

Snapdragons Sandridge

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	161959
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Inspector	Nikki Whinton
Setting Address	3, St. Margaret's Gardens, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7BT
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Registered person	Rosemary Collard
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 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?

Snapdragons in Sandridge opened in 2001. It is a privately-owned setting that operates from a detached chalet bungalow, in a residential road on the outskirts of Melksham, Wiltshire. A maximum of 27 children may attend the provision at any one time. The nursery is open all year round from 08.00 until 18.00 Monday to Friday. All children share access to secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 57 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. The nursery facilities are used by local residents and parents who travel into the area to work. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The provision has achieved an Investor in People Award and The Bristol Standard for Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop their awareness of good health practices as part of the daily routine. For example, they are learning the need to wash their hands before eating and to blow their own noses before hygienically disposing of the tissue. They benefit from the staff's good role modelling, their understanding of first aid and their appreciation of the correct procedures to follow if accidents occur or children require medication. There is a range of measures to promote children's health. Written parental permission has been obtained to seek emergency treatment or apply sun cream, children use separate paper towels when hand drying to reduce the risk of cross contamination and appropriate nappy changing routines are followed.

Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise whilst playing within the provision's three enclosed play areas. They can access a range of equipment, including climbing apparatus, slides, hoops, a football net and balls. In addition, a sports coach visits the pre-school room on a weekly basis to offer stimulating, age appropriate activities to help develop children's large muscle skills. Children increase their fine motor control and coordination through safely handling a variety of tools, such as paintbrushes during free painting or age appropriate cutlery at lunchtime.

Children enjoy a varied menu of freshly prepared cooked meals and nutritious snacks whilst in the provision. Allergies or any dietary issues are discussed with parents as part of the registration process. These discussions are recorded, made available for easy staff reference and accommodated. Children are able to help themselves to water from named drinks flasks that are positioned at children's height, to enable them to access fluids at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children rest and play within premises that are suitably clean and maintained. Well-presented displays of children's labelled artwork and informative notices provide a welcoming environment for parents. However, the building is not always of an adequate temperature for the children.

Children throughout the provision are able to self-select from a good variety of clean, well-maintained resources. They benefit from the management's appreciation of safety issues concerning the purchase and ongoing maintenance of equipment. As a result, children play with age appropriate toys that are safe and suitable. There is a range of measures to promote children's safety. For example, a gate prevents children entering the kitchen, covers are fitted to exposed electric points and the premises are secure. Children learn to share some responsibility for their own safety through activities including tidying away toys, thus reducing trip hazards and by taking part in emergency evacuation drills.

Children's well-being is supported by staff that are aware of child protection issues, confidentiality of information and the correct procedures to follow if concerned about the welfare of a child. There are effective arrangements for making sure parents fully understand the provider's responsibilities, prior to a child commencing in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are enthusiastic and show good self-esteem. They enter the provision very willingly, separate easily from their main carer and make independent choices concerning the resources or activities they wish to explore. For example, babies enjoy investigating programmable toys, crawling through play tunnels or handling small world resources. Children in the toddler room gain pleasure from climbing over soft play apparatus, exploring paint or from playing in a ball pool. Non-mobile babies are able to access a variety of toys, including activity centres that are strategically placed within their reach. Older children are able to sit quietly and concentrate for short periods, such as when listening to a story or during registration. Children are becoming increasingly confident and independent as they learn self-care skills, such as putting on their coats for outside play or when self-toileting.

Younger children within the setting, that have not reached the Foundation Stage curriculum follow a programme of planned activities that are linked to the Birth to three matters framework. Staff undertake regular written observations and assessments of the children, which they use when planning activities to support their future development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. They plan a variety of activities to cover all aspects of the curriculum, although there is a tendency for children to have to sit for extended periods at adult led activities. Staff complete initial assessments of the children's differing stages of learning when they start in the pre-school room. This is followed up by written observations and assessments using the Wiltshire Building Blocks scheme. However, there are gaps in some assessment profiles and ongoing observations are spasmodic. Information from assessment is not used effectively in planning for children's future progress and therefore their learning potential is not always maximised.

Children have a good range of vocabulary, which they use confidently when talking to adult and peers. They are learning to recognise familiar words in print through meaningful activities, including self-registration, finding their named drinks flasks or putting their artwork in their clearly labelled drawers. Children enjoy exploring books alone and listen attentively during regularly planned whole group story times. They have opportunities to practise their pencil control skills, for example, when completing work sheets. However, staff have a tendency to label children's artwork, which reduces children's daily opportunities to develop their early writing whilst engaged in practical activities. Children have the chance to count, such as when singing action songs, counting peers present in the room or the number of pieces of pear to take from a plate at snack time. Through practical activities, including completing puzzles of differing complexity, comparing the heights of cube towers or fixing together pieces of train track, children are starting to gain an awareness of shape, space and measure. However, children have limited chances to calculate or solve simple practical mathematical problems as part of the daily routine.

Children take part in a variety of local outings, such as to the library, nearby park or walks into town to buy fish from the pet shop. They welcome meaningful visitors to the setting, including local reception class teachers, parents showing the children kittens and a puppy as part of a topic, a parent who is a nurse demonstrating to the children how to bandage injuries and a father who is also a fire fighter visiting the setting with his fire engine. Such interesting, age

appropriate experiences enable children to increase their knowledge of their local environment and the wider world. Children have regular opportunities to help complete the weather chart and calendar. They enjoy designing and building with a range of construction materials. However, children have limited chances to use information and communication technology as part of their play. Children thoroughly enjoy using their imagination whilst engaged in role-play. Their imaginative experiences are greatly enhanced by the range of props available to them and by the active involvement of staff in their play, such as when counting coins in the 'toy shop'. Children sing a growing repertoire of songs from memory and gain great pleasure from exploring paint as a free choice activity. However, some planned craft activities are adult directed, providing children with no opportunity to initiate or develop their own creative and imaginative ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff knowing them well and appreciating their differing needs. Children are valued as individuals. They are able to access a suitable range of resources, such as dolls, dressing up clothes, books and small world figures to help them gain an awareness of diversity. Children attending with additional needs, receive timely, good quality support to assist in meeting their needs and promoting their development.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children appear confident and increasingly independent. They are gaining social skills as they learn to share resources, for example, in the role-play area and to take turns. Through topic-based activities, such as making dragon masks during Chinese New Year celebrations or eating foods from different countries as part of a topic entitled 'Around the World', children gain an awareness of a range of cultures and festivals.

Children behave well as appropriate for their age and stage of development. They benefit from the staff's knowledge of appropriate strategies for encouraging appropriate behaviour. These include praise, the awarding of Certificates of Achievement or staff writing on the pre-school room 'white board' what children have done that deserves particular recognition. Children develop their awareness of right and wrong whilst in the provision.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are made to feel very welcome in the group. They are given valuable written information about the provision and how to access its policies and procedures, prior to a child commencing in the provision. They are invited to share their skills and to help their child to bring in articles from home that are linked to the current theme, such as a family pet or children's baby photographs. They are kept up to date through newsletters, daily record sheets and regular opportunities for informal discussion with staff. They are invited to attend a yearly parents' evening, receive termly reports about their child's academic progress and are encouraged to contribute, via the report sheets, their own written comments on their child's progress at home. However, parents are not invited to contribute to initial Foundation Stage assessments.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's welfare, care and development are supported by a friendly and suitably qualified staffing team. All legally required documentation is maintained and securely stored. For example,

children's personal information is immediately available in the case of an emergency. However, the attendance records for children and staff are not consistently kept up to date.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The management has a very positive attitude towards developing the quality of the provision and through schemes such as the Bristol Standard are constantly evaluating the quality of the setting. In addition, they welcome Wiltshire early years advisors to the setting, to help support the development of the group. The staff and management team meet on a regular basis to plan the daily programme and to discuss any concerns or issues. However, the management does not always effectively monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage or the completion of the educational assessments. Key staff are not consistently kept up to date with planned innovations.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last combined inspection the group was given a recommendation and key issues, in order to support the development of the group. The care report recommended children under the age of two-years-old have free access to books. The education report requested staff enrich their knowledge of the mathematical curriculum and develop children's understanding of addition and subtraction through practical activities.

Children within the baby room have free access to books and staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the mathematical curriculum. These improvements have had a positive impact on the quality of care and education offered to the children. However, children have limited chances to develop their understanding of addition and subtraction through practical activities.

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 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):

- ensure the building is of an appropriate temperature to meet the needs of the children attending
- ensure the records detailing the attendance of children and staff are kept up to date

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):

- develop the planning and monitoring of the educational provision, in order that regular written observations and assessments are undertaken on children across all aspects of the curriculum. Use assessment information to plan suitably challenging activities, with clear learning intents, that promote individual children's future learning
- increase opportunities for children to use calculation as part of the daily routine and to use their own imaginative ideas whilst involved in planned creative activities involving craft
- review the management of the Foundation Stage provision, in order that there is a balance between structured and free choice activities and children are not required to sit for extended periods of time at adult led, structured activities. Ensure staff are kept up to date with innovations within the provision.

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