

Sandcastles Nursery

81 London Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 2QL

Inspection date	09/09/2013
Previous inspection date	17/01/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff know the children extremely well and they plan activities and care routines based on their individual needs. As a result, the children make excellent advancement in their learning and development.
- The robust management systems are based on focused, in-depth evaluation of staff practice. A well-targeted programme of professional development means that staff are constantly seeking to improve their already excellent understanding of how young children learn.
- Children's safety and protection is assured through rigorous safeguarding procedures and consequently, children feel safe and secure.
- Strong, respectful partnerships with parents and other professionals means that children's individual needs are exceptionally well met. There are extremely strong arrangements to support children's transitions onto the next stages in their learning.
- The staff team are highly skilled and form nurturing relationships with the children. This supports children to become independent and highly motivated learners.
- Staff are all highly reflective practitioners and are extremely proactive in ensuring that there are ongoing quality improvements.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments, this included a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the management team, staff and children.
- The inspector viewed a sample of the children's development records and activity planning.
- The inspector saw evidence of suitability and qualifications of the staff, risk assessment and other documentation in relation to health and safety checks.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and from surveys carried out by the nursery.

Inspector

Patricia Champion

Full Report

Information about the setting

Sandcastles Nursery was registered in 2000 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from a total of five rooms within a converted two-storey school and annexe in Hadleigh, Essex. It is run and managed by a limited company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold Early Years Professional Status and one holds Qualified Teacher Status. There are eight staff that hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or higher. There are three staff that hold early years qualifications at level 2. There are six staff currently training towards a degree or qualifications at level 3. The nursery also employs a cook, receptionist and maintenance worker.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7am until 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions or out of school care. There are currently 112 children attending, who are within the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children, who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the already first rate indoor learning environment to enrich children's emotional well-being, by extending the planned programme of refurbishment to the rooms used by older children.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff have an excellent understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the different ways in which children learn. As a result, children throughout the nursery are exceptionally well supported in their learning and development and become inquisitive learners. Staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of their key children's needs and plan stimulating activities for their development. The quality of teaching is extremely effective and consequently, children are motivated and eager to learn. Children are offered an exciting blend of adult-led activities and experiences that

they choose for themselves. Staff are skilled knowing when to interact with children to extend their play and learning and when to allow them to play without their direct involvement. In addition, activities are differentiated to suit the needs of all children within their age groups. Babies and toddlers are offered extra daily adult-led activities that include sing and sign sessions, movement to music and walks to the local library. Older children take part in drama, cookery and gardening sessions and regular woodland and seaside outings.

Children have extremely informative development records, which are regularly monitored by the management team to ensure accuracy of recording. Staff make excellent observations of children as they play and learn. They note the characteristics of learning, depth of involvement and follow children's interests in detail. Accurate planning, assessment and termly reporting enable staff to ensure that all children are making rapid progress in their learning and development. A focused progress report is completed when children reach the age of two and this precisely identifies if there are any gaps in learning or whether children, need additional support.

Babies and toddlers have many opportunities to develop early skills and explore a variety of natural or sensory materials, such as, compost, sand, water and stimulating fabrics. This multi-sensory approach to learning ensures that children develop interests based on exploration and imagination. Children's speech and language skills develop really well. Babies frequently imitate words and sounds as staff speak clearly and ask them to indicate different parts of their bodies. Older children become very confident as they share their news with groups of children. Children with speech delay are supported effectively through the use of sign language. In addition, all children learn signing as they share useful phrases, songs and rhymes and interesting activities are planned to encourage children to explore and match different sounds.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at nursery and rapidly develop the skills they need in readiness for starting school. They quickly learn to link sounds to letters and older children proudly write their names on artwork or to display on their personal drawers. All children choose to look at books for pleasure. They make their own choices, sit down and turn the pages, looking at the pictures. During a group story, children enthusiastically predict what might happen next and enjoy recalling the main parts of the story. Dual language labels and symbols enable all children, including those who speak English as an additional language, to communicate their needs and access all areas of the nursery. Children's early mathematical awareness and concept of numbers, size and shape is skilfully supported as they play. For example, children measure and compare logs and twigs cut from branches in the garden. Routines and practical activities are used extremely well as children calculate and compare numbers at mealtimes and registration.

Children's development is extremely well supported through both indoor and outdoor experiences. They really relish the opportunity to choose where they prefer to play. The innovative and inspiring design of the outdoor area encourages children to extend their play using larger equipment and resources. Protective canopies and sails are used effectively to allow children to take part in large scale outdoor role play scenarios, in all weathers. For example, children imaginatively act out many aspects of what happens at an airport. They buy tickets, exchange currency, pack luggage and choose their seat on

the aeroplane, before they take off on their imagined journeys.

Staff work exceedingly closely with parents and other professionals and regularly share what they know about children's learning in nursery and at home. This is particularly evident with the close links with the wide range of outside agencies and professionals that support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All parents have ready access to their children's development records and support their interests, for instance, by bringing in family photographs and joining in the stay and play sessions. Ideas for parents to continue children's learning at home are displayed and are included on information sheets and the nursery website. The nursery also has a successful library and children can take books home to share with their families.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key person and buddy system is extremely well embedded. Young children's individual needs are lovingly met by nurturing staff, who work tirelessly to make sure new babies feel secure. Right from the start, staff gain a very clear picture of each child's early development and of their family, from written information and discussions with parents. Staff use this to assess the child's starting points, to support settling-in and inform early learning. This includes information about children's sleep routines, dietary requirements and medication for those with health needs. As a result, children settle quickly and form strong attachments.

Children are extremely well supported in their moves from room to room within the nursery. This is due to the settling-in visits with their key person as they move into a different room. Meticulous attention is given to ensuring that all individual records are passed onto the next key person. This ensures continuity and consistency of care, in order to meet and support children's individual welfare and learning and development needs. The nursery has extremely close links with local schools and arranges visits for the children to meet their new teachers. Staff also plan activities, such as role play or dressing-up in uniforms to prepare children for the transfer to school. Therefore, children confidently and seamlessly move onto the next phase in their education.

Children are actively encouraged to make independent choices in their play and staff ensure they have access to a highly stimulating and exciting range of resources that reflect their current interests. Many improvements have recently been made to the indoor and outdoor environments. The refurbishment of the annexe to provide high quality care for babies has proved to be a great success. A great deal of thought has been put into the impact of natural materials, textures and contrast of colours on young children's emotional well-being. However, this planned programme of improvements has not yet been fully extended to the playrooms used by the older children.

Children's physical development is given an extremely high priority. Children are clearly developing a love of the outdoors and recognise the benefits of fresh air and exercise. They eagerly put on waterproof ponchos and enjoy splashing in puddles in the rain. Children also show increasing control and coordination using different wheeled toys and physical play apparatus on the pathways. The indoor gymnasium is used exceptionally well

as an addition to the normal play spaces. Yoga sessions are organised and children have great fun climbing, sliding and clambering on the wide range of safe, soft play apparatus. There are also opportunities for children to develop important physical skills during swimming lessons at a nearby pool.

Through a variety of activities, babies and toddlers are supported to roll, crawl and develop their reaching, stretching and early walking skills. Planning for physical development also includes the importance of letting children learn finer physical skills for themselves, such as attempting to put on their own coats and shoes, pour drinks or use cutlery to help them become more independent. Younger children are very well supported in their self-care skills, nappy changing routines are highly effective in ensuring children's dignity is maintained. Babies sleep comfortably in cots with their own blankets and comforters, while older children seek quiet comfortable places for rest and relaxation. The sleeping areas are very calm and room rotas ensure a very high standard of cleanliness is maintained at all times.

Children enjoy the wholesome, nutritious food they receive at the nursery. Menus are seasonal and include a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. A rolling snack time helps children to develop an awareness of their bodily needs while letting them play without interruption. Fresh water is always available, so that children can help themselves to a drink when they feel thirsty. Children learn about making healthy choices and are keen to discover where food comes from. For example, each morning, they go out with staff to collect the eggs laid by the nursery's chickens.

Children have an excellent understanding of how to manage risks and challenges relative to their age. They know to take care when climbing on physical apparatus and learn to use tools, such as scissors correctly. They tell each other to be careful when walking on wet paths because they know they might slip when they play outside in the rain. Children also learn about their personal safety when emergency evacuation procedures are frequently practised.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery owners and the management team have exceptionally high aspirations and a clear and ambitious vision. They truly value the work of staff and their contributions. The staff team are fully involved in evaluation and decision making and they are motivated and take ownership. This embeds ambition and drives continuous improvement. Self-evaluation shows extremely rigorous monitoring and gives an accurate appraisal of its effectiveness and areas for further development. As a result, the nursery has sustained the outstanding teaching and care practices found in the previous two inspections. In addition, the nursery has successfully addressed the recommendation from the last inspection. The management team have been proactive in consolidating and streamlining documentation to make the evaluative processes more manageable. They have also been eager to include new initiatives and use ideas from research to make the effective ongoing improvements to the nursery environment. Through reflective practice, they recognise there is room to improve the playrooms used by the older children.

Safeguarding procedures are meticulous and implemented to a high level of consistency. All required documentation is in place. Staff are fully aware of their duty to protect children and know what to do should they have a concern about a child in their care. The management of the nursery is well aware of the importance of notifying Ofsted about any significant events that occur. Comprehensive and well-implemented risk assessments ensure the premises are safe and secure and these extend to cover activities and outings. There are extremely reliable arrangements for taking and collecting the children attending the out of school club, to and from school. Consequently, children move freely and safely throughout the nursery and on visits into the local community.

A robust vetting procedure helps to protect children. The ongoing suitability of staff is checked at appraisals, supervision meetings and during audits and spot checks of children's learning programmes. An extensive induction programme includes management and peer observations and self-reflection. Staff training and development profiles ensure that all staff reach the high standard of expertise and care expected at the nursery. Staff morale is exceptionally high and they say they love their work.

Observation, assessment and planning is monitored closely. This means that key persons know their children in depth and can readily discuss their age and stage of development. Tracking documents and the required progress check at age two are used with great effect to identify needs, show improvement and ensure activities are planned to enhance learning. Copious information is collected for individual children and groups of children, to make absolutely sure that no child gets left behind.

All staff are highly committed to working in partnership with parents. A variety of systems ensure parents are consulted at every stage of their children's care and development, which allows continuity of care. The views of children, parents and carers are continually sought, promoting better outcomes for children. For example, specifically adapted parental questionnaires are distributed in relation to the varying age groups. These are used to inform future planning for the individual playrooms. A wealth of information about how the nursery runs is available by way of a dedicated website and comprehensive displays. This ensures that parents are fully informed about how the nursery meets the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents all agree the nursery is brilliant and gives an excellent start to their children's educational journey. They say that the nursery staff are extremely supportive and give very good advice on how to help children at home. Exceptionally positive partnerships with other professionals and agencies involved with the children help to ensure that information relevant to each child's development and progress is shared.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	403985
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	910594
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	99
Number of children on roll	112
Name of provider	Sandcastles Nursery Ltd
Date of previous inspection	17/01/2011
Telephone number	01702 555171

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

