

Sandcastles Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 403985
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Inspector Patricia Champion

Setting address 81 London Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 2QL

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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*.

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Sandcastles Nursery is privately owned and opened in 2000. It operates from a total of seven rooms within a converted two-storey school and two-storey house, together with an annexe known as the Ark. The nursery is located in Hadleigh, Essex. All children share access to secure, enclosed, outdoor play areas. A maximum of 99 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Operating times are from 7am until 6.30pm.

There are currently 207 children aged from six months to 11 years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions, out of school care or full day care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery employs 23 staff to work directly with the children, of whom 20 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff that hold Early Years Professional Status or Qualified Teacher Status. There are two staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification and four staff are working towards higher qualifications. The nursery also employs administrators, a cook and maintenance worker. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are particularly well motivated and confident as they play in an extremely vibrant, inclusive and safe environment. Learning experiences are stimulating and exciting and enable children to be actively engaged and make rapid progress. Thriving partnerships with parents and other early years professionals ensure that staff have an in-depth understanding of all children's needs. Management and staff are highly skilled and have an excellent understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a rigorous evaluation process and this clearly underpins the excellent practice and ensures that there is an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- reviewing, consolidating and streamlining the evaluative processes for the management and organisation of the nursery and including new initiatives as they become available.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Extremely robust systems are in place for safeguarding children and all staff have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau. Very effective appraisal and induction procedures ensure that all adults continue to be suitable to work with children and are familiar with the extensive range of policies and procedures in use. The staff are very secure in their knowledge of current information regarding safeguarding and child protection, which makes them certain that they always act in the best interests of children. Comprehensive risk assessment covers all the activities and outings the children participate in as well as the areas of the premises and the equipment they use.

The nursery owners along with the management and staff are a cohesive and committed team dedicated to ensuring that the care and education they provide is of the highest quality. They achieve this by constantly reviewing their practice and facilities and implement effective plans for improvement. Staff are well supported as they undertake higher qualifications to develop their practice and constantly increase their skills and knowledge through in-house training. The nursery has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People and has achieved the highest level of a national early years quality assurance scheme. The nursery management recognise that there is scope to improve self-evaluation further by consolidating and streamlining the current processes to maintain the high aspirations they have for every child that attends.

Consistent staffing ensures that staff have an exceptional knowledge of each individual child's developmental progress. This allows them to plan and deliver activities in tune with each child's needs. There are excellent arrangements to provide support for children with special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language. Children experience very effective and supportive procedures to settle them in successfully and the information collected contributes to personalised individual learning plans. Visual prompts and resources are provided to develop language skills. Consequently, all children participate fully and thrive in the setting. The staff have developed very good links with local schools, nurseries and childminders to enhance consistency in care and to ensure there are smooth transitions into full-time education. Children are accompanied on school visits so that confidence is gained in new surroundings with familiar adults. Very reliable arrangements are organised to take and collect the older children attending the out of school club to and from their primary schools.

The nursery prides itself on the strong partnerships it builds with the parents and carers. There are excellent systems for communicating with parents about their children and both parents and children are consulted about many aspects of the provision. High quality displays and detailed daily record sheets are shared and

there is a very informative website. Parents receive a written summary of the progress their children are making in a format which encourages them to share milestones they have observed at home. All parents spoken to during this inspection were extremely supportive of the nursery and delighted with the care and education the children receive.

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

Children make exceptional progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage. They play an active role in their own learning, show curiosity and the desire to explore. Children are well-equipped to make consistent progress and develop their future learning skills to a high level. They show real enthusiasm for what they are doing and talk with considerable confidence and eagerness about their achievements. They experience an excellent level of supervision and direct attention to ensure that individual needs are met. The staff always take into account their differing interests, capabilities and enthusiasms. Activities are adapted to ensure all children can contribute; they then feel welcomed and valued. Routines such as sleep times are flexible to accommodate children's individual and changing needs. The thoughtful storage of resources means that children are able to make independent choices and are inspired to explore and be imaginative and creative. The attention to detail in each room helps children to feel welcome and motivated. There are numerous displays, mobiles and examples of children's work, with a range of music often playing in the background.

Exceptional use is made of the outside area to maximise opportunities for children's learning. Children explore spacious and well-equipped gardens appropriate to their age group with older pre-school children choosing whether to play inside or out whenever they like. Each garden has been thoughtfully designed to capture children's interests and imagination with areas where they can be physically active, engage in role play or tend to plants they have grown. Canopies providing protection from sun and rain mean that children can explore and investigate outside whatever the weather and they particularly enjoy putting on coats and boots to splash in puddles. First hand experiences that include caring for the nursery guinea pigs, rabbits or gerbils help foster a wonder and knowledge and understanding of the world. Frequent opportunities to go on walks in the vicinity such as trips to the library allow children to explore their surroundings and become active and inquisitive learners. There are also opportunities for children to develop important physical skills during swimming lessons at a nearby pool.

Children demonstrate a high level of physical aptitude as they move confidently around the premises. They benefit because the well-equipped gym area on the first floor is available in addition to their home base for indoor play. A speech and drama teacher visits the children and they confidently explore emotions, extend their thinking skills and act out imaginary scenarios. Football coaches also visit the children to encourage them to exercise and develop their agility and ball skills. Furthermore during physical activities, they are encouraged to use a digital camera to capture things of interest to enhance their learning.

Children's behaviour is exemplary and they are gaining an excellent understanding of right and wrong. Staff act as excellent role models, remaining calm, consistent, polite and fair. Children respond positively to this, showing great care and concern for each other and demonstrating great respect as they listen to their friends and make their own contribution to discussions. Staff plan with great care to ensure that children experience enjoyable and worthwhile experiences. Their teaching skills and thoroughness ensure that children make rapid progress in their learning. Staff frequently observe the children and note their responses and provide learning opportunities that meet the needs of every child. Careful analysis of children's progress and achievements ensure that there are no gaps in learning.

Children are adopting healthy and safe lifestyles because great emphasis is placed on safety, healthy eating, exercise and positive hygiene. Scrupulous attention is given to health and hygiene routines. Nappy changing is hygienically and sensitively undertaken and the nursery has achieved a five star rating for food safety from the environmental health department. Extremely nourishing meals and snacks are provided so that children gain an understanding of the importance of healthy eating. Children display an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They can explain why it is important to be careful using scissors or when playing with sand. Regular fire drills are practised so that children know what to do if they need to evacuate the premises in an emergency. They respond extremely well to information regarding road safety and know why they wear high visibility jackets and demonstrate the safe way to cross the road at the pedestrian crossing. Consequently, the extent to which children feel safe, learn to lead healthy lifestyles and develop their skills for the future is outstanding.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met