

# Inspection of Sandfield Natural Play Centre

Sandfield House, Lickers Lane, Whiston, Merseyside L35 3SR

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Inspection date: 30 September 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

Children flourish at this wonderfully unique nursery and are extremely happy and settled. Highly personalised settling-in and transition arrangements support children's emotional well-being exceptionally well. As a result, children are very confident and secure. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve and an impressive knowledge of children's individual capability and of what makes them unique. Leaders implement mixed-age groups so that younger children have opportunities to play and explore together and learn from their more able peers.

Children are fully involved in making decisions and their opinions and ideas are valued and respected. For example, children have contributed their suggestions in the development of the garden area, working closely with an archaeologist and staff. They learned about the history of the garden and the importance of preserving it, as they debated the best possible location for their sandpit. Children respect and value each other. They play harmoniously together and their behaviour is exemplary. They show a fierce determination and strong levels of perseverance as they play. For example, children continuously strive to solve problems and test their ideas and theories independently. They calculate how to make a wind chime hanging high in a tree make a sound and intelligently use drainpipes to reach it.

Staff worked tremendously hard during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic to maintain consistent communication for those children who could not attend due to the restrictions in place. Staff made a video call to children on a weekly basis and shared activity information to support children's learning at home. They completed detailed assessments when children returned and immediately began planning a purposeful curriculum to ensure that no child fell behind in their learning.

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

- Staff have a superb understanding of children's needs. They diligently gather information when children first start at the nursery. Staff visit families in their homes to establish children's existing skills and abilities and previous life experiences. They make excellent use of this information to plan meticulously for children's individual learning needs.
- Staff's interactions with children are outstanding. They effortlessly ignite children's passion and enthusiasm for learning and skilfully differentiate activities to provide optimal challenge that supports rapid progress. Young children use trial and error to establish which objects will sink or float. Older children confidently debate 'forces' when investigating how objects that usually float can still be pushed under the water. They perceptively notice how these objects move and change, which builds on their scientific understanding.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive highly tailored

support. Knowledgeable staff complete detailed, well-considered interventions that are regularly reviewed and continuously shared with parents. Furthermore, robust partnership working with other professionals ensures that any gaps in children's learning are swiftly identified and addressed.

- Children have wonderful opportunities to reflect on their differences and understand their place within society. They enjoy singing songs in other languages and participating in special celebrations that are important to their friends. Furthermore, children learn to use sign language as another method of communicating as they play together. Children recall when they learned about Indian weddings and the special clothes that are worn.
- Children demonstrate a love of literacy. Staff enthusiastically share books with children as they recall familiar phrases and discuss characters in their favourite tales. Children develop their awareness of stories further as they make a 'gruffalo crumble'. Extremely skilful questioning from staff encourages children to think critically at every opportunity. They talk about the 'ingredients' and work collaboratively together, listening to each other's suggestions.
- Leaders undertake rigorous and accurate evaluation of the nursery's performance. Staff are extremely passionate, committed and dedicated and share their leaders' enthusiasm and vision. They comment positively on the support they receive that encompasses supervision meetings, peer observations and opportunities to access an abundance of training. This enables them to further develop their already outstanding skills. Furthermore, leaders frequently disseminate their knowledge, inviting other professionals and trainees within the early years arena to visit their wonderful nursery.
- Partnerships with parents are tremendous. Staff foster highly effective and carefully considered strategies to help engage and involve parents in their child's learning. For example, they deliver educational opportunities that help parents to understand about patterns in children's learning and the importance of numeracy and literacy in the early years. Furthermore, stay and play sessions create opportunities for parents to see their children in this natural environment and enable them to recreate learning opportunities within their homes.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff complete extensive training in order to know exactly what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare. They fully understand and implement the nursery's comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff have a robust awareness of the whistle-blowing arrangements and know whom to report any concerns to. Staff are extremely vigilant in their care and supervision of the children. They ensure that they deploy themselves effectively and continuously encourage children to identify and manage their own risks. For example, children complete their own risk assessments before using the outdoor areas. This means that children have an astute understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are developing excellent skills for life.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY342763
<b>Local authority</b>	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204639
<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>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	70
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	108
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Suzanne and Alex Scott Partnership
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP526573
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4266262
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 December 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Sandfield Natural Play Centre registered in 2006. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, all year round, from 7am until 6pm. The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, 24 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including two staff who hold early years teacher status. There is an adventure club operating in school holidays for children up to the age of eight years. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Karen Cox

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector spoke with staff, parents and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- A learning walk was completed with the manager to discuss the curriculum intent and how the provision is organised.
- The inspector completed a joint evaluation of an activity with the deputy manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager, deputy manager and provider. She reviewed a variety of documents, including evidence of the suitability of staff, qualifications, first-aid certificates and policies.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children during activities and assessed the impact of teaching on children's learning.

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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