



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 146865

DfES Number: 530019

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	28/11/2003
Inspector Name	Susan Parker

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Sandon Cygnets Group
Setting Address	Sandon JMI School Sandon near Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 0QS

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Sandon Cygnets Pre-School 803735
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Sandon Cygnets Pre-School
Address	Sandon JMI School Sandon Nr Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 0QS

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

Sandon Cygnets opened in 1988. It operates from the school hall within Sandon JMI 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.

The group are registered to provide care for 24 children aged 2-5 years. There are currently 14 children attending. The group receive funding for 3 and 4 year olds. The group do not have any children with special needs currently attending.

Sandon Cygnets is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 09:00 until 11.45 during the school term.

The group have four members of staff who all hold a valid child care qualification.

Sandon Cygnets are a committee run group, the chair of the committee is also the head teacher of the school. The group also receive support from the teachers within the school.

How good is the Day Care?

Sandon Cygnets provides satisfactory care for children.

All staff working in the group hold a suitable child care qualification. They have a good understanding of how children learn, and provide a wide selection of stimulating and exciting activities. Children can choose activities and resources which are developmentally appropriate, and suitably challenging.

Staff plan and provide resources and activities which promote equal opportunities within the setting. Children are developing an understanding of other races, cultures, religions and abilities through play and celebrating festivals.

The children are well cared for and all their individual dietary and medical needs are met. However, some dressings in the first aid box are past their use by date.

Children are well behaved and staff are consistent with their high expectations, although the behaviour management policy does not state that staff will work together with the child's parents.

Parents are provided with good quality information on the setting, and the achievements and progress of their child. They are generally very happy with the information given and the care their child receives. Staff have been very supportive of families who are experiencing difficulties. Parents are encouraged to participate in the sessions on a rota basis.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no actions from the last inspection. Sandon Cygnets have continued to meet the National Standards for the care and welfare of the children.

What is being done well?

- Provision of a wide range of toys, resources and learning experiences which support children's development and learning.
- Parents are given good quality information on the setting, and are encouraged to support the children's learning and development at home.

What needs to be improved?

- the reviewing procedures regarding medical dressings and equipment.
- the wording of the behaviour management policy.
- some details in the complaintss procedure.
- recording procedures in an incident book.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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
7	Ensure all dressings, medications and first aid equipment are in date.
11	Ensure that the staff will work together with the parents in all aspects of behaviour management. Include this statement in your policy.
12	Include the address and telephone number of the regulator in the complaints procedure.
13	Ensure any significant incidents or concerns regarding the children are recorded confidentially in an incident book.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Sandon Cygnets Pre-school is good. It enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of the teaching is generally good. Staff use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan together to provide an imaginative range of activities to support the children's learning. Staff mostly use their knowledge of all the children to set them appropriate challenges but do not always extend activities for the older or more able children. Staff provide excellent role models for the children and use good behaviour management to set boundaries that are understood for the children. Both the inside and outside areas are used effectively as learning environments. Staff plan activities across the areas of learning, but this planning needs further development. Staff are beginning to develop children's assessments.

The leadership and management of the group is generally good. The staff work well together. They receive support from the committee and regular input from a teacher who works in the Foundation stage in the school. All are committed to the development of care and education and the setting is in the process of developing their system to monitor and evaluate the provision.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents have some information about the activities and are given regular written information about how their child is progressing. Staff are always willing to talk with parents. However parents do not fully contribute what they know about their child's learning, neither are they given comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage and what this means for their child. There are no formal opportunities for the parents to discuss the information on their child's progress.

What is being done well?

- Staff work well together to provide a stimulating and varied environment in which children are encouraged to participate and persevere with tasks.
- Activities use the child as the starting point and help the children to develop their skills of investigation and exploration. The children's use of language for communication and thought is being extended appropriately. Children enjoy reading for pleasure and for information, with adults and by themselves. Familiar stories are supported by props and children encouraged to predict what comes next.
- Adults act as good role models. They value the children's contributions and use effective behaviour management strategies. As a result, children are secure and confident within the group.

- There is a commitment by all involved with the management and everyday running of the group to the development of the care and education given to the children.

What needs to be improved?

- long term planning to ensure balance at all levels across the six areas of learning
- short term planning to show the learning intention, the grouping of the children, staff deployment, how activities will meet the needs of all the children, and the language to be learnt
- the evaluation of planning and the children's assessments to inform the future planning
- the opportunities for children to solve simple mathematical problems in everyday situations
- information to parents about the six areas of learning and more opportunities for parents to tell the setting about what their children can do
- opportunities for the parents to discuss their children's learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting have made generally good progress with the key issues from their last inspection. Staff have begun to develop the children's assessments and a key worker system to support children's learning, but this assessment is not being used to inform planning.

There are now good opportunities for children to use their large muscles on a range of equipment inside and outside but there are no planned activities within physical development to focus on particular skills such as balance or climbing.

Children are beginning to link initial sounds to their names and are beginning to associate letter names with sounds. However this is not being extended to include familiar simple words, final sounds or short vowels for the older or more able child.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are motivated to learn, persevering with tasks and taking pride in their achievements. They are learning to value themselves and others through a range of activities, and from positive adult role models. Children are beginning to know right from wrong and the need for routines and rules. There are some opportunities for children to develop self independence and choice although these are not always being fully developed in everyday routines, limiting challenge for some children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children use language well to express themselves in a group and as individuals. They use developing vocabulary and grammar to describe their ideas, thoughts and to describe their work. Children listen to each other. They enjoy books and use them for pleasure and information. Children are aware words carry information through literature, displays and instructions. They are beginning to mark make and use writing to communicate. Although children recognise initial sounds this is not being extended.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are beginning to use and recognise number, learning to count reliably to ten and beyond. They use matching and sorting to compare number and learn about shape, space and measures, which includes volume and weight in practical activities such as cooking. Children are not learning to solve simple problems in everyday situations and children's responses to mathematical prediction are not being followed through consistently

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are being given imaginative activities that help them to develop skills in exploration and investigation. They are learning to question how things work and use both natural and made objects. Themes use the child as the starting point and they are learning about time, place and culture through these. They learn about technology through play and more structured activities. Children have insufficient opportunities to use their own ideas and thoughts in design and construction.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing skills and confidence when using both large and small equipment, both inside and outside. They are learning to do so safely. They show good spatial awareness and the needs of their bodies in everyday situations. However, there are no planned activities that focus on the development of the children's skills of balance, climbing or co-ordination.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children experience a range of imaginative play situations, music and art to help develop their confidence and imagination. Children experience the work of artists and use a range of materials to recreate the artists' style. Planned activities encourage children to use all their senses creatively, and to use a widening range of tools and artefacts to support their work. There are limited opportunities for the children to develop their own ideas following on from the civilities set by adults.	

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

- develop the planning to ensure that all plans relate to the areas of learning across all levels of planning and that short term plans show the learning intention, the grouping of children, the staff deployment, how the activity will be adapted to meet the needs of all the children, the language to be learnt, and the evaluation of the activity
- use the evaluation of the activities and the children's assessments to inform the future planning
- ensure that children have the opportunities to solve simple mathematical problems in everyday situations
- increase the information given to parents about the Foundation Stage and the 6 areas of learning, give them opportunities to discuss what they know about their child's learning and ensure parents are able to discuss their own child's progress with the staff on a regular basis.

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.