

# Sandcastle Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY371488  
**Inspection date** 23/01/2009  
**Inspector** Lynn Clements

**Setting address** c/o Castle Manor Business and Enterprise College, Eastern Avenue, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 9JE

**Telephone number** 01440 705660

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

Sandcastles Playgroup opened in 1984 and was re-registered in 2008 to reflect a change of ownership with regard to the Trustees. They are registered to care for a maximum of 29 children at any one time. They are registered on the Early Years Register, the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The group operate from self-contained rooms within Castle Manor Upper School, in Haverhill. Access to the setting is on one level and there are disabled toilet facilities available, helping to provide an inclusive environment.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 and 12.30 until 15.00, Monday to Friday. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 70 children from three to under eight years on roll. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs eight members of staff. All members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The needs of all children are met extremely well as all members of staff work as a team and recognise the uniqueness of each child, in addition, staff are further developing their self assessment systems enabling them to reflect on practice and continue to develop their service to meet children's individual needs effectively. Members of staff support each and every child so that no group or individual is disadvantaged. Very clear and effective procedures are in place to safeguard children's welfare in relation to child protection. Open and purposeful partnerships with parents and others, in the wider context, are excellent and ensure that continuity of care is provided for all the children.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- develop further systems of self evaluation and a culture of reflective practice and informed discussion to identify the settings strengths and priorities for development that will continue to improve the quality of provision for all children.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Extremely effective management and working as a close knit team, enables the manager and members of staff to draw up effective policies and procedures which are implemented in practice to support the smooth running of the setting and provide positive outcomes for the children attending. All staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and child development. Attention to staff appraisals and on-going professional development enables the team to provide a high quality care and learning environment. All records are updated, stored securely and confidentiality is respected at all times. Daily registers are maintained and include times of attendance for children and members of staff, this ensures that everyone can be safely accounted for at all times. The leadership team work very effectively with other agencies to evaluate how their playgroup works and what they can improve within the provision. The manager has recently begun updating a new system of self evaluation to support continuous improvement.

Clear and robust recruitment systems are in place, along with effective safeguarding children procedures to ensure children are kept safe and their welfare is protected. No one is left unsupervised with the children until all checks, including an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check has been completed. A clear induction programme is in place to support new members of staff or students on placement. The identification of visitors is checked and a record maintained. Clear procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children are implemented in practice. Excellent partnerships are forged with parents, carers and other agencies and information is shared thoughtfully. The team work closely with the local authority to organise events for parents and carers at the setting, including opportunities for them to join in and discover all about learning through play and the six early learning goals. There are clear and effective systems in place enabling staff to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An excellent, well-organised key person system is in place and provides support and encouragement for parents and carers to become interactive in their child's learning and development within the setting. There is no bias in practice in relation to gender, race or disability. The overall organisation of the provision is excellent, for example, child-height storage enabling the children to become active independent learners. The playgroup is very much part of the whole school and local community.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children achieve extremely well as a result of the very effective teaching. They develop key skills due to the high expectations of the staff team. Children use language successfully as they talk with each other and members of staff about the favourite food of the playgroup tortoise 'Tilly', or whilst sharing their news from home. They negotiate well with each other, making decisions during role play and organising who will be the doggy or what superhero they are going to be. Children use writing for a purpose as they write and draw freely. They build on their problem solving and reasoning skills as they complete puzzles or work out how water and other objects can travel down various pipes. Children's creative and

physical development are promoted exceptionally well, they move freely around the entire playgroup both inside and outside, they select activities, use their imagination and further develop their coordination and other motor skills. For example, they enjoy singing and dancing to music or holding impromptu talent contests, dancing, singing and having a marvellous time. All activities are planned well for each week and reflect the wide range of opportunities available for the children, both inside and outside. Key person's observe and assess children using the EYFS. They clearly identify children's next steps for learning and actively use this information to inform future planning, enabling them to build on what the children know and can do, in order for them to make exceptionally good progress towards the six early learning goals.

Children's welfare is extremely important. Effective risk assessments are in place, covering all areas of the provision, this ensures the environment remains safe for the children to access freely. They are well cared for by all members of staff and good relationships are fostered, helping the children to feel confident and at home in the setting. Children learn to keep themselves safe, for example, practising emergency evacuation drills, carrying resources and using single handed tools carefully, for example, whilst cutting up cabbage, tomatoes and cucumber for the tortoise's breakfast. Any minor accidents are dealt with sensitively by members of staff and a full record is maintained and shared with parents or carers. Excellent systems are in place to ensure that only parents or carers collect children.

Every child's personal development is very good as staff care for their needs conscientiously. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the playgroup as they investigate and participate in activities with sheer enthusiasm. Children's behaviour is very good. They show care and consideration for others, sharing resources, helping each other to find toys or making room at the snack bar. Attention to keeping healthy is a priority in the setting and children have plenty of opportunities to explore foods which are good for them and foods from all around the world. For example, tasting home made German ginger bread. Children help themselves to water throughout the session and this is monitored by staff to ensure no child remains thirsty. All children are able to rest or be active according to their individual needs.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.