

Sandpiper Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	119514
Inspection date	14/07/2009
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting address	105 Kingfisher Close, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS3 9YB
Telephone number	0789 1078032
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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 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).

Description of the setting

Sandpiper Pre-school is run by a committee. It opened in 1980 and operates from a community centre in Shoeburyness, Essex. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. Access to the premises is via a ramp to the side of the premises. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Session times are from 09.00 until 12.00.

There are currently 21 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs three staff, of whom two of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. A volunteer also regularly works with the children. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children really enjoy the time they spend in the pre-school and establish very good relationships with the staff and each other. They make effective progress as they play in a generally safe, secure and welcoming environment. Children are recognised and valued as individuals and the setting's policies and procedures are effective and inclusive for all children that attend. The good use of self-evaluation by the staff team ensures that any priorities for development are promptly acted on. The partnerships with parents and the local schools are a strength of the setting and contribute to children making good progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- evaluate the planning and review the routine to ensure that activities are securely based on the children's interests and enthusiasms so that they achieve as much as they can
- ensure that information about the staff's vetting checks is held on the premises
- ensure the risk assessment is consistently completed to include anything in which a child comes into contact.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The management of the pre-school has acted on the recommendations set at the last inspection with very effective results. Improvements to the outdoor area and the purchase of very good quality equipment have enhanced children's learning and allowed them to explore and investigate according to their preferred individual learning styles. There is now a comprehensive operational plan, which is frequently reviewed to meet changes and contains effective policies and procedures. The ongoing self-evaluation system is used well to identify the areas for further development, so that continuous improvement is maintained.

The small team of staff work well-together and have clear roles and responsibilities that effectively support children's welfare and safety. Since the last inspection the staff have attended a wealth of training to update their childcare knowledge and skills. All staff and the volunteer hold current first aid certificates and both the manager and deputy now hold the necessary qualifications. However, although all staff and committee members have been checked and cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau, information about the staff's vetting checks is not held on the premises. Staff give the children's safety a high priority and are vigilant regarding security and checking that the premises and equipment are safe every day. Although the daily check of the premises is recorded, children may not be fully protected because the annual risk assessment is not consistently completed to cover everything they come into contact with. Overall, staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children, which includes recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow regarding any concerns.

Staff promote very positive relationships with parents and carers. Key persons make themselves available to give feedback to parents each day and displays, notice boards, 'home links books' and newsletters keep parents informed about special events. Parents are invited to discuss their children's progress records and also make contributions to the Learning Journals. The become involved in the children's learning by attending events, such as, sports day, sharing library books or taking part in further activities at home that are suggested by staff. Good relationships are established with nearby schools, which result in children settling into reception classes with confidence. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator liaises effectively with parents, key persons and outside agencies to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children play confidently and keep busy and interested in activities for much of the session. Staff work sensitively with the children and the close support and respectful interaction ensures that children become good listeners and behave responsibly. Every opportunity is taken to develop language and vocabulary through effective questioning and exploration of the sound of words and letters. Children use a good range of equipment and resources that are thoughtfully organised so that they are motivated to explore, become creative and extend their own play and learning. For example, children imaginatively build and investigate in

the outdoor construction site, by adding and tipping water from the cement mixer. They also develop a keen interest in the natural world as they hunt for bugs and insects or grow tomatoes and carrots. There are opportunities for mark making and writing in both indoor and outdoor activities. Children's artistic contributions are valued by the local community when their pictures of fish and fishing trawlers are beautifully displayed in the local fish and chip shop.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. There are suitable systems for assessing children's learning and development, which ensures that play opportunities are broadly matched to children's individual needs. The staff use a variety of methods to observe children as they play and analyse their observations to identify children's learning priorities. The Learning Journals contain many positive observations and photographs depicting children's achievements. However, the activity planning and the daily routine does not always take account of children's interests and enthusiasms. Consequently, some of the older children are not always inspired to achieve as much as they can.

Children's health is well-promoted. They develop independence in hygiene and self-care routines and have plenty of opportunities for fresh air and exercise using a super range of physical play apparatus. Children learn to make healthy choices in what they eat, through discussion and through the good example set by staff. They also make healthy 'traffic light' sandwiches using vegetables they find growing in the garden. Children learn about aspects of their own safety by using equipment carefully and practising emergency evacuation procedures. They are well-supported to acquire a positive attitude towards people who are different from themselves. Children play with resources and look at books that reflect diversity and activities are linked to festivals and special events. Staff plan a good variety of activities to enhance children's future economic well-being through developing their problem solving, numeracy, literacy and technology skills.

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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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