themselves in with their name cards. They show others where their photograph is displayed and feel part of the pre-school community. They gain increasing independence as they learn to put on their coats and manage fastenings for themselves. Children make a contribution by helping to tidy away the toys at the end of the session and sweeping up the sand.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. They co-operate well with each other in play, and negotiate over turn taking when pouring out the drinks. They learn what is right and wrong as they discuss the golden rules. Staff act as good role models behaving in a friendly and courteous manner towards others, and usually encourage children to consider how their behaviour effects others. Positive methods are used to encourage good behaviour, such as praising the children for sitting quietly during circle time.

Children's individual needs are met well. Certain activities are repeated on different days to allow all children to have a similar range of experiences. Children are able to select from a full range of equipment to suit their interests. Children with learning difficulties make good progress because the co-ordinator works well in partnership with parents and other agencies, such as speech therapists. The facilities are accessible to children with disabilities. Children learn to appreciate cultural similarities and differences through talking about their families and traditions, and celebrating significant events in their own and other peoples lives.

Good relationships are established with parents who appreciate the continuity provided at the pre-school for the children in their families over the years. Parents support the organisation by becoming members of the committee and doing fund raising activities. Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff share information with parents about what children are achieving on an informal basis. They limit the involvement of parents in contributing to records or planning next steps, because they are not using the local authority 'plotting progress' records effectively, which is only handed over when children leave. There is good information about how the pre-school operates and a regular news letter which refers to topics and forthcoming events.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All regulatory records relating to the children are well maintained. A record is kept of committee members to comply with regulations, but not all names have been notified promptly enough to Ofsted when members change, so that checks are carried out on their suitability. The manager is aware of the appointments and checking procedures for new staff, and there is an induction process to use with either new staff or volunteers for safeguarding purposes. There is an

adequate number of qualified staff and a suitable system for deputising. Ratios are well maintained to suit the needs and ages of the children. Procedures are followed well for children's safety using standard policy documents.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The teacher does not always convey to the other staff what role they have to play in children's learning, so opportunities are missed for them to make a fuller contribution. Little attention is given to staff development and knowledge of the Foundation Stage, although the manager keeps up to date with curriculum matters. There are some good resources for children to use, but their organisation is not always well thought out to support children's learning, such as in the wet play or discovery area. There is no systematic monitoring system for evaluating the quality of provision to identify strengths and weaknesses to work on. The manager reports to the committee on a regular basis and the committee gives support through fund raising. All the improvements recommended from the last inspection report have been made for children's safety.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection of care there were four recommendations raised. This is the pre-school's first inspection of nursery education. The recommendations related mostly to health and safety policies and training.

The manager and deputy have now updated their knowledge of safeguarding by attending a child protection course which enables them to understand the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures better. The child protection policy document is yet to be amended to reflect the change from Area Child Protection Committee to LSCB and to emphasise the new 'working together' commitment between agencies. There is now a written policy document on the induction of new staff included in the staff guidance and a policy for the non collection of children to comply with regulations. Children are now able to have drinks whenever they wish with the introduction of a system for keeping water out in a jug for children to pour out themselves. This encourages children to be more independent in their self care and to drink regularly.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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 systems for notifying Ofsted of changes to committee members so that the required forms are completed for suitability checks to be carried out.

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):

- improve methods for recording children's achievements, monitoring their progress, planning for next steps, and involving parents in children's learning and assessments
- improve methods for monitoring the quality of provision, involving staff in planning, and developing their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage

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