

# The Sandcastle Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY427490

**Inspection date**

17/10/2011

**Inspector**

Julie Biddle

**Setting address**

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**Type of setting**

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

The Sandcastle Nursery was re-registered in 2011 under new ownership. The nursery is situated in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire and serves a wide catchment area. The nursery operates from five rooms in an old school building with an enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

The nursery operates five days a week all year round, with the exception of a week at Christmas and bank holidays. Children may attend all day between 8am and 6pm, or for a variety of shorter sessions. A maximum of 80 children under eight years old may attend the nursery at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age group, but no more than 33 may be under two years old at any one time. There are currently 131 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

The nursery employs 32 staff to work directly with the children. Of these, 29 hold a suitable childcare qualification. Two members of staff have Early Years Professional Status. Four members of staff have cooking, housekeeping and administrative duties. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff are highly skilled in recognising the uniqueness of each child and providing for their individual needs and interests. The relationship between the key workers, the children and their parents are highly effective in ensuring outstanding outcomes for all children. Staff in the setting work very hard to make the most of planned activities, indoor and outdoor space and resources to provide an interesting and stimulating environment built around the children's current and ever changing interests. Most of the outdoor area is used successfully. The management team and the staff have inspiring visions for the future and demonstrate a high level of commitment to addressing any improvement to enhance the service for the children.

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

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

- developing the outdoor area to add more choices to children

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

The management team and staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to safeguarding children in the setting. Comprehensive policies and procedures are implemented consistently to make certain any concerns are prioritised and dealt with effectively. In addition, clear and robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Risk assessments are an integral part of daily practice, effectively ensuring the children are well protected from harm. Security of the setting is excellent and prevents children leaving unsupervised, or intruders gaining access to the children. In addition, children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they participate in regular evacuation drills. The management team add hazards to the fire evacuation practice, such as blocked exits, to make certain staff are always vigilant in protecting children from harm.

The management team are inspiring and highly motivated. They share their enthusiasm with their extremely committed staff to continuously build on the work of the setting. They reflect on their practice as a team to identify achievements and areas to be developed, for example the development of an 'anything goes' area in the garden. Morale is very high in the setting, and the well-established team has a strong belief in the setting and supporting children. There are extensive self-evaluation systems in place, which include high input by the management, staff and parents. The systems identify areas of strength and for improvement. Targets set are realistic and achievable and support the continuous improvement of the setting. A quality improvement officer works closely with staff, offering support, ideas and training opportunities to enhance good practice and, in turn, benefit all the children.

Staff deployment is highly effective. The environment is inspiring; it is managed well and is well suited to the care, development and welfare of children who attend. High-quality resources are made available to all children. Observations and assessments are carried out to monitor and ascertain each child's achievements in all areas of learning. The next step in the child's unique learning journey is then planned to ensure appropriate and consistent progress is made. Each child has a learning journey record containing examples of their work, photographs of them at play and their observations. These clearly demonstrate the outstanding progress they make.

Engagement with parents is exemplary. There is daily written and verbal two-way exchange of information to ensure each child's needs are identified and met. Planning, menus and information about activities are displayed around the nursery, meaning parents feel included in their child's day. Parents come into the setting to take part in concerts and parties to celebrate special events in the setting. Printers in each room mean staff can print pictures of the days events to share with parents on the same day. Parents and grandparents are unanimous in the praise of the setting. In particular, they mention the successful key worker system and

transition procedures making certain all children feel confident as they change rooms in the setting. This also includes the transition to 'big school'. The liaison between the key workers, parents and other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage contribute exceptionally well to children's inclusion and the ongoing identification of their individual needs. The staff have an excellent understanding and strong commitment to supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language. With parental support, they identify children's individual requirements and ensure appropriate professional support, which further promotes inclusion.

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

The staff make excellent use of all resources, indoor and outdoor space to provide a motivating and challenging environment for the children. Children's current and ever-changing interests are fully included in the planning. For example, an interest in camping led to a campfire being built and cooked on in the outdoor play area. The children explore their environment, identifying features and noticing the natural world. Children thoroughly enjoy opportunities to enhance the environment they play and learn in. They have been completely involved in developing an allotment, planting vegetables and fruit and learning how to care for living things and harvesting them for the cook. The children learn about a healthy lifestyle through visitors, stories and discussions during meal times. They are provided with an extensive menu that includes locally sourced produce that is cooked from scratch on site. Children are fully involved in selecting meals for the seasonal menu. Children's individual diet requirements are fully met by the nursery cook at all times.

Staff ensure the children have a high level of understanding about personal safety and the safety of others around them. The staff also remind children to be careful as they climb stairs and move around the garden. Children have wonderful opportunities to enjoy the outdoor environment in all weathers, for example, igloo building in the snow and sheltering from the rain in a wigwam. These rich and varied opportunities allow children to understand about safely assessing risks and about how to keep themselves healthy.

Children have a high regard for one another and the staff. They show they have a good sense of feeling safe in their environment by confidently seeking out assistance or comfort when they need it. The children's sense of belonging is fostered exceptionally well, and their photographs, paintings and collage work is displayed all around the environment.

The children show high levels of interest as they explore skills for the future. They enjoy using an extensive range of programs on the computers, which support their problem-solving skills. Music is used effectively across the setting. Children enthusiastically play musical instruments, sing songs and dance. Pre-school children make choices about the music they listen to by using the remote control.

Children are particularly interested in using the overhead projector, adding a further dimension to story time. Listening to stories is vibrant and exciting for children. Staff use props and real life items such as chillies to add new dimensions to the story. In addition, children are delighted when grandparents take part in story-reading. Children are encouraged by the staff to count during everyday routines, such as calculating how many cups and plates are needed at meal times and how many stairs they climb. Well-planned and exciting activities encourage children to gain life skills such as cutting food, climbing stairs, putting on coats. Children have such fun cutting fruit and tasting it before it goes in the fruit salad.

Children are beginning to have a good understanding about people who have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs. They play with a broad range of toys and resources, which reflect positive images of diversity including dolls, dressing up clothes and home corners with real items. They also explore a broad range of festivals around the calendar year through artwork, stories and visitors, and through food-tasting activities. In addition, they take part in fund-raising events to help other children. Strong links are fostered in the community. Children in the setting are joined by children from the local school to play musical instruments at the Christmas-tree-lighting ceremony.

New children and parents are exceptionally well supported by staff to ensure a successful settling-in period that is tailored to the needs of each child and family. Babies are extremely well supported to gain confidence to explore their surroundings. They are beginning to form strong attachments to staff and look for reassurance when they are feeling sad. Staff respect the established routines of the children. This helps the babies feel content, safe and secure. Staff have developed 'comfort cards' with pictures of family members, pets or events to help them support children as they settle or to comfort them when they are feeling upset. Children are delighted as they look at the pictures, telling staff who is on the card. Real items in the home corner and positive images displayed in the setting help children to understand and embrace different lifestyles. Children across the setting have access to a range of creative resources that extends their imagination. Children particularly enjoy using glitter and glue, creating pictures of Divali lamps.

Children flourish in this happy and awe-inspiring environment. Children enjoy high levels of interaction with staff and feel safe with them as they confidently express their needs, knowing they will be met by the kind, motivated staff. Children are fully involved in planning systems; for example, pre-school children are invited to plan their day, telling staff the resources and activities they want. Children know what is expected of them at the setting and receive plenty of praise for achievements. Consequently, their behaviour is very good and they develop a strong sense of belonging and security.

## 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>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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