

Sandhills Day Nursery at Codsall

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY356551
Inspection date	08 April 2008
Inspector	Michelle W. Smith
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Registered person	Harcharan Kaur Basra
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sandhills Day Nursery at Codsall opened in 2007. It operates from a single storey building in the Bradshaw's Estate, South Staffordshire. A maximum of 96 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 except for Christmas and Bank Holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 76 children aged from six months to four years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a number of children for whom English is an additional language.

The setting employs 15 members of staff. Of these, 14 hold an appropriate early years qualification. There are four staff members who are working towards additional early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children follow personal hygiene routines such as hand washing consistently and with increasing levels of independence. Young children are cheerfully given a wipe to clean their 'fingers and face' after meal times whilst older children skip happily into the bathroom, washing and drying their hands with confidence. An impressive system ensures that any medicine is administered safely to children, for example, two staff members are present when the prescribed dose is given to the child and both staff sign the record book. Accident systems are deeply understood by all staff. In addition, the manager views every accident report in order to identify any trends or recurring causes of injuries. There are detailed documents which outline the procedures staff should take in the event of a medical emergency. This proactive approach to health issues ensures that children's well-being is continuously given a high priority.

Children eat a well-balanced diet which takes account of their individual dietary needs and preferences. Staff support young children to develop their self-care skills, for example, they encourage babies to use a spoon when eating Shepherds Pie and to drink independently from suitable feeding cups. More able children show a good awareness of the principles of healthy eating as they comment that they will eat all of their dinner so that they 'are big and strong' and talk with enthusiasm about 'eating meat and peas'. The menu for the week is rotated and planned in advance which ensures children's diet is nutritionally balanced. Staff complete a weekly lunch report which includes comments such as how well the children ate the daily meal, so helping to ensure that children eat meals that they enjoy.

Children learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and gain bodily awareness. They welcome visitors such as nurses and paramedics and have fun using medical equipment such as stethoscopes. They have daily, unrushed opportunities to explore, test and develop their physical skills. Young babies crawl freely around their base room, stretching safely to reach their toys and pulling themselves up onto their knees using furniture. Toddlers dance around the room holding musical instruments as they coordinate their large muscle skills whilst pretending to be lions. More able children run, jump and balance with confidence as they move energetically around an obstacle course that they have devised with the close support of staff. In addition, they go on nature walks where they search for mole hills and spot features in the environment, so helping to make outdoor learning fun.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are developing a considerable understanding of how to keep themselves safe. More able children talk about group boundaries every morning and every afternoon in order to ensure they are very aware of what they can and cannot do. Consequently, they enjoy the freedom of the environment whilst respecting why some rules such as not throwing equipment are important. Vibrant displays of children's artwork, posters and murals create a stimulating environment which is warm and personable, so helping them to develop a strong sense of belonging. All children help to tidy away resources and equipment. They use child-sized brushes to sweep flour off the floor and play fun memory games, so helping them to learn where equipment is stored. They have superb access to a diverse range of high quality toys, resources and equipment, for example, magnifying glasses, play food and trucks. Children use a varied range of both

natural materials such as cardboard boxes and man-made resources, for example, they use plastic animals innovatively as they build dens for animals to provide shelter from the rain.

Children are very safe as a result of comprehensive indoor and outside safe care systems that are implemented consistently by all staff. Both staff and management work collaboratively to ensure impressive risk assessments work effectively. Meticulous use of documents such as area hazard report sheets and the staff health and safety handbook ensure that staff are exceptionally clear of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children. As a result of this praiseworthy approach to safety, children can relax and enjoy their play as the risk of accidents is significantly reduced. All staff are fully aware of the excellent emergency evacuation procedures. They practise fire drills regularly with the children and carry out weekly tests on fire safety equipment, so helping to ensure children can react calmly and with familiarity should an emergency situation occur.

All staff have excellent knowledge of child protection issues and procedures. They are extremely knowledgeable about their individual responsibility to protect children from harm and to continually safeguard their welfare. In addition, the setting have whistle blowing procedures which outline the process staff should follow if they are uneasy about the conduct of their colleagues. Child protection issues are covered within the staff induction package and any staff returning to work following a period of absence such as maternity leave are actively supported to refresh their knowledge, so helping to ensure they are up-to-date with local and national guidelines. The setting's clear and dedicated approach to safety issues demonstrates that children's safety is given the highest priority at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure and very happy in the welcoming and caring environment. They have positive relationships with staff who respect their innate capacity to learn and who celebrate their achievements. Staff have a very good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They use their knowledge with success to observe, plan and deliver a diverse range of first-hand, purposeful and meaningful activities which motivate children to learn. A record of each child's progress is kept and information gained from assessments is actively used to plan for their next steps for learning. Consequently, the care, learning opportunities and play experiences for children under three years are good.

All children experience a good balance of planned, spontaneous and child-initiated activities. Babies play with good quality toys that help them to develop the full use of all of their senses. They splash playfully in water and explore textures such as cooked spaghetti within sensory activities. In addition, they paint using their hands or brushes and explore treasure baskets full of natural materials such as string nets. This helps them to represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways and to begin to make sense of the world around them. Toddlers move around their base rooms freely and with confidence. They select what they wish to play with such as trucks and merge them with objects of interest such as magnets, so helping to build on their natural curiosity and develop their independence. They have uninterrupted time for self-initiated learning. Consequently, they show increasing levels of concentration. They build towers using blocks and then giggle as they knock them over, building the tower over and over again. Staff resist the pressure to rush children onto the next activity. They sit with children, interacting joyfully and cherishing each part of the child's learning journey.

Children learn about the value of communication from an early age. Babies vocalise as they crawl around the room, often watching themselves in low-level safety mirrors as they use equipment such as musical instruments. Toddlers raise multicoloured transparent wrappers to their eyes, peeping through the materials whilst using key words such as 'hiding'. Staff talk to children throughout routines and activities which helps children to learn to listen, respond and to develop respect for others. Children play games such as cards with their friends, showing that they are learning to play cooperatively. Staff exercise open-mindedness as children seize opportunities for learning, for example, children stroll up and down the bathroom, touching taps whilst saying numbers such as '14' and '16', giggling with their friends. Children are consistently stimulated at this setting. Their self-esteem is increased because they are celebrated as individuals, supported, encouraged and praised throughout their play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide a child-orientated environment where learning is exciting and enjoyable. All staff have very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are highly motivated to continually improve the delivery of the educational programme. Detailed planning, observation and assessment systems are used to ensure positive outcomes for children. A rigorous system is in place to make sure every child is making good progress through the stepping stones for learning and to ensure that most areas of the curriculum are delivered with equal weight. However, staff do not plan effectively to ensure children have a full understanding of the many uses of information and communication technology (ICT) and do not maximise opportunities within the daily routine to consolidate their calculation skills. Overall learning opportunities are well matched to children's abilities and activities provide good levels of challenge.

Much emphasis is given to children making choices and learning through daily routines, for example, they self-register every morning by placing their name card onto a green smiley face in the behaviour zone. Staff have high expectations for each child's development. They show deep knowledge of how children learn as they ensure that planned focused activities are also available as free play opportunities. This enables children to learn at their own pace and to revisit activities in order to confirm their knowledge, test their understanding and to respond to new challenges. Children are very self-disciplined as staff make them clear about the rules and boundaries within their play time. Consequently, children initiate negotiation with their friends before involving staff. They spot very quickly when too many children wish to play in the water, quickly touch counting other children's heads and whilst trying to reason through numbers. Staff are always close by to offer assistance when needed.

Children are confident, lively and friendly. They are eager to take part in group discussions and show a real enthusiasm to share their personal experiences and knowledge with both staff and visitors. They listen and behave well because staff create a positive learning environment where learning is fun. Their motivation to learn is seized by staff who understand how to cover many areas of the curriculum, for example, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, within any given play opportunity, so helping to provide a well-balanced curriculum.

All children thoroughly enjoy listening and taking an active part in stories. They use props such as puppets and pictures of fruits when helping to tell a story about a caterpillar, threading the fruit onto the child's arm who is wearing the puppet as the story progresses. They work together extremely well and respond excitedly to staff's open-ended and carefully framed questions. They tell their friends that they are holding a 'cocoon' and comment 'I have got the moon', showing good levels of self-esteem. In addition, they count the number of foods and guess

with success which day comes after Tuesday, challenging their own learning as they look at an information board pointing to 'M' saying 'look M for Monday'. They remain interested and engaged throughout the activity as their contributions are valued.

Children use numbers independently and with great confidence. They count to eight with ease as they turn the pages of a book and recognise numerals of significance such as 'three'. The daily routine is used sufficiently to help children to learn to count beyond 10, for example, they count up to 16 as they queue in readiness for outdoor play. Although they develop problem solving skills through set activities such as comparing bears, staff do not make full use of daily routines and activities to prompt and consolidate their calculation skills which restricts their understanding of 'one more' and 'one less' than. Children explore musical sounds as they freely access musical instruments, tapping notes onto a xylophone and beating rhythms on a tambourine. They sing songs about 'drummers in the ring' in order to gain an appreciation of loud and quiet noises.

Children are very creative. They sit quietly in the free writing area colouring snippets of paper they have cut whilst talking actively to their friends about the materials they use. Through using the resources safely and imaginatively, they pretend that the scissors are characters and add descriptions such as 'mine is a multicoloured ranger', opening the scissors wide. This demonstrates children's clear ability to initiate conversations and to use one object to represent another, even when they have few characteristics in common. Other children are absorbed in quieter activities. They read books and magazines, rest their head on the floor as they push carriages along a track and build complex towers using octagonal construction toys. Through the effective organisation of resources children can consistently build on their own ideas. They talk freely about letters and sounds within their name, moving swiftly to the computer to write their name using a keyboard. This shows that children are interested in ICT. However, their ability to find out about and use ICT within spontaneous, self-initiated and planned activities is restricted as resources such as programmable toys are limited. A nature and investigation area enables children to explore using all of their senses. Children discuss life cycles within a 'growing' theme, name parts of a flower and make nests using shredded paper linked to Easter, so helping them to learn about measure and living things. They develop a wider understanding of the environment, cultures and beliefs as they celebrate festivals, discuss hot and cold countries as they pretend to be weather presenters and play outdoors in all weathers such as soft hail.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by highly motivated staff who know them very well. Through careful observations and through working very effectively with parents staff recognise children's uniqueness. They adapt daily routines, activities and behaviour management techniques with great success to individualise care for differing age groups and needs. As a result, children feel secure and are confident. They are given comfort and reassurance when they are feeling tired and are offered opportunities for rest and relaxation such as sleeping, quietly reading favourite books or having a cuddle. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. More able children are keen to express their own voice as they comment, for example, 'I like this' when listening to music, showing emerging self-confidence in their own beliefs. A 'special helper' is allocated each day to help with routine tasks such as feeding George the hamster. This helps to boost children's self-esteem. Children begin to learn about their local community and the wider world. Written plans ensure that they gain knowledge about many cultures and festivals including Chinese New Year and Diwali, so helping them to develop respect for each other. They make Chinese lanterns and learn about flags and countries within the United

Kingdom. The setting has effective strategies in place to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. Consequently, children play and learn in an inclusive environment.

Children require minimal behaviour management as they are calm, stimulated and play happily in a positive learning environment. Staff use a good range of positive strategies such as stickers and clapping to reinforce positive behaviour and show children visually that they are achievers. There are appropriate strategies in place to deal with any unacceptable behaviour if it occurs such as a 'behavioural zone' in the pre-school room where children are involved in the monitoring of their own behaviour. This helps them to become self-disciplined throughout most elements of the day. Younger children respond extremely well to staff directions and to the consistent daily routines, for example, they place their drinks on a designated table when asked and gather together with speed in readiness for group activities. Staff smile often and respond cheerfully to children's interests, for example, when children look into a mirror, staff join in as they show the child how to wave whilst looking at their image. This light-hearted approach shows staff have a clear understanding that enjoyment and fun provide the best context for learning.

Children benefit from strong relationships between staff and parents. The setting recognises the role of parents as joint educators. They send out questionnaires to parents asking them to rate the quality of care they feel they receive and to make additional comments if they wish. Parents receive detailed information about their child's day as they read their child's individual diary before leaving the setting and talk informally to staff. If parents authorise an alternative adult to collect, written information is sent home detailing the child's day, so helping to ensure all parents are continually well-informed. Each month a newsletter is sent to parents which tells them about key issues such as changes to staffing and informs them how they can help to ensure their child is fully included in all activities. As children grow and develop, they progress into and through different room bases. Parents are totally involved in this process. They are asked to give their written permission in order for the change to take place and are invited to talk to staff if they wish to discuss the transfer further. This helps to minimise the risk of upset and confusion to children as they receive extremely consistent care.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Parents are successfully involved in their child's learning. They receive detailed written information about the current theme and ideas about how they can extend their child's learning at home, for example, by collecting rain in containers linked to a project about the weather. In addition, the written educational plans are displayed on the wall in the pre-school room so that parents can see at a glance what staff are expecting their child to learn and what activities they will be taking part in. Parents are further supported to learn about the Foundation Stage and their child's progress through parents evenings which are held twice a year. This very positive approach to working with parents helps children to thrive as all carers are working cooperatively to support their educational progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust operational, recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are cared for by staff that are dedicated, suitable and effectively trained to successfully implement the setting's unique policies and procedures. All staff have a proactive approach to training, take part in comprehensive induction packages and complete self-assessments which contribute towards their yearly professional appraisal. The staff team work well together and are continually striving to further improve standards. A very high percentage of staff hold an early years qualification.

Many staff members are working towards qualifications of a higher level. Consequently, children are cared for by staff who understand the benefits of good childcare and who are very committed to their well-being.

Children thrive in the generally organised environment. A particular strength of this nursery is the indoor physical playroom which ensures children develop their large muscle skills such as climbing and balancing throughout the year. The overwhelming majority of setting runs smoothly, for example, toddlers settle peacefully to sleep whilst listening to classical music and babies enjoy a drink whilst waiting patiently for their lunch to be served. However, the organisation of staffing and other resources during lunch times in the pre-school room is less successful, for example, children wander away from the table between servings and on occasions, some children eat their pudding whilst others are still eating their main meal. This does not help children to value meal times or to fully progress their social skills. Children receive a high level of individual attention as there are always more than the required amount of staff to work directly with the children. They are each allocated to a key person and to a base room such as 'Mr Messy's' where they gain a strong sense of belonging and receive very consistent care. All of the required documents are in place and are impeccably maintained, for example, the record of both children's and staff's attendance is precise in its recording of times. A superb range of additional documents help to ensure that children's safety and care is prioritised and that they are making good developmental progress. All policies and procedures are centrally collated into a strong and successful operational plan and are available on the setting's website.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. The manager has a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong emphasis on ensuring progressive improvement of the service which includes extending opportunities for outdoor learning. This clear managerial approach inspires and motivates the staff. Staff work together as a team to evaluate and monitor children's progression through the Foundation Stage and to contribute ideas towards future activities and themes. Consequently, there are only minor areas for improvement within the curriculum and children are making good developmental progress.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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 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 further the organisation of staffing and other resources during lunch time in the pre-school room.

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 further the use of daily routines to consolidate children's understanding of calculation
- develop further opportunities for children to find out about and understand the use of information and communication technology within everyday lives.

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