

# Sandbach Heath (St John's) Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 305284  
**Inspection date** 21/10/2009  
**Inspector** Rachel Ruth Britten

**Setting address** School Lane, Sandbach Heath, Sandbach, CW11 2LS

**Telephone number** 01270 761505

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

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## **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*.

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## Description of the setting

Sandbach Heath (St John's) Playgroup was registered in 1985. The setting is committee run and operates from a purpose-built, single storey building adjoining St. John's School in Sandbach. Children are cared for within one open area accessed by one step and have a secure area available for outdoor play. A maximum of 15 children aged from two years old to five years old may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open during term time on three days a week from 9.00am to 11.45am and 9.00am to 3.30pm on two days a week, with additional sessions offered according to demand. Children attend from the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 18 children on roll aged from two years old to four years old. All of these are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The setting receives funding for nursery education. The setting is experienced in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children from travelling families.

The setting employs four members of staff including the manager. The manager has Early Years Professional Status, the deputy is qualified to level 3 in early years and the two assistant staff are qualified to level 2. The setting receives support from the local authority early years advisory team.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

All staff fully recognise the uniqueness of each child and successfully support each one to make good progress in their learning and development. They provide well for children with a range of learning, development and language needs and safeguard all children generally well. Partnerships are well developed overall and leaders work hard to provide resources and teaching styles which particularly benefit children's confidence, choice, independence and sense of belonging. Processes for monitoring the setting and making improvements are mostly effective, led strongly by the highly committed manager. Overall, systems for the education and care of each child are effective.

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

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- carry out a full risk assessment for each specific outing, including an assessment of the required adult-to-child ratios (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare).

21/11/2009

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

- extend the involvement of parents in their child's learning journey by including them in preparing initial plans when their child first attends and then subsequently working together regularly on priorities for their child's next steps
- locate all reports, evidence, plans and specialist input and records systematically into the child's learning record to promote a coordinated approach and regular use of all the information to plan well for each child to make maximum progress
- ensure that staff records demonstrate their continuing suitability for working with children.

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

Overall, children are well safeguarded because the setting is well organised and prioritises safety. The long-standing staff team is suitably vetted, qualified, trained and supported to implement the procedures for dealing with concerns about abuse. However, a robust system to ensure that staff remain suitable and disclose anything that may compromise their suitability has not been established. There are high adult-to-child ratios and all staff are first aid and hygiene trained and vigilant, especially while children play at the front of the setting, where the gate and wall are lower. Risk assessments are used to ensure children's health and safety indoors and outside and local walking trips are undertaken with parental consent and high adult-to-child ratios. However, risk assessments for each specific outing have not always been used to ensure that necessary equipment, such as a first aid kit, are always taken. The manager is the designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding. All staff are involved in teaching children how to adopt safe practices balanced with realistic risks, for example, as they use climbing equipment or scissors. Displayed information and the parent's prospectus contains up-to-date policies and information about child protection, health and safety and how to complain or give feedback, making the setting's commitment very clear.

The manager is a clear leader who is supportive of all staff and has a link with each child and family. She shares her vision and ambition with staff and parents through open days, questionnaires, meetings and daily informal contacts, including very flexible settling in arrangements. Parents and carers do not presently come into the setting at the end of sessions, which removes an opportunity for discussing children's progress, but their views about strategies to support literacy and speech development have been sought. Parents and carers are delighted with the detailed information they receive about the setting and their child's activities and progress, but they do not evolve initial starting points plans for their child, together with the key worker and do not routinely see their child's record or regularly discuss next steps plans. In addition, diaries, learning journey records and specialist input plans where appropriate, are still kept separately which makes it more difficult to coordinate all the information and plans available for a child into a coherent whole, which is easy to use.

Working alongside social services and various specialists, there is a team approach to meeting the individual needs of children and families and promoting equality of opportunity for all. The manager also makes good use of quality assurance documents and new knowledge from ongoing professional training, for example, in creating and culture of safety and in equality and diversity. The implementation of the EYFS and action on matters raised at the last inspection are both highly beneficial to the outcomes for children. For example, the environment, resources and routine are now very accessible, allowing children to follow their interests and create their own play choices. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and good regard is given to the specific learning needs of boys, through awareness of the importance of active, constructive, outdoor and larger play materials.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children enjoy their learning immensely and achieve very well in relation to their starting points. This is because the intimate, nurturing environment and simple routine provides children with great opportunities to choose play materials and follow their individual learning styles. Staff genuinely act on children's expressed interests and carry these out on the same day or next day. They support children's play with great skill, weaving in each of the areas of learning. On the inspection day, children chose to play outside using the chalk easel, to run a traffic role play with lights and scooters, or to stay indoors, getting out the knight's fort, dressing up, or making their own salt dough. Staff are excellent role models, supporting two-year-olds to become confidently toilet trained, to choose their own activities and to help to clear, clean and sweep up afterwards. Children's health is also well supported through healthy snacks, teeth cleaning for those that stay for lunch and learning to wash hands and keep noses clean.

Children feel secure and safe in the small, intimate setting and feel an excellent sense of belonging, fostered by warm care from staff and good resources. For example, a new two-year-old plays hide and seek with the manager and they laugh together. Children find their name to hang on the tree when they arrive and put their coats and bags on their own peg. Straightaway, they choose activities such as the sand tray, wooden jigsaws, dressing up and painting and are immensely proud when they complete a harder puzzle, either as a team, or individually. Staff liberally praise and enthuse with them, giving special sticker rewards and helping children to photograph their achievements for their learning record. All around the setting, children can see things they have made and photographs of activities they have been doing.

Adults spend all their time alongside children, showing them how things work, challenging them to think and solve problems for themselves and teaching them how to play safely and take appropriate risks. For example, children measure out their ingredients and make their own salt dough, working out and fetching how many wooden spoons they will need if everyone wants to join in. They use large boxes, guttering and junk in diverse ways, working out how to balance and attach items. Communication, language and literacy is promoted well, linked with physical

and creative activities and knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, children talk together with staff about the seasons, weather and what they are going to do today. They talk through preparations, such as putting the chalk easel outside so that they can draw and mark make outside and they enthusiastically dance and move to a music and movement tape to warm and limber up. They use cameras, binoculars and magnifiers to examine things and dress in wellies and waterproof suits when the weather is wet. They enjoy books, stories, dressing up and acting out scenes, choosing nursery rhymes and relaxing together on their chosen cushions, especially after lunch.

Children are developing excellent skills for the future. They are independent to tackle problems and do things for themselves, such as using a large brush and dustpan to sweep up the sand and flour, or to select a costume and put it on for themselves. They are becoming confident to use the computer mouse or the camera. They are confident and inquisitive learners, who are reported to have settled into school extremely well, thanks to the preparation received in pre-school. Children behave well and tolerate one another's differences well because staff talk with them about home and loved ones regularly as they play. Children's social skills are very good because they are respected and given real choice and time to finish what they are doing. Balanced with this are clear and realistic expectations that they will share, take turns, help one another and be kind and responsible in an age appropriate way, as they lay the table for the rolling snack, or relay a message to the children and adults outside.

## 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*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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