

Sandcastle Playgroup

c/o Castle Manor Business and Enterprise College, Eastern Avenue, Haverhill,
Suffolk, CB9 9JE



Inspection date

10 July 2015

Previous inspection date

23 January 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Staff deployment is excellent and every opportunity is used to enrich children's learning. The playgroup provides a relaxed, fun and homely environment where each child is respected and valued. All children embed the skills they need for their move on to school, and make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Children's readiness for school is taken seriously by staff. Changeover reports are diligently put together to provide clear information about each child's current ability and learning style. This means that staff in the receiving schools can plan learning based securely on the children's existing skills. As a result, children are able to settle more quickly into this new stage of learning.
- Staff have high expectations about what children can achieve. As a result, children are exceptionally independent and resourceful. For example, they access healthy snacks and drinks, to meet their personal needs.
- Children become exceedingly confident and are emotionally secure. This is because staff use plenty of positive praise and encouragement to raise their self-esteem.
- The safety of children's is central to all that the staff do. All relevant records are meticulously reviewed. This ensures that the children are safely accounted for. Any anomalies in their care are quickly highlighted and addressed. All staff maintain their child protection and first-aid training. This means that they know what action to take in an emergency.
- The manager and staff work tirelessly to provide excellent opportunities for all children. This is confirmed by the attention they give to their continuing professional development and seeking out other professionals to extend their practice wherever they can.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the system for assessing children's progress to identify how quickly different groups of children achieve, in order to maintain the excellent progress and identify times when their development exceeds expectation in any particular area of learning.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed general play and snack time in the setting.
- The inspector talked with the manager, staff, parents and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at evidence of the suitability checks for all members of staff and a range of other documentation. Evidence of staff's main qualifications, and safeguarding and first-aid training certificates, were also viewed.
- The inspector held discussions with some of the children's individual key persons and the manager in relation to observations of the children's play, learning and progress.
- The inspector reviewed the current self-evaluation documents used by the manager and staff.

Inspector

Lynn Clements

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is outstanding

Children's development in communication, literacy and mathematics is consistently and imaginatively promoted by the outstanding learning opportunities provided. For example, children use their developing thinking and language skills to discuss how to make play dough. When it is ready they decide on the colour they would like it to be. Together they choose green. The children go to collect the green powder paint from the cupboard. They discover that they do not have this colour. The member of staff encourages them to think how they could make their own colour green using the colours they do have. Staff encourage children to use their memories to revisit previous activities, such as colour mixing. This ignites the children's interest even further as they very confidently share their ideas about mixing blue and yellow. Staff introduce letters and sounds and children use their increasing knowledge of simple phonics to identify their name in print and record their names on their creations. Helping to feed animals in the orchard provides interesting opportunities for children to explore weighing and measuring as they help staff prepare the feeds.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is outstanding

The manager and staff have the children's very best interests at heart at all times. They plan exceedingly well to support the individual care needs of each child. Where additional support is required, members of staff take the time to attend relevant meetings in order to support families. They provide pertinent observations to access funding and as a result, all the children in the playgroup receive high-quality care within a well-planned and child-centred environment. Children thoroughly enjoy first-hand experiences to learn about leading healthy lifestyles. This is achieved as they help prepare an excellent range of healthy foods for their snack and take time to talk with staff about foods that help them to grow strong. Children's behaviour is excellent. Children learn to care for the playgroup's pets and livestock, including sheep, chickens and a tortoise. These activities help them to learn about being kind and considerate to animals and each other.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is outstanding

Outstanding attention is paid to working closely with parents, carers and other professionals, including early years practitioners at other settings the children attend. This attention to detail enables staff to gain the information they need to establish each child's starting point and ongoing development. Exceptionally careful monitoring takes place to support every child and address any gaps in learning. This includes children who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, all children receive excellent support and make exceptional progress towards the early learning goals. However, the manager understands that the monitoring of children's differing rates of progress can be studied even more closely, this is to identify any specific children who learn more rapidly, to ensure that planning remains relevant and challenging.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY371488
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	849730
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	75
Name of provider	Sandcastle Playgroup Limited
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2009
Telephone number	01440 705660

Sandcastle Playgroup was established in 1994. The playgroup is based on an academy site for pupils aged 11 years and over. The playgroup employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and the provider of the setting, who is also the manager, is qualified to degree level. The playgroup opens from Monday to Friday and sessions are from 8.30am until 11.30am and 12.30pm until 3.30pm. A lunch club runs from 11.30am until 12.30pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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