

# Sandytots @ Stafford Children's Centre

Stafford Children's Centre, STAFFORD, ST16 3NQ

<b>Inspection date</b>	03/03/2014
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	2
	Previous inspection:	Not Applicable
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is good

- Teaching is good because all staff are skilful in promoting children's language skills through the use of effective open-ended questions and positive interaction during the wide range of activities offered.
- There is a targeted training programme and staff have attended a vast range of courses since the setting opened last year. As a result, staff are making many changes to the environment and the outdoor area is highly stimulating to promote children's learning.
- Behaviour is managed very well through the clear boundaries set by staff and praise is given to promote children's self-esteem to a high level.
- Partnerships with external agencies are very strong and ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported in their learning.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to improve the organisation of group times in the pre-school room to enable quieter children to have more confidence to take part.
- Although children learn to speak in various languages, opportunities for some to use their home language in their play and learning are not always maximised.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of children and parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector observed activities in all playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and had discussions with other staff members about their roles and responsibilities, including safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation which included the safeguarding policy, children's learning records and the planning of activities.

## Inspector

Val Thomas

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Sandytots Nursery was registered in 2013 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises within Stafford Children's Centre in Stafford, and is managed by Sandytots Limited. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three rooms and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 23 members of childcare staff. Of these, 21 hold appropriate early years qualifications, including two with 5 early years qualifications at level 6 and two with early years qualifications at level 5. There are 15 members of staff with early qualifications at level 3 and two with early years qualifications at level 2. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round, except bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 148 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

#### To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- ensure that the grouping of children for all planned activities are appropriate to enable all children to learn effectively; for example, by creating smaller groups to enable those who are less confident to take part
- review how children's home languages are acknowledged and reflected within the setting and subsequently enable all children to further respect and value other's differences.

## Inspection judgements

### How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Teaching is good throughout the nursery and the dedication to continually improving what is offered through training attended ensures that children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The observation and assessment system is thorough and staff identify children's starting points through discussions with parents at the initial visits and the long observations completed in the child's first few weeks. This gives a clear foundation on which to plan for their future learning. The continual observations and 'snap shots' of children's learning and the 'wow' moments that parents are encouraged to record of their child's learning in the home ensure that activities are planned to further their development and learning. Staff keep a record to identify if children are meeting their expected levels of development so that early interventions can be accessed if needed. This

ensures all children are making good progress in their learning. The progress check at age two is thorough and ensures parents are fully informed of their child's progress. Parents are further involved and encouraged to take part in their child's learning through the use of the library service that is offered and taking account of the 'Tip of the week' to promote their child's language. Staff have a good understanding of how to promote children's learning and take account of how they are developing the characteristics of learning through their observations. The educational programmes planned cover the seven areas of learning in-depth and provide stimulating and challenging experiences for children. Planning is detailed and each key person has the next steps and interests in learning for the children in their group identified each week so that they can be promoted through the wide range of activities planned. This helps to ensure that children are engaged and interested throughout the day.

Staff are skilful in their interactions to ensure that the development of children's language skills are given high priority. They effectively use open-ended questions during activities to promote children's thinking and imaginative skills. For example, staff ask how they can make the sand castle bigger in the two- to three-year-olds' room and during story time older children are asked 'what do you think he was doing on the boat?' Children are confident and show how they need to use the bigger bucket for the sand castle, patting it with the spade and older ones animatedly explain how 'he is going to catch a shark' in the story. In readiness for school children are given a wealth of opportunities to listen to and identify the initial sounds in words. During group time they say what their names begin with and repeat the letter and staff encourage them to think of other words that begin with the same letter. For example, they say 'c' and then eagerly call out 'cat' and 'comb' with lots of praise given by staff. During group times staff are also encouraging children to learn other languages. They are confident to say 'hello' in Spanish, Italian and French. However, the languages of some of the children present are not always used or displayed to ensure they feel fully valued. Throughout the nursery staff use sign language and this is also displayed so that parents can use the signs at home if they wish. This means that those with language difficulties are fully included. Children confidently put their thumbs up for the word 'brilliant' and put their hands out to indicate 'stop'. The number of children present in the pre-school room is large and because of this group time is organised into key person groups. However, on occasions some key groups join together and this means that the group size can be more than 20 children. As a result, this does not always support the quieter and less confident children to actively engage in the activities.

To start the day children in the pre-school room take part in a 'Wake and Shake' activity, which prepares and motivates them well for the activities ahead. Staff help to develop children's understanding of the world through the many opportunities provided outside. Babies explore the effect of the ball as it splashes in the water outside and staff make this a fun activity. Children explore the mini-beasts using magnifying glasses and grow vegetables, such as potatoes and onions in the outside garden. The outdoor area has tunnels made of twigs for children to crawl through and explore and crates and equipment that they can build and experiment with. Sensory play is very much encouraged throughout the nursery. Babies enjoy the sand and older children explore how the water moves along the tubes and containers. Children in the two- to three-year-olds' room sit and concentrate well when painting their pictures whilst those in the pre-school room create their own pictures of a fog after looking at the pictures in the book. Free-expression

is very much encouraged with all children. From a very early age they are encouraged to make marks, with chalks of a suitable size for babies to hold and crayons and pencils available in all rooms. Children enjoy making rubbings outside and staff encourage them to talk about the textures introducing words, such as 'bumpy' and 'smooth'. During play staff support children well in developing their mathematical skills. Staff count with babies as they play in the sand and in the two- to three-year-olds room, staff ask children to count how many red butterflies there are in the story. They confidently count up to six with confidence. Children in pre-school are able to match the objects to the correct size on the cards and concentrate well with a matching dominoes game, counting the ladybirds correctly. Children obviously enjoy their time at the nursery and playing with their friends. They say that the den outside is 'amazing' and are eager to talk about where they are going on the train to each other.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

The nursery is very bright and welcoming for children and offers a stimulating environment to promote children's learning. Each room has low-level furniture which is very sturdy and there is an abundance of open shelving and easily accessible resources to enable children to make choices in their play and learning. There is a wide range of equipment both indoors and outdoors and it supports children's curiosity and exploration very well. Rooms are large and give good space for children to move around safely. Children's independence is promoted effectively in every room. Young babies are encouraged to start to learn how to dress themselves by putting their arms into the sleeve of their coat and to feed themselves at lunchtime. Children in the 2-3 year room enjoy using the small brushes to sweep up the sand outside and those in the pre-school room put on their own coats and wellingtons to play outside. Staff ensure that children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. They remind them that they need to look at their feet when stepping along the wooden logs outside so that they do not fall off. Behaviour is managed very well in the nursery and staff use praise effectively to raise children's self-esteem to a high level. Staff use a large sand timer to encourage them to share the toys and they are complimented when they share the pram with each other. Staff say 'brilliant' for the good sitting at group time. When the tambourine is heard in the 2-3 year room children are very eager to help to tidy the toys away. Staff talk to children about how they need to play nicely with their friends and that they should not push others because it will make them sad. They ask children to think about what will happen if they throw the stick outside and what the stick can be used for. This enables children to think about the effects their behaviour has on others and therefore, promotes a more harmonious environment.

The key person system is used effectively to promote children's emotional well-being. Staff are very positive in their interactions with children at all times and this helps them to feel emotionally secure. The settling-in process is effective and supports children in building strong relationships with staff. Parents stay with their child for the first two visits and then they are encouraged to leave them for short periods until the child is content to be left for the full day. This process is flexible in accordance with the child's and parents' needs. As a result, children are happy and settled and parents spoken to say that the process works well. Parents are encouraged to share information at the initial visits in order that

appropriate care and education can be provided so that their child's needs are met effectively. Children's routines at home are fully discussed and an 'All about me' form is completed so that the key person can fully meet the child's needs and it informs them of the child's starting points. For example, details about how the child prefers to sleep and what comforters are needed are shared and these are displayed so that their needs are met at all times. Care plans are devised for those children with specific needs, for example, if there is a medical need and these routines are sensitively implemented by staff. Transitions between rooms are supported and planned well. The key person goes with the child to the next room for short visits until they feel the child is ready to have short visits on their own before they finally move rooms. The transitions are planned for when the child is able to cope with the move both emotionally and physically according to their level of development. Parents are fully involved and information is shared between key persons in order that children's needs are effectively met. In order to prepare children for the transition to other settings staff talk to them about what will happen so that they feel emotionally secure.

The daily and frequent access to the outdoor play areas means that children are actively developing a healthy lifestyle, which has a positive impact for their future health. There are long periods where the playroom doors are left open so that children can choose to access both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children are developing good physical skills. Babies have lots of fun as they jump on the trampoline together, climb on the slide and push the walkers along. In the two- to three-year-olds' room children trundle along on the bikes and confidently climb into the large wooden boat. Older children thoroughly enjoy moving quickly along the paths as they lie on the body boards and are skilful at pedalling bikes and using the large climbing frame. Routines for hand washing at appropriate times are embedded and staff are alert if children have used the toilet, reminding them to go back and wash their hands. A healthy and nutritional diet is provided and staff take account of any food allergies children have to ensure their safety. At snack time children have fruit which they enjoy eating and lunchtimes are a very social occasion with staff sitting with the children encouraging conversation and good eating habits.

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

The management and staff have worked hard to ensure that the quality of care and education is of a good standard since opening. The safety of children is given the utmost importance. Security is very good with each room having a coded access system which can only be operated by staff and the main entrance has a visual intercom system. The outdoor areas are completely fenced and gates are secured at all times. This enables children to play safely at all times. Staff fully understand the procedures for safeguarding children and reporting any concerns they have in relation to child protection. They take an active role in working in partnership with the relevant agencies, attending meetings and supporting families to ensure children are fully protected. Recruitment procedures are robust and ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. All required checks are completed and evidence is available on each staff member's file. There are extremely detailed risk assessments in place for the whole of the premises and an external company

is used to complete safety audits. This ensures that children's continual safety is promoted to a high level. Records sampled on the day of the inspection, such as attendance, medication and accident records indicate that all requirements are met in order that children's safety and welfare is promoted effectively.

There is a good number of qualified staff working with the children and there is a clear management structure to provide effective guidance and support at all times. Although the setting has only been operating for a short time there is a well-established training programme for staff to ensure they continue to enhance their learning. The management team ensure staff have regular supervisions in order that relevant training can be targeted for individuals so that practice is continually improving. Training attended includes, 'Think Two' and staff in the two- to three-year-olds' room are using the knowledge gained to enhance the environment and to complete the progress check at age two effectively. The training for 'Outdoor Play' attended has had a major impact on the learning opportunities staff provide outside. The area is extremely stimulating and offers rich, varied and imaginative play experiences for children. For example, children eagerly gather twigs to make their camp fire and use the sticks to make sounds on the tubes. Many staff have attended safeguarding training and there is always someone present with a paediatric first aid certificate on the premises and on outings. Self-evaluation processes are effective and there is a clear development plan in place. Parents and children are involved through listening to the 'voice of the child' and questionnaires are given to parents to gather their views. Managers have a good overview of the curriculum through monitoring of the educational programmes and observing staff practices. This ensures that a broad range of experiences are provided to ensure children make good progress towards the early learning goals. There is an effective monitoring system in place to enable managers to have a clear understanding of the progress different groups of children are making. As a result, they are able to give support and make changes as needed to ensure all children continue to progress well in their learning.

Partnerships with parents, external agencies and other providers are very strong and a clear strength of the setting. Staff are fully committed to engaging with other professionals to ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need and they continue with implementing the guidance given. As a result, they are making good progress in their learning and development given their starting points. There is a comprehensive range of policies for the setting which are shared with parents and there are displays around the nursery in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they are fully informed on what is provided for their children. Parents and carers spoken to on the day of the inspection are extremely complimentary about the setting since the new ownership. They say that 'staff are fantastic' and that they have 'detailed information about their child and the progress they are making'. Other comments include that 'staff have been proactive in securing the support the child needs' and 'there have been many changes to the environment for the better'. There are clear systems to facilitate the transitions of children to other settings. The key person visits the setting to discuss the children and share what progress they are making and where they may need support. School staff are invited into the nursery to meet the children and to discuss their needs. This supports the continuity and consistency in children's experiences and learning and ensures they are fully supported.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**



## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

## Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY469523
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	935015
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	83
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	148
<b>Name of provider</b>	Sandytots Limited
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	07974344618

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## Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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