

Inspection of Sandhills Pre-school

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

Inspection date: 27 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children benefit from an exciting and engaging curriculum. Staff are attentive to ensure that they find out about children's interests and they weave this into their planning. This encourages children new to the setting to play with familiar toys, sing their favourite songs and explore well-known books. This helps children to settle well and feel safe and secure.

Children demonstrate incredibly kind and considerate behaviour towards one another. They follow the positive role modelling of staff. For example, older children say that they need to help their younger peers, as they begin experimenting pushing a trolley up and down the hill. They help them to gather items of interest to put in the trolley and join in with their repetitive play. Children consistently use good manners in their interactions with others, saying, 'Please help me' and 'Thank you'.

Staff have high expectations for children's learning. They prepare them for their eventual move to school effectively. For instance, children are eager to sit with their friends and demonstrate their developing understanding of concepts that promote early reading. They develop good levels of language and communication for their age. Staff promote good listening and attention during group sessions, and help children to recognise when it is their time to share their ideas.

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

- Since the last inspection, the pre-school team have worked effectively to establish their vision for the curriculum, and to determine the sequence of skills and knowledge they want to teach. Staff explain that they are now clear about learning aims and they can accurately identify what their key children know and need to learn next. Staff are more confident and children are making good progress from their starting points.
- Staff are prompt to seek advice from other agencies to support children with additional needs. They also use additional funding effectively to purchase equipment linked to children's interests, which they then use to spark their curiosity in other areas of learning. However, on occasion, staff do not demonstrate a secure understanding of how and when to help children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn to play alongside others. This impacts on their developing social skills.
- Children have consistently positive attitudes to their learning, which they demonstrate as they develop their physical skills. For instance, older children enjoy making ramps, which they crawl under and side-step along, learning to move in different ways. Younger children learn to scoop and pour water from one container to another. They find 'treasures' to add and demonstrate

particular confidence approaching visitors and inviting them to taste the 'soup' they have made.

- Managers establish positive partnership working with other settings. For example, they liaise closely with teachers at the school children transfer to. Teachers visit children at the pre-school so that children become familiar with them and they find out about their most recent achievements. This is helping to achieve continuity in children's learning and development.
- Parents speak of their children's positive experiences at the pre-school. They comment that they are particularly happy with communication and they appreciate the advice staff give them to support their children's personal needs, such as tips for good-quality sleep.
- The committee chair has supported the pre-school management team particularly well to improve practice. For instance, following the last inspection, they have reviewed record keeping and now ensure that recruitment and all staff suitability records are retained and kept securely. The committee chair has a good understanding of her role and responsibilities.
- Managers have a positive approach to professional development. For instance, they seek training to find out about further ways to promote early writing. Following training, they deliver targeted teaching, such as in small groups, to support identified children. Overall, this is successful. However, on rare occasions, staff are not fully effective at applying their own knowledge of the planned sequence of skills to support children's developing pencil grip. This means that some children do not fully understand what they need to do to make marks with increasing control.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. The designated safeguarding leads are familiar with the professionals they can liaise with to support individual children's needs. All staff know how to respond to any potential concern about children's welfare. For instance, they are able to describe pre-school and local safeguarding partnership procedures. Managers follow robust procedures to ensure that children have good attendance and they liaise well with parents to meet children's medical needs. The committee ensures that the ongoing suitability of staff is checked and recorded on a regular basis to help keep children safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen opportunities to help children to learn how to form friendships and begin to play alongside others, with particular relation to children with SEND

- support staff to recognise when to use their own knowledge of the sequence of learning to intervene more swiftly and further develop children's early writing.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY257122
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10247063
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	35
Name of registered person	Sandhills Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518051
Telephone number	07983961142
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2022

Information about this early years setting

Sandhills Pre-school registered at its current premises in 2003. 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 six staff, three of whom hold relevant qualifications ranging from level 3 to level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lisa Dailey

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector, nominated individual and manager discussed improvements that have been made since the last inspection.
- Parents spoke to the inspector and provided their views in writing on the day of the inspection.
- Children shared their views and showed the inspector examples of their creations.
- The inspector and manager completed two evaluations of activities that they observed together.

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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