

Inspection of Sandhills Pre-school

Community Hall, c/o Sandhills School, Terrett Avenue, Sandhills, Oxford OX3 8FN

Inspection date: 14 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children enjoy being able to move freely between the large indoor classroom and the garden space. Although a broad range of resources are set out, activities do not consistently capture children's imagination and inspire them to explore. For example, children become excited as they look at a wormery in the garden. They learn to use a magnifying glass for closer inspection. However, staff do not offer enough support to extend their learning and enjoyment further. Children are enthusiastic to join in with group times, such as learning letter sounds. However, some struggle to remain engaged as the activities go on too long. As a result, children do not have the best possible opportunities to build on their prior learning or explore new ideas.

Overall, children are happy, settled and confident. They behave well and play contentedly alongside their peers. Children are beginning to learn about how to make healthy choices at snack time. For example, they know that fruit is good for them. Children also understand why some rules are in place to keep them safe, including walking rather than running indoors. They learn to take carefully managed risks as they play, for example as they set up an obstacle course, moving objects further for a greater jump.

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

- The manager does not have a fully clear intent for children's learning. As a result, activities sometimes lack challenge and do not engage children well. The manager makes sure that there are lots of resources set out when children arrive. However, she does not plan an educational programme that is designed to reflect the learning needs of the children taking part. The manager has good relationships with the staff and they form a friendly team. The manager acts as a key person, working directly with the children. This leaves her with little time to provide the supervision and support that staff need to continually develop their practice. As a result, some staff are slightly less secure than their colleagues in fully understanding their role and responsibilities.
- The pre-school receives some early years pupil premium funding to enhance the education of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Although the manager uses this money to buy additional resources, she does not target the spending specifically to benefit the children for whom it is provided.
- Although there are some inconsistencies in teaching, staff interact warmly with children and listen with genuine interest to what they have to say. Some activities are more successful. For example, children had a lot of fun playing a game of football with a member of staff. In addition, staff supported children effectively during the creation of the obstacle course. They followed children's instructions to move obstacles so that children could test out their own abilities.

- The manager and staff have formed positive relationships with the teachers at the school that the majority of children move on to. They share relevant information to help the transition of individual children to be as smooth as possible. They have been unable to take children to spend time in the school since the start of COVID-19. However, the manager plans to restart this in the future.
- Staff provide a friendly welcome as parents drop off and collect their children. Parents value the kindness of staff and comment how their children are happy to come along each day. They feel that this helps the children to grow in confidence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Three staff are trained to act as safeguarding leads and all staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe. They know what is expected of them in regards to reporting concerns about a child's welfare and where to go for advice and support. There is also a clear procedure to follow in case of an allegation being made against a member of staff. Staff understand the potential signs of abuse, including those relating to exposure to extreme views and beliefs. The suitability of all staff has been checked, although the records that demonstrate this are poorly organised.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure that staff have in place a curriculum that works with children's interests and extends their learning and development
- ensure that the committee takes responsibility to support the management team and puts in place robust systems for recording and checking the ongoing suitability of persons
- ensure that leaders convey their vision for the setting to the team so that they work better together to improve outcomes for all children
- target grants and funding specifically at individual children who will benefit the most, enhancing their opportunities and early years experiences.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY257122
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10228043
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	36
Name of registered person	Sandhills Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518051
Telephone number	07983961142
Date of previous inspection	20 January 2017

Information about this early years setting

Sandhills Pre-school registered at its current premises in 2003 and is run by a parent management committee. It is located in the grounds of Sandhills Community Primary School in Headington, Oxford. The pre-school is open on weekdays during school term times from 8.50am to 2.50pm. It receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs seven staff, three of whom hold relevant qualifications ranging from level 3 to level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Stephanie Dorling

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 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 held a management and leadership meeting with the manager of the pre-school.
- Conversations were held between staff members and the inspector throughout the day.
- The inspector carried out a detailed learning walk with the pre-school manager.
- Children's views were sought through conversations with the inspector.
- The views of parents were gathered in conversations with the inspector and via email testimonies.

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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