

Sandhills Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY257122
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	C/O Sandhills Primary School, Terrett Avenue, Sandhills, Headington, Oxfordshire, OX3 8FN
Telephone number	07974990627
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Registered person	The Trustees of Sandhills Pre-School Playgroup
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sandhills Pre-School Playgroup has been registered on its current premises since 2003. It operates from the community hall on the site of Sandhills School in Headington and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. The playgroup serves Headington and the surrounding area. It has a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The playgroup opens on weekdays during term time from 08.45 to 14.55. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 47 children on roll. Of these 22 are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six members of staff, three of whom have relevant early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff and parents work appropriately together to help children stay healthy, for example by discussing recent illnesses and sharing guidance. The staff ensure they update their first aid training, although do not regularly check and renew the first aid supplies. Children play in a clean pre-school and staff regularly mop floors and wipe tables to maintain suitable standards. Although children are not always aware of the reason behind hand washing they do receive regular reminders to do this after visiting the toilet or before eating. The bathroom areas are clean, though do not currently have a supply of hot running water to ensure good hygiene.

Children sit together for sociable snack times, and when staying for their lunch. Staff help the children to sit quietly during meal times and the addition of colourful table cloths helps to reinforce these routines. There are posters on view promoting healthy lifestyles and the staff encourage children to eat a small range of fresh fruit. Children take part in some seasonal cookery such as making vegetable soup or bread in the autumn.

Children have suitable opportunities for rest during the day when they use the cosy book corner with a large comfortable sofa. More active children prefer to make the most of the indoor climbing frame to develop strength, balance and co-ordination. All children spend time outdoors when the weather is suitable and here they use a simple range of equipment for energetic play. Children learn about space and movement as they run with pull-a-long toys. Staff provide support to short games with a bat and ball.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play mainly in a large bright hall which is maintained to suitable standards. The children can see colourful posters and displays on the walls, many of which are at child-height. For the majority of sessions during the week the staff set out an appropriate range of activities to interest the children. The equipment is suitable for the ages of children attending the pre-school and staff monitor the condition and cleanliness of the toys.

Children play safely with staff supervising them at all times. This works well outdoors when the staff position themselves so all areas are under supervision. The children are aware of some safety rules at pre-school, for example, stating that 'only adults' can open the main door. The staff monitor access to the premises appropriately and maintain an accurate daily register of the adults and children in attendance. Although there are no regular written risk assessments, the staff do make suitable use of safety equipment, and they work with the adjoining school to undertake regular fire evacuation of the premises.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to child protection. They ensure that the adults working with children are suitable to do so and they supervise those awaiting checks. The staff are applying to update their child protection training and they have all the necessary reference materials to hand should they have concerns for a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a suitable range of play opportunities in this friendly pre-school. Children are developing the confidence to separate from their main carers and staff offer support to those who require some extra reassurance. The children are free to choose which of a selection of activities they would like to participate in, and they move around the room sampling different ones. The selection of experiences provides them with some positive first experiences of pre-school life. Children spend some of the session in one of three groups led by their key worker. This provides them with suitable chances to participate in a smaller group and for their key member of staff to get to know them better. The staff use some of the recommended 'Birth to three matters' framework materials to monitor the younger children's development. However, the brief observational comments are not dated and not yet used to plan the next steps in learning.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children are making steady progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The staff organise the sessions to include an appropriate mix of free play and group times so that the children experience a variety of situations. Staff appropriately base written plans on the Foundation Stage and they include all six areas of learning. Children are developing some independence as they pour drinks or attempt to get ready for outdoor play. Children are learning how to play sociably with others and they take turns when using equipment like the climbing frame and slide. The children are gaining in their knowledge of the world around them since staff introduce practical topics like gardening in the summer. Children use some toys with lights, sounds and buttons to introduce them to the world of technology.

Children and staff engage in simple conversations about families and current events. During the year the pre-school celebrates a suitable range of celebrations to help the children learn about their own culture and those of others. Many children can recognise their own names and can place them back in a storage pocket by matching their letters. Children enjoy listening to stories and they like to visit the book corner where they select from a colourful but crowded range of books. Children experience basic mark-making at the writing table and some activities help them to see the purpose of writing, such as signing a Christmas greeting card. Children learn about counting and numbers during play and daily routines. They look at numerals in the sand tray, for example, or count how many children need cups at their table during snack time. Children who like to play with construction equipment learn about shape, size and colour matching and some spend a long time concentrating at such activities.

Children enjoy using materials like play dough and they are gaining confidence and control as they roll out the dough and use cutters to make shapes. They also visit the water and sand trays where they experience some more sensory play. Children use resources like zoo animals and cars to make up their own stories and they use construction games imaginatively. Sometimes the presentation of resources does not help the children to develop their stories, for example, the large boxes of props in the home corner become muddled as children empty items out onto the floor. Children learn a suitable range of songs at pre-school and the musical instruments in use outdoors are a popular choice for exploring and when marching along.

The staff record the children's progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals each term. However there are few other systems in place, such as examples of art work

or early writing, to form a really thorough picture of the children's progress. Whilst the staff feel they know the children in their groups quite well they do not yet really use what they know to plan the next steps in individual children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Families receive a friendly welcome from the staff when they arrive at the pre-school. The manager is available to greet and talk through any day-to-day issues with parents about the children's care. The team of staff are ready at the activities to comfort children and help them to engage in play. Staff are trying to put together some ideas to help children who speak English as an additional language, for example, by becoming aware of some phrases in children's home languages. Children are reasonably confident in the setting and they are becoming aware of the daily routine with reminders from staff when activities are about to change. Children play with an acceptable range of resources that provide them positive images of different cultures and backgrounds. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

There are no children currently attending the setting who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The staff have a nominated person to liaise with families and other professionals and they are following up training in this area. The children are behaving appropriately at pre-school and they are receiving suitable guidance from the staff to help them distinguish right from wrong. The children sit well at group times and listen to each other. Children receive praise when they do something kind, such as holding a younger friend's hand to walk around the hall.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff display a reasonable amount of information in the lobby of the setting and in the main play area. Parents can see all policy documents and they receive regular newsletters detailing forthcoming events. Staff sometimes tell parents about the current theme so that the children can be involved, for example, wearing clothing to match the 'colour of the week'. However, at the time of the inspection not a great deal of information is available about the educational curriculum or ways for parents to share in learning at home. Staff discuss children's progress with parents through informal conversations and parents receive invites during the year to discuss issues in more depth with the child's key worker. Parents and staff share sufficient information about the children to enable staff to care for them appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The policies and procedures are generally working well to promote the outcomes for children. The staff work together as a team and know their roles and responsibilities. When senior staff are working with their key groups the rest of the team help to make the day run smoothly by undertaking tasks like preparing for lunch time and ensuring the bathroom is clean. The pre-school have all the regulatory policies in place and they store documents securely to maintain confidentiality. They complete accurate daily registers of those present and have contingency arrangements to ensure they maintain suitable ratios of adults to children. This helps to keep the children safe and supported in their play. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are led by an experienced manager and those in the team without qualifications are keen to pursue training as part of their professional development. The staff are aware of areas that require improvement and take steps to address

issues, for example, ordering new books on areas like child protection or risk assessment. The staff and the committee work reasonably well together, for example through fund raising, and regular meetings provide some time to discuss issues. All are aware of the need to obtain checks on those who serve on the committee or work in the setting to safeguard the welfare of the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection staff were required to address three recommendations. They have made adequate progress by starting to use sheets to record the younger children's development. Some further work is required in this area to continue the improvement. Children use separate paper towels to dry their hands to reduce the risk of cross-infection and staff maintain confidentiality of accident and medicine details by using separate forms for each entry. These improvements help to protect children's health.

At the last inspection of nursery education staff were required to consider two points and again they have made adequate progress. Some additions to the planning sheets for the weekly activities now link them to specific stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The pre-school committee now conduct annual staff appraisals with the help of the manager. This provides the staff with an opportunity to plan their professional development and to contribute to maintaining the quality of the care and education on offer.

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 first aid supplies are checked and renewed regularly
- ensure there is hot running water for hand washing in the bathroom for adults and children to maintain good hygiene
- extend the methods used to record children's progress and use the information to plan their next steps in learning (also applies to nursery education).

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 the range of information available to parents about the educational curriculum and extend the opportunities for shared learning between home and pre-school
- review the way some resources are presented to children to help them progress in their learning as they play.

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