

Sandon Cygnets Group

Sandon JMI School, Sandon, near Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 0QS



Inspection date

24 May 2018

Previous inspection date

8 October 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Requires improvement	3
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The provider has not ensured that there are effective arrangements in place to provide all staff with regular opportunities for support, coaching and training. The manager does not make time to speak to staff on a one-to-one basis to help identify areas of their practice to improve.
- Staff do not always take the development needs of the youngest children into consideration when planning activities. They plan activities that younger children are not able to take part in or understand fully.
- Staff do not consistently manage children's behaviour. They ask them to pick up resources but when children do not follow their requests, staff do not reinforce this.

It has the following strengths

- Children independently choose from a wide range of resources and equipment. They engage well in their self-chosen play.
- Children who are moving on to school are prepared well. They spend time in the Reception class where they join in with all activities. Parents comment that their children's move to school is a seamless, natural process.
- Staff are keenly aware of when children and families may need extra support, such as when their attendance is not as expected. For example, staff use additional funding well to help improve children's attendance, which helps children to close gaps in their learning.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
■ ensure there are effective systems in place to provide all staff with regular opportunities for coaching, support and training, to help improve the quality of teaching and practice	07/06/2018
■ sharpen the focus of teaching when planning and delivering group activities, to promote more specifically the learning of children at different stages of development	07/06/2018
■ improve staff's understanding of how to manage children's behaviour appropriately, to ensure all children receive consistent guidance.	07/06/2018

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed staff's teaching and interactions with children indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector observed an adult-led activity with the manager and held a discussion with her about staff's teaching skills and children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children, and held a meeting with the manager and deputy manager.
- The inspector looked at a sample of paperwork, including staff's qualifications, and suitability checks of staff and committee members. The safeguarding policies and procedures were also seen.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents and took account of their views.

Inspector

Jill Hardaker

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management requires improvement

The provider has not identified that the manager does not provide staff with regular opportunities to receive training, coaching and support to help develop their practice. Safeguarding is effective. Staff have a good knowledge of recognising signs of potential abuse and how to escalate these concerns in the pre-school and to outside agencies. The provider has suitable recruitment procedures to help ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. There are effective partnerships with other professionals. Staff identify children who have special educational needs and regularly liaise with local authority development workers and specialist outside agencies to help support children's individual needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

Staff use their observations and assessments of children's learning to recognise their development levels and plan what they need to learn next. However, they do not always take children's age and understanding into consideration when they plan group activities. For example, some activities to promote children's mathematical development are too advanced for the children at which they are aimed. Children quickly lose interest and wander off. At other times, the quality of teaching is better. For example, staff help children to find out information about birds they are interested in from using books and the internet. Staff also help children to learn about different aspects of the world, such as how plants grow and how to care for mini-beasts. Staff share information about children with parents. For example, they hold meetings to discuss the progress check when children are aged between two and three years.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Staff do not give all children consistent messages about their behaviour. For example, when asking children to comply with their requests, such as to put down a stick, staff do not ensure that children pick up the sticks. This does not help children to understand and cooperate within appropriate boundaries. Staff provide children with many opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They enjoy steering cars round a track and exploring in a nearby woodland area. Children display a suitable level of independence, such as putting on boots and helping to prepare snacks. Staff encourage parents to share information about children's likes and dislikes, which helps them to understand children's personalities.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Weaknesses in the planning of some activities hinder children's progress. Despite this, older children learn some of the skills they need for their move to school. They show a good understanding of numbers, for example, they draw the correct number of items to correspond with numerals. Children show their developing imaginations and creative skills as they make pictures with precise detail and talk confidently about each aspect.

Setting details

Unique reference number	146865
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1103032
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Sandon Cygnets Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519052
Date of previous inspection	8 October 2014
Telephone number	01763 287 238

Sandon Cygnets Group registered in 1988. It is situated at Sandon School and is managed by a committee. The setting employs seven members of staff, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, and two hold qualified teacher status. The setting opens during term time on Monday to Friday from 9am until 3pm, except on a Tuesday when it closes at 1.30pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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