



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 106024

DfES Number: 518910

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 28/04/2004
Inspector Name Julie Neal

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Sandcastles Playgroup
Setting Address The Castle School
Barrington Street
TIVERTON
Devon
EX16

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Sandcastles Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Sandcastles Playgroup
Address The Castle School
Barrington Street
Tiverton
Devon

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Sandcastles Playgroup is set in a large pre-fabricated building on the Castle School site, with three large playrooms, a kitchen and an entrance hall. There is a large fenced play area outdoors for the playgroup to use. It is registered to take 26 children aged 3 - 8 years, although children may be accepted in the term of their third birthday, if accompanied by a parent. There are currently eight staff members, five of whom hold Level 3 and above qualifications. The playgroup is open from 8.30am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday, offering wrap around care, and offers a play scheme facility during school holidays. There are currently 45 children in receipt of three and four year old funding, including one child with special educational needs.

How good is the Day Care?

Sandcastles Playgroup provides good quality care for children. Staff ensure a welcoming and child friendly environment, with space used well to support care, learning, and play. The staff team are well qualified, and high staff: child ratios and effective deployment ensure children receive good levels of support.

Children take part in a good range of activities that support learning and development. These are interesting and stimulating, and good account is taken of the needs of different age groups. Activities are well supported by an extensive range of resources which are easily accessible to children, and children confidently self select. Staff develop good relationships with children. They are very supportive and engage with them well. Behaviour is managed in a calm and consistent manner, and staff have a very positive approach, valuing and encouraging good behaviour. They show a good understanding of equal opportunities issues and ensure a supportive and inclusive environment. There are very good arrangements in place to ensure that children with special needs are supported and enabled to fully participate.

Staff have a high regard for the safety of children. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place that are regularly reviewed and updated. Premises are secure and there are good systems in place to ensure children are safe. Staff are very

knowledgeable about child protection issues. Hygiene routines are promoted effectively and children are learning these well.

Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting, the curriculum, and their children's progress. There are good systems in place to encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning and development and effective key working systems ensure good regular liaison. Most documentation is well maintained and shared appropriately with parents.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection it was agreed that an operational plan should be put in place, and that a record of visitors should be established. These have been done appropriately.

What is being done well?

- children take part in a very good range of activities that support learning and development. These are well supported by a good range of activities.
- Space is used well to support care, learning and play. Staff ratios are good and they are deployed effectively.
- Staff show a high regard for children's safety. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and these are regularly reviewed.
- Staff demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities issues and provide an inclusive environment. There are very good arrangements in place to support children with special needs.
- Staff manage behaviour well and have a positive and consistent approach.
- Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting, the curriculum, and their children's progress.

What needs to be improved?

- consistency in ensuring children's medicine records are signed by parents

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
14	Ensure records of medicines administered to children are consistently signed by parents.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Sandcastles Playgroup provides good quality nursery education. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication for language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and creative development. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in mathematical development.

Teaching of the children is generally good. Staff show good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones. Planning makes clear links to each of the six areas of learning, and to each aspect of learning. Staff have developed good systems of observation of what children do, and systems of assessment link well to the stepping stones. However, methods of assessing individual children's progress have been very recently implemented and it is not yet possible to monitor progression. Staff regularly evaluate the effectiveness of activities in achieving learning objectives, however there is lack of consistency in the quality of these. Challenges set for younger and less able children is very good, and staff provide high levels of support, however older and more able children are not always appropriately extended. Support for children with special needs is very good, with staff working closely with external agencies to ensure individual needs are met. Individual education plans for children with special needs are clear and focused.

Leadership and management of the setting is very good. The staff team are well qualified, committed, and enthusiastic. There are effective processes to enable the setting to identify its strengths and areas for improvement.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are provided with very good quality information regarding the setting, the curriculum, and children's progress. Effective key working systems ensure good liaison with parents.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident and well motivated. They interact well with each other and with adults and confidently make choices about what they do.
- Children communicate very well. They link sounds and letters and show good understanding of print having meaning.
- Children count confidently and accurately and shape recognition is very good.
- Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate. They are learning well about the natural world, and ICT skills are good.
- Children move confidently within their environment, and use a good range of tools and equipment.

- Children use a good range of creative media to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas.
- Staff develop good relationship with children and their parents. Support for children with special needs is very good, and individual needs are met well.

What needs to be improved?

- informal opportunities for children to practise what they learn in everyday meaningful contexts
- assessments of individual children's progress
- extension for older and more able children

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection it was agreed to develop planning to identify the areas of learning that activities aim to promote, ensuring a balance across the six areas of learning. This has been done effectively. It was also agreed to assess children's progress in each of the six areas of learning and to use assessment records to plan appropriately for each child. Considerable work has been done in this area.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and well motivated. They are enthusiastic about the activities they take part in and confidently make choices about what they wish to do. They interact very well with each other and with adults, and are developing good levels of personal independence. Children are developing an understanding of right and wrong, behaviour is good and they care and share well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children communicate confidently with each other and with adults. They link sounds and letters well and make good use of language to organise their thoughts and ideas. They are developing a good understanding of print having meaning and handle books very well. Children are writing well for a variety of purposes and are forming recognisable letters, with older and more able children clearly writing their names.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count well and confidently, showing good one-to-one correspondence. Shape recognition is very good and children make and recreate patterns well. Children show good understanding of language of size and use accurately and appropriately. Children are learning simple calculation during planned activities, however they are not practising this in meaningful, everyday situations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore and investigate the properties of a good range of materials. They take part in activities that develop knowledge of the natural world, and they are learning well about their community and local environment. ICT skills are good and they are learning well about their own and other cultures.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move well in their environment showing co-ordination and control, and are developing good spatial awareness. They use a good range of large and small scale tools and equipment. They are developing good awareness of their bodies and how they work.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use a good range of media and materials to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. They take part in an excellent range of musical and dance activities, and use their imaginations well in role play. They take part in interesting, pre-planned art and craft activities and also regularly express themselves in non adult directed activities with no defined end product.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- There are two key issues to be addressed:
- Continue to develop systems of assessment of children's progress, ensuring these are used effectively in planning the next steps for individual children. Ensure there are appropriate challenges in place for older and more able children.
- Ensure that children have opportunities to practise what they have learned in everyday, meaningful contexts, particularly with regard to calculation.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.