



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY246058

DfES Number: 513874

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	22/02/2005
Inspector Name	Sue Stuart

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Sandcastles Preschool Playgroup
Setting Address	Connor Downs Sunday School Turnpike Road, Connor Downs Hayle Cornwall TR27 5DT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Sandcastles Preschool Playgroup 4884359 1037129
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Sandcastles Preschool Playgroup
Address	Connor Downs Sunday School Turnpike Road, Connor Downs Hayle Cornwall TR27 5DT

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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 Pre-School opened in 2002. It operates from the church hall in the village of Connor Downs, near Hayle. They have use of a large hall, kitchen and toilet facilities. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 19 children aged from two to five years on roll. This includes 11 funded three year olds and 2 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30.

There are two full-time, and one part-time, members of staff who work with the children. All staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Sandcastles Pre-school is of good quality and enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children make very good progress in physical development.

Teaching is generally good. Staff plan interesting topics, such as 'ourselves' that link through all six areas of learning. Short term plans identify learning objectives, however, daily plans do not always address all areas of learning equally. Staff observe and record children's efforts, although they do not always identify children's next stage of learning. Staff are aware of how children learn and provide effective activities, such as shaking a variety of homemade instruments to listen to a range of sounds. However challenges, particularly during whole group times, are not always appropriate for children's stage of learning. Children behave well in response to the expectations and positive support of staff. The group provides a good range of equipment and resources to support learning, including those reflecting awareness of other cultures. The routine allows time for children to work with an adult, and to select their own activities. However they lack chances to use writing and art materials freely to express their own thoughts and ideas. The organisation of furniture means children can move around freely. The recently revised local assessment system is currently being updated by the group.

Leadership and management are generally good. The committee and staff work well together as a team, are keen to improve standards, and develop their own skills. They evaluate and monitor the educational programme, however this is an area for continued development.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents are given information about the group including curriculum information. They are encouraged to share in their children's learning. There are, however, few regular chances to discuss their child's progress and achievements.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Staff are supportive and caring. They promote good behaviour and encourage and praise children's efforts.
- A good range of resources and equipment ensure that children's small muscle development is very good.
- Children have regular opportunities to use a variety of apparatus and use ride on toys. They demonstrated very good physical control as they climbed and balanced on the equipment.
- Staff set appropriate challenges, during small group situations, for children to increase their thinking and communication abilities, for example learning

about feelings using a variety of puppets.

- A good range of interesting books, and daily opportunities for children to choose a book to take home gives parents the chance to share in their child's learning and communication skills.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of group times to ensure challenges are appropriate for all children
- the regular opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress and achievement
- the opportunities for children to independently access writing materials and art materials
- the evaluation and monitoring of the education programme, to ensure the daily balance of activities for all areas of learning
- the regular updating of children's 'I can' records to ensure their next stage of learning is identified.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to increase the emphasis to teaching sounds in words, and the opportunities for children to recognise familiar words and practise their writing skills. They also agreed to provide opportunities for children to explore their own ideas creatively. In addition they agreed to provide written detailed curriculum information for parents, and opportunities for parents to contribute formally towards the assessment of their child's progress.

Generally good improvement has been made to the provision since the last inspection. Staff have introduced a new planning system which ensures the emphasis on teaching sounds in words is addressed. However children lack opportunities to practise their writing skills, and to express and explore their own ideas creatively. At present curriculum plans are displayed for parents, and the brochure is currently being updated to include curriculum information. Parents contribute informally towards the assessment of their child's progress, although there is opportunity for further development in this area. Generally these improvements have had a positive effect on learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children relate well to each other and adults. They are eager to share experiences and ideas together, for example during register time. They are aware of others as they take turns and wait to use the large apparatus. Children confidently work well on their own as they select and use resources. Children behave well and know what is expected of them, although they lose interest during whole group times. They share well and demonstrate good personal independence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children engage easily in conversations with each other and with adults. They develop their thinking skills through a variety of activities, such as discussing feelings while playing with puppets. They choose and read books both for pleasure and information. They join in rhymes with enjoyment. They learn to link sounds to letters and match them to items. Children are beginning to recognise their names. However there are few chances to independently practise writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children demonstrate a good understanding of number and mathematical language during their play. They recognise and match numerals to numbers. They learn to compare and match objects and to find out about size and shape using a range of equipment. They learn to match and recreate patterns through practical hands-on activities, such as hand printing. However not all children have daily opportunities to learn to count and join in number rhymes to learn about addition and subtraction.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children learn about the natural world and features in their environment in many ways, for instance as they walk to the play park. However they have few chances to examine and explore natural objects on their own. They have chances to question how and why things work, for example as they join Duplo to make items. They frequently talk about past and present events in their own lives and about the lives of others, including those of other cultures. They use some ICT to support their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move with confidence and demonstrate good co-ordination as they move around the room. They have chances to climb and balance on apparatus and use bats and balls to develop physical control. They show good spatial awareness as they respond to instructions during movement sessions. They are aware of bodily changes when they are active. They have access to a range of equipment and handle a variety of tools and materials, such as squeezing playdough to develop small muscle hand control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have good practical opportunities to explore texture using a variety of art materials to produce group and individual collages. However they have few daily chances to be involved freely in creative art activities. They join in action songs, and have chances to play instruments to learn about sound. They express their ideas and imagination through a range of pretend situations, such as domestic role-play. They have chances to explore through their senses, for example tasting fresh fruit.

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

- organise group times to ensure challenges are appropriate for all children, and provide opportunities for children to independently access writing materials and art materials
- develop the evaluation and monitoring of the education programme, to ensure all areas of learning are addressed equally, and identify children's next stage of learning
- provide regular opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress and achievement.

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.