

# Inspection of Sandytots

Stafford Children's Centre, Stafford ST16 3NQ

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Inspection date: 21 September 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Staff greet children and parents warmly as they arrive at the nursery. They give children lots of cuddles and reassurance, helping them to settle and build attachments with staff and their key person. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points.

Children learn through a balance of child-initiated play and adult-led activities. Staff plan enjoyable learning opportunities based on children's interests and planned topics. For example, children create faces out of play dough as part of the 'All about me' topic. This helps children to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Children's physical development is supported particularly well. They have lots of fun practising their physical skills in the large and exciting outdoor area. They confidently navigate the climbing apparatus and eagerly travel down the slide. Children climb on tyres and balance beams. They help their friends and have lots of fun pretending they cannot touch the floor because it is hot lava.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff act as positive role models and manage children's behaviour effectively. Children know what is expected from them and happily follow simple instructions. Babies and toddlers learn new words to develop their growing vocabulary. They have lots of fun joining in with familiar nursery rhymes and listening to stories read by the enthusiastic staff. For example, babies snuggle up to staff and feel the different textures of sensory books.

## **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- The manager has established excellent relationships with other professionals, and this successfully contributes to ensuring that children get the help they need. The use of additional funding is planned well to meet individual children's needs. The special educational needs coordinator works effectively with children who require additional support. For example, children learn to communicate using sign language, which helps all children to feel included.
- Babies and toddlers giggle and smile as they move their bodies to music, freely expressing themselves. As babies become mobile, they safely explore the indoor and outdoor areas. The manager has devised a robust risk assessment procedure. However, staff do not consistently implement this. Some toys outside have not been checked to ensure they are clean and suitable. However, staff supervise children closely, which means the risk is minimal.
- Older children are articulate talkers and clearly express their feelings and wishes. Children use their imaginations as they explore the role-play areas and splash in

the water tray as they wash dolls. Children confidently greet visitors and tell them that they love playing outside.

- The manager and staff have developed strong parent partnerships. They keep parents informed on the care their child receives and their progress, through an online learning journal. Parents say their children are always happy to go to the nursery and feel that their children have become more confident.
- The manager and staff gather useful information from parents before children start at the nursery. Staff find out about children's interests and their care needs, which helps them to follow babies' routines. Staff are nurturing and sensitive to children's individual needs.
- Staff are respectful of children's backgrounds and cultures. They support children to develop an understanding of diversity through activities and conversations. Staff gather key words and phrases from families who speak English as an additional language, to aid communication.
- Older children learn to recognise their names and distinguish between different letter sounds. Staff teach children to recognise different shapes and to count objects during group activities. Staff give children lots of encouragement and praise for their achievements, helping to boost children's self-esteem. However, on occasions, staff miss opportunities to extend children's learning even further to help build on their existing knowledge.
- Children develop their independence in preparation for the next stage of their education. For example, older children confidently manage their own personal care needs and younger children learn to take off their own coats and shoes. Close links with the local schools help to support children effectively through their transitions to school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe. They have a good knowledge of signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of abuse or neglect. The manager and staff have a clear understanding of wider safeguarding concerns, including being drawn into extreme situations. Staff are confident with the nursery policies and procedures in relation to making referrals, dealing with allegations and whistle-blowing. Management and staff liaise effectively with other agencies, where necessary. The manager has a safe recruitment procedure in place to check the suitability of new staff and the ongoing suitability of existing staff. The nursery is safe and secure, and staff are trained in paediatric first aid to ensure the safety of children.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to identify opportunities as they arise, to extend children's learning and build on their existing knowledge
- strengthen the professional development of staff to develop their understanding and implementation of sound risk assessment procedures.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY469523
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204026
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	122
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	154
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Sandytots Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP909340
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785256155
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Sandytots is based in Stafford and opens Monday to Friday and all year round. Sessions are from 6.30am until 6.30 pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. In addition to the nursery, Sandytots also offers a before- and after-school club and a holiday club. The nursery employs 30 members of staff. Of these two hold an early years qualification at level 5 and 4 and 14 hold a qualification at level 3. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Angela Hulme

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to look at how the curriculum is planned to meet children's needs and development.
- A meeting was held with the inspector and the management team to discuss leadership and management arrangements.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and checked the evidence of the suitability of the staff working in the nursery.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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Manchester  
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