

Sandon Cygnets Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	146865
Inspection date	30 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Parker
Setting Address	Sandon JMI School, Sandon, near Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 0QS
Telephone number	01763 287 238
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Registered person	The Trustees of Sandon Cygnets Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Sandon Cygnets Group is a committee run pre-school and opened in 1988. It operates from the school hall within Sandon J.M.I School. The hall is also used as the dining room for the school. Sandon Cygnets use the enclosed outside play area and share the toilets with the infants.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The pre-school is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 09:00 until 11:45 during the school term.

There are currently 12 children aged two years to five years on roll. Of these, six receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language, however, there are none currently attending.

Three members of staff work directly with the children. Two of them have early year's qualifications to NVQ Level 3 and the third is working towards a qualification.

The pre-school are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and hygienic environment where they are learning about the importance of good hygiene practices and are keen to develop independence in their personal care. For example, the children used child friendly hand sanitizer after touching chicks.

Children's physical, nutritional and health needs are well met due to the effective procedures and practices followed by the staff. Children enjoy an excellent range of purposeful activities which contribute to their good health. For example, there are a selection of good indoor and outdoor activities and equipment to help children to develop control of their bodies as they run, jump, ride on wheeled toys, climb and balance.

Children are confident to try out new skills and ask for help when needed, this is a result of the staff's very good understanding of each child's stage of development, thoughtful provision of resources and continual encouragement. For example, children having mastered manoeuvring the bikes with good control and avoiding obstacles.

Children help themselves to easily accessible drinks and enjoy an excellent range of healthy snacks, for example fresh fruits, sugar free biscuits, and raisins. They benefit from these well-balanced, varied and healthy snacks which take account of their individual dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, well-organised, child-centred provision where hazards are minimised and effective precautions are in place to protect them. Children are therefore, able to move around the play areas freely and independently. Children gain a sense of responsibility as they move around the tables and equipment inside the compact classroom without risk. They are learning about safety as they participate in road safety activities and regular fire drills.

The environment is rich and stimulating with brightly coloured posters and children's artwork displayed. Children make full use of the good range of high quality equipment, which is safe, attractively displayed, well maintained and suitable for the children's use. They are able to select and access the play resources with minimal risk, as they are easily accessible. However, there is a hot water pipe close to the entrance, which is very hot to touch.

Children are very well protected by the staff team as they have a clear understanding of child protection. They have the correct contact telephone numbers and are aware of the need to record and report any concerns. Staff give top priority to children's safety and welfare

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children actively participate in well-planned and purposeful activities. They clearly enjoy the calm and friendly atmosphere. They are making excellent progress in their learning, self-esteem and development because practitioners have an excellent understanding of how children learn. Staff act as positive role models, and give sensitive support to all children. They demonstrate a genuine affection for children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and

clearly enjoy their company. Staff follow a set routine, which promotes children's feelings of security and stability. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Practitioners encourage and build children's confidence and vocabulary through constant praise and recognition. Staff adapt their provision of activities to reflect each child's stage of development and level of understanding. This helps them meet the needs of all children. The staff team are suitably qualified and dedicated to the concept of providing high quality childcare and education. Staff have a proficient understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and will be including this in all aspects of planning and provision of learning activities. These secure systems underpin the foundations of the educational programme for younger or less able children who attend the provision.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn through play. All staff are skilled in planning; they purposefully draw from their prior working knowledge in addition to using regular training courses to continue to develop the group's early year's curriculum. Staff meet formally as a team to share and collate ideas linked to their current topic. This forms the basis of their long-term objectives. They then break their overarching theme into a weekly plan formulating a medium term overview of how they will cover their topic within the six areas of learning. However, children's baseline assessment is not effectively recorded so a true picture of their progress can not currently be effectively assessed.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured well. Children arrive with confidence separating from their main carer with ease. They are attentive and respectful of adult and peers alike. For example, they know to be quiet and listen when someone is talking and to take turns. Children are developing their independence in dressing and themselves. Their self-esteem is promoted as they proudly talk about their displayed artwork and models. Children build an awareness of phonetic links as they have many opportunities to recognise familiar words. Staff have effectively displayed familiar words such as Weetabix, Tesco, and Thomas etc. Children are eager to show that they can read these familiar words from well-known brands. This is very effective in promoting their confidence in reading. However, children's names are not always put on the top left hand corner of paper to remind them that this is where writing starts. Children handle books well. They take time to look at the pictorial illustrations before turning the page to continue the story. Children have plentiful opportunities to mark make and are beginning to form recognisable letters as they practise writing their names on completed artwork and during play.

Children are developing a growing awareness of number. Older and more able children can calculate in practical situations, such as when tidying away toys, they sort and match effectively. Numerals are displayed which enables children to use these as reference and to enhance their understanding of numbers and counting.

Children benefit from well-planned and provided hands on experiences. For example, they have seen chicks hatch from an egg and have seen the chicks develop and grow over the week. They have studied frogs from the school pond and have regular visitors from the local community. Children experience use of technology through a digital camera with which they can take photographs, calculators and telephones in play situations and have access to a computer. They are developing an awareness of the wider world as they celebrate cultural events throughout the year.

Children are agile and competent in their physical skills. They have access to an excellent range of outdoor equipment, which promotes muscle growth, control and strength. They have daily access to a range of tools, such as various sized pens and pencils to draw, scissors to cut and shape, paintbrushes and glue spreaders. They also have access to different types of construction sets. Children have exciting imaginations. They enjoy making individual creations using an excellent selection of media and materials. Children regularly role play, using a selection of dressing up. Children can feed their imaginations and become whoever they want to be. They eagerly participate in singing action songs and interpreting the music or prose with their bodies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs and personalities are clearly recognised and respected by the adults in the provision. All children are welcomed and included in the setting because the staff value and respect their individuality. Their behaviour is very good. They are aware of what is expected of them, are calm, share, take turns and enjoy each other's company. The staff use effective skills to encourage and help them to develop their relationships with one another, and to maintain behaviour boundaries. Children are very receptive to the praise and encouragement that is freely given.

Children learn to value differences through sensitive discussions, stories, activities and the use of developmentally appropriate resources. Children develop warm relationships with each other and the staff team, they help and support each other, and are aware of and sensitive to the individual abilities of the other children.

The partnership with parents is good. Parent's views about their child's needs are actively sought before the child commences at the setting and throughout their time there. Parents have access to the policies and procedures, which underpin the running of this enthusiastic pre-school. Parents are well informed of their child's achievements and progress through individual folders, children's artwork, photographs and verbal daily feedback on the children and what they have been doing. This ensures that children's care, well-being and development is greatly enhanced.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

An enthusiastic committed and dedicated staff team, sound and detailed documentation, supportive committee and positive working relationships with the school ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time at this provision. Staff are exceptionally skilled and competent in their childcare practice. However, during outside playtime, there is occasionally only one member of staff on duty if a child needs the toilet.

Staff demonstrate a real affinity with children. They use their wealth of experience and their ongoing childcare training to provide a wide range of practical and stimulating learning opportunities. The staff are receptive to improvement. For example, a couple of items of documentation mentioned were remedied quickly. They have plans to enhance children's learning and understanding by providing a growing area for vegetables. Staff have an understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are effectively beginning to

correlate the two early year's programmes together. This promotes a unified curriculum for all children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The leader has clear views and ideas for expansion and improvement to the experiences provided for the children. Staff are highly competent. They are able to draw incidental learning from the daily routine naturally. This supports the balance and coverage across all aspects of the curriculum.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, staff agreed to ensure that all dressings, medications and first aid equipment were in date. The new leader has checked and replaced all items to ensure that all first aid equipment is in date and suitable for use with children. They have also ensured that any significant incidents or concerns are recorded confidentially, included the name and address of the regulator in the complaints procedure and updated the behaviour management policy to include a statement regarding working together with parents. These improvements ensure that the required documentation, which underpins the very good care and welfare of the children, is secure.

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 that the staff risk assess and organise the supervision of children when playing outside to ensure that correct ratios are adhered to
- ensure that any hot water pipes or radiators are not accessible and do not pose a risk to children.

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 that when the children's names are written on paper, the writing starts at the top left corner so that children become accustomed to the correct place for writing in English
- ensure that the children's baseline assessments show where they start and clearly show dates of achievement.

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