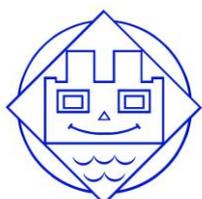


**SEN and Disability**  
**Local Offer: Early Years Settings**  
**Sandcastles Children's Nursery Ltd**

Ofsted Unique Reference Number: EY476948 (Prev: 309450)



# The Setting

Sandcastles Private Day Nursery opened in 1991. The nursery operates from the ground floor of a converted detached house on the seafront at Morecambe. Children have access to three main playrooms plus a hall, dining room and a secure outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 5.45pm, 51 weeks of the year. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 50 children aged 2 years – school age may attend the nursery at any one time. Sandcastles Nursery offers both full and part-time attendance options. The nursery provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years. At Sandcastles children move freely between rooms, children ages 2, 3 & 4 years interact and play together. The nursery has experience of supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are three small steps to the front door and steps from the patio to the rear outdoor play area.

Nine members of staff work directly with the children, all of whom hold early years qualifications to at least Level 3. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status (level 6).

The nursery has completed the 'Lancashire Quality award'. Ofsted last inspected Sandcastles in December 2012 and judged us as 'Outstanding in every area'. We are working hard to maintain our standards.

**Mission Statement:** *Sandcastles nursery provides a centre for early learning and care, dedicated to encouraging a quality start in education. Children and staff value one another and work together to create a happy community where everyone is encouraged to flourish.*

## **AIMS of our Nursery:**

To work in partnership with families and carers to:

- provide a stimulating and supportive environment where children's individual needs and abilities are recognised and all are encouraged to develop to their full potential
- provide opportunities for development in all areas of learning
- encourage each child towards taking pleasure in their own learning, development and health, as they grow
- encourage self-esteem, self-awareness and self-confidence
- encourage children to form positive relationships and to communicate effectively with other children and adults
- encourage respect for other people's feelings, values, beliefs and property
- encourage children to participate fully in nursery as well as family life
- celebrate achievement and effort at all levels and in all areas

## **Sandcastles Staff with Additional Responsibilities**

All Sandcastles staff keep their skills updated with regular training. Named staff take responsibility for specialist roles within our nursery. Please see the 'our team' section of our website for our full list of specialist roles. <http://www.nursery-morecambe.co.uk/our-team.php>

**Child Protection & Safeguarding:** Janet Burns & Helen O'Hagan

**Special Needs & Disability Co-Ordinators:** Julie Parlane & Helen O'Hagan

**Hearing impairment:** Claire Hayes & Kat Pughsley

**Behaviour Management:** Judith Stewart & Helen O'Hagan

**Equality Named Co-Ordinator:** Kat Pughsley & Judith Stewart

**Health & Safety:** Helen O'Hagan & Claire Hayes

## Accessibility and Inclusion

Sandcastles is situated in a converted Art Deco detached house on Morecambe promenade as such our building provides some limitations and challenges. The nursery has sole use of the ground floor of the building. There are three wide stone steps to the front door and steps down from our patio to the children's outdoor play area at the rear of our site. Families use our loop driveway for drop off and collection of children. Cars may be parked directly outside our front door. We have previously provided nursery care and education for pre-walking children and those using walking frames and aids. We often have children attending Sandcastles who are 'less steady on their feet' where relevant we work with guidance from Longlands Child Development Physiotherapists to ensure that we offer safe challenges tailored to individual children. Both our in and outdoor areas offer a range of textured flooring surfaces.

Our displays and information notices are changed regularly with children's work taking pride of place within our nursery. Our policies and procedures are available to all parents as hard copy (please request) we are also able to provide USB copies of documents allowing parents the opportunity to use their home computer to view / audio describe our policies and procedures. We work in partnerships with our local children's centres so we are able to offer some language translation services. We are dyslexia aware and provide tailored communication for parents who request dyslexia support (coloured paper, verbal explanations etc).

Our rooms have high ceilings, pale painted walls and lots of natural light. Our furniture and resources are free standing and can be rearranged to suit the needs of individual children or groups. We use lots of photo prompts, symbols and logo signs to help children start to 'read' meaning in images.

Sandcastles would be willing to make reasonable adjustments as needed where possible – please talk to us about your family's needs.

# Identification and Early Intervention

Parents are their children's first and most enduring educator – you are the authority on your own child. When children join Sandcastles parents will meet with one of our senior staff and discuss their child's preferences, skills and development. This 'All about me' discussion forms the foundation of your child's nursery learning journey folder. Your child's key person will collate all information and development notes regarding your child in this folder. You will be invited to take this folder home and comment on your child's progress each term.

Sandcastles uses a network of tools and information to ensure we are well informed about children's progress;

- Communication & language screening (WellComm)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters tracking
- Practitioner observation and assessment
- Information from parents and carers
- Information from specialist professionals e.g. Speech and Language Therapists
- Sandcastles Progress check at age 2-3 years, your child's key person will review your child's learning & development and meet with you to discuss their progress and targets

Where practitioners or parents have worries regarding any child's progress we will work in partnership with parents to promote children's emerging skills and support parents to seek specialist advice.

Sandcastles prepares 'request for guidance', 'referral forms', 'learning & progress summary' documents to support parents in seeking specialist advice. Sandcastles adheres to the DSCF revised Code of Practice on the identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (2004) and all subsequent legislation.

Support for individual children is tailored to reflect their emerging skills, areas for development and the advice of specialists and parents. Support plans are designed during 'Targeted Learning Plan' meetings which parents attend. Our TLP's are short term and focus on defining challenges and progress we are keen to achieve within 6-9 weeks. Where children struggle to achieve progress we work with parents to seek further specialist advice and guidance.

Whilst parents guide our support and intervention plans we do have a professional obligation to ensure that children have access to health, education and medical care as such we discourage parents from opting out of specialist services and advice.

Sandcastles has experience of partnership working with

Speech and Language Therapists  
Occupational Therapists  
Health Visitors  
Social Workers  
General Practitioners  
Visual Impairment teacher  
Children's Centre Outreach staff

Educational Psychologists  
Physiotherapists  
Portage Workers  
Paediatricians  
SEN Inclusion Teacher  
Hearing impairment teacher

Sandcastles is acutely aware of the emotional strain of parenting children with additional needs, we are here to support you to support your child. Our SENco is available to discuss your needs as a parent.

# Teaching and Learning Part 1

## – Practitioners and Practice

At Sandcastles all teaching and learning is routed in play, we believe that: Young children develop and learn best through play and first-hand experiences with the companionship of other children and of interested and supportive adults.

All aspects of development and learning in young children are interlinked, and children are born with brains and bodies which are ready to learn and move in increasingly complex and co-ordinated ways, given favourable conditions. Sandcastles offers such favourable conditions: space, freedom with responsibility, autonomy with comradeship, and companionable adults who have understanding of how children develop and learn, who can share in new discoveries, sympathise with setbacks and upsets, and prepare the nursery inside and outside for each child's interests and needs.

Play is neither easy to plan for, nor simple to support. Sandcastles plans using a flexible range of 'in the moment', weekly, seasonal and annual planning to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Each child will experience our curriculum uniquely. We provide free flow continuous provision so empowering children to choose their 'subject' time table each day. With adult support (observation, reflection, planning) children can experience all areas of learning within any single activity area. Different planning formats are used to support and inspire different skills – e.g. planning a group session to teach continence is inappropriate, whilst planning a session practising hand washing may be effective.

Children have very different temperaments. Some children need energetic, questioning and communicative adults in order to encourage them to explore and experiment. But more outgoing children can have their development hindered by this type of approach, experiencing it as interfering. All children need adults who listen attentively, develop conversation, and think out loud together with them.

Children's powerful learning mechanisms mean that a lot of their development happens through playing and experimenting. For example, through repeated experiences of playing with water and other liquids, children move from simple actions (e.g. a baby flicking water with her fingers) to more complex, co-ordinated actions (e.g. a four year old carefully pouring water from one container into another and then carrying the container over to the sand and mixing the two substances together to make the best consistency of sand to build castles with). Through repeating and practising these physical actions and experiments, children develop concepts about shape, space, and the properties of substances. At Sandcastles we plan and review the play resources and opportunities which we offer to children.

The development of language gives children an additional and immensely powerful mechanism for organising experiences and learning. Through conversation with adults and other children, children are increasingly able to distance themselves from what they are doing and reflect on it, or see another point of view. When adults engage with children co-operatively (e.g. thinking over a problem together; guiding a child by discussion through a process like cooking a cake which the child could not do independently), they are providing a very powerful structure to support children's learning.

EYFS v.2014 Statutory Requirements - 3.67. Special Educational Needs: "Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained nursery schools and other providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice. Maintained nursery schools must identify a member of staff to act as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other providers (in group provision) are expected to identify a SENco."

**Provision mapping** is a system which Sandcastles uses to describe and identify our process of supporting children with additional/special educational needs.

Please find our full provision mapping document <http://www.nursery-morecambe.co.uk/for-parents.php>

### **The Key Person role:**

At Sandcastles individual children's progress is monitored from their settling in visit to leaving by their key person who uses photos, notes, examples of work and transcriptions to record development highlights. Key people also prepare 2-3 year progress checks and screen children's developing communication skills using WellComm.

The main purpose of a key person system is to create a "family" atmosphere. When assigning key people we take into account existing staff-family relationships, the sessions that the child attends, the hours the team member works and the compatibility between the child, parent/carer and the team member.

What does the Key Person role mean:

*For the baby or young child*

*The key person makes sure that, within the day-to-day demands of the setting, each child for whom they have special responsibility feels individual, cherished and thought about by someone in particular while they are away from home.*

*For the parents and close carers at home*

*The key person ensures they have the opportunity to build a personal relationship with individual children rather than all children as a group in the setting. The benefits are likely to be peace of mind for parents, and the possibility for them to build a partnership with professional staff who may share with them the pleasures and stresses of child rearing. It provides an opportunity for them to liaise with someone else who loves their child.*

*The key person approach does not mean that attachments with parents will be undermined. In fact, this works the other way round: attachments at home and in the early years setting can support each other.*

*The key person approach does not mean that the key person should be with their key children all the time. Children need, and benefit from, interactions with other adults and children in the early years setting. Children often choose who they want to be attached to and these choices should be respected.*

## **Teaching and Learning Part 2**

### **- Provision & Resources**

At Sandcastles our practitioners are each allocated administration time to plan, assess and reflect on their key children's progress. Our manager is supernumerary which allows our team more opportunities to individualise our interactions with children and attend meetings with specialists and parents.

Our manager maintains our 'Access Action Plan' with support from our SENco & ENco ensuring that our facilities & resources match the needs of current families using our service.

Our greatest 'resource' is our staff expertise as such our manager discusses children's needs and staff confidence with key people during our regular professional development 'supervision' sessions.

All nursery settings within Lancashire receive a small volume of funding called AEN within their Early Years Free Entitlement Funding, this component provides a small budget to support settings to meet the changing SEN of children accessing the service. We have previously allocated our AEN to offer a period of increased staffing & to fund staff training.

# Reviews

Sandcastles operates an open door policy with our EYP/Manager, SENco and team of Nursery Practitioners available to discuss your child each day. We welcome family involvement and aim to work in partnership with parents and carers in the care and education of children.

Following your child's first week at Sandcastles we will share photos of what they have been enjoying and exploring (young children often need visual prompts to jog their memory to allow them to describe their day). Each term your child's learning journey folder will come home giving your family an opportunity to celebrate and discuss your child's progress. We love to see families adding in information and photos from home. Within your child's folder you will find 'Development Matters' learning and development tables – our staff use these to monitor your child's progress from joining nursery to leaving for school.

Your child's Health Visitor will complete a Healthy child progress check when your child is aged 18-36 months. Your Health Visitor will contact you directly to schedule this check. At Sandcastles your child's key person will also monitor your child's development and will prepare a '2 year old Progress check' document in partnership with you. Sandcastles screens children's communication skills regularly using the WellComm programme. The majority of our local schools also use this technique as children during reception year.

For children requiring 'Targeted Learning Plans' within Sandcastles we will host regular review meetings with you here at nursery. These meetings provide an opportunity for our team and you to share progress and define new support plans and targets for the coming 6-9 weeks. Sandcastles staff are also available to attend or host 'Team around the Family' meetings where necessary. For children with 'Statements of SEN' or 'Education, Health and Care Plans' Sandcastles follows the statutory process.

We share information with parents via short newsletters and memos attached to fee invoices, these newsletters are tailored to each child's age. We also share details of activities and events through the year using posters and photos on our entrance door and notice boards. We update our website monthly [www.nursery-morecambe.co.uk](http://www.nursery-morecambe.co.uk).

We often ask for parent feedback regarding changes to our policies and procedures.

# Transitions

Identified 'transitions' within Sandcastles:

Joining nursery

Leaving Sandcastles

Changes in family home life (emotional transitions) – new baby / divorce / moving etc

Changing key person\*

Becoming a 'RED' tabard

Daily arrival & departure

\*Several years ago the Sandcastles team implemented free flow continuous provision where a single key person remains closely connected to each child and family from settling in visits until the child leaves. This removes many of the 'transitions' common within other nurseries. Occasionally due to staff maternity leave etc children do move key person groups where possible this is planned for and introduced slowly. Where possible we also work to ensure that future siblings are linked to the same key person.

Often, transitions involve a process of change that requires children to adapt their thoughts, feelings and behaviours to meet new expectations. Where possible we have removed unnecessary transitions within nursery and encourage our partners to consider what adaptations we all can make as adults to ease children's experiences.

**Aims:** We want our children to experience a smooth educational and emotional transition into, through and out from nursery. This will support children to make the best all round progress.

**Equal Opportunities and Inclusion:** Children and parents are actively involved in the process and their perceptions about transition are explored and valued. Building relationships with children and families helps parents to share confidences and concerns with us earlier.

There are clear curriculum guidelines and legal entitlements for children with 'statements' during transition.

## Principles that underpin the policy

S – stay safe

H – be healthy

E - enjoy and achieve

E - economic well-being / skills for the future

P - positive contribution

Transitions are not overlooked or left to chance, but thought about and planned in advance.

Effective transition takes time, and is a process rather than an event. Transition is about the setting fitting the child, not the child fitting the setting.

Parents are children's first and enduring educators. Parents and carers need to feel well informed about and comfortable with transitions in their child's life. Children, parents/carers and staff all need to be involved and work in partnership – when supporting children joining nursery building trusting relationships with parents quickly is essential. We will seek information from the previous setting/phase/child's home. Whilst we work in partnership with parents we will act as advocates for children and their interests.

Children's emotional welfare, wellbeing and involvement should be monitored through transition periods. Children should enjoy the transition process. Transitions should motivate and challenge children.

Styles of teaching and learning should meet the needs of children and not pre-conceived notions of what is or is not appropriate or 'next'. Children and parents are individuals; our policies and practices must offer flexibility to be responsive.

### Science behind our approach to Transitions - University of Bath. Dr Julie Turner-Cobb 2005

- Stress hormone Cortisol was found to rise 3 months prior to starting school.
- Cortisol levels increased further as children join primary school.
- Within 6 months of starting school children had adapted well and Cortisol levels were reduced to lower than the 3 month prior to school level.
- Children observed as less socially interactive at school were not necessarily more anxious but rather used removing themselves from social situations as a coping mechanism.
- Children with lower morning cortisol levels were better able to focus their attention and inhibit impulsive behaviour.

*Whilst we have no data we consider these results might also indicate the potential 'stress' children experience joining a nursery setting or moving within a setting.*

### Examples of how Sandcastles supports transitions:

	Joining Sandcastles	Becoming a 'Red' Tabard	Starting school	New key person
<b>All children</b>	<p>Hosting a minimum of 1 settling in visit. Scheduling additional visits as best suits child and family.</p> <p>Senior staff member completing 'All about me' discussion during settling in session.</p> <p>Parent – practitioner 'discussions' during settling in sessions.</p> <p>We keenly review Learning journey from previous settings.</p> <p>We are happy to visit your family at home.</p> <p>We will share our Top tips parents leaflets.</p> <p>We advise families to start with short but frequent attendance.</p> <p><u>Returning following 4+wks holiday:</u> Min 1x settling in visit. Parent – practitioner 'chat'.</p>	<p>Children encouraged to role play and try tabards on.</p> <p>We position mirrors– encourage children to acknowledge and admire their progression.</p> <p>We talk about the progression of blue tabard-red tabard-school from joining.</p> <p>We talk about Red tabard attitudes and characteristics (trying hard, finding out, helping others, team work) tabards are earned and awarded.</p> <p>Red has always (22yrs) been preschool colour here – we have photos of big brothers, parents, aunts etc as reds.</p> <p>Red tabards symbolise a state of mind, expectation of effort &amp; community.</p>	<p>Continuation of blue-&gt;red-&gt;school process – children start talking about going to school after red tabard summer as soon as they are awarded a red tabard.</p> <p>School group visual display.</p> <p>Teachers invited into nursery.</p> <p>Children share learning journeys with teachers (either at nursery / take to school).</p> <p>We share our experience of children and parent's interest, learning styles &amp; expertise with teachers.</p> <p>We remind parents of local school events – PTA BBQ's &amp; Visit days etc. We introduce parents to one another as relevant.</p> <p>We introduce children to uniforms, food trays, school environment / staff.</p> <p>Top tips parents leaflet.</p> <p>Transition to school documents prepared and shared with parents and teachers early in Summer term.</p>	<p>Transition process will move slowly.</p> <p>Parents and carers introduced to new key person.</p> <p>Where possible child will choose new key person. Parents will be invited to voice any preference.</p>
<b>Personalised support</b>	<p>Practitioners are able to join child at SEN playgroups before child joins Sandcastles.</p> <p>Family member invited to accompany child for initial sessions / first term.</p> <p>Practitioners visiting family at home.</p> <p>Staff available to attend specialist training individual to child. Staff available to attend multi-disciplinary meetings in advance of child joining.</p>	<p><i>As relevant to individual child..... new children sometime choose not to wear a tabard until they feel at home here.</i></p>	<p>We will contribute / host individual SEN transition to school meetings &amp; complete paperwork as appropriate / required.</p> <p>Practitioners available to visit school – environment / experiences alignment.</p> <p>Tailored support to build foundation of success – communication skills and social / emotion skill.</p>	<p>Key person photo &amp; biography shared with family.</p> <p>Child to choose own new person.</p> <p>Opportunity to spend extended time with new key person.</p>

### **At Sandcastles we encourage parents to be involved by:**

- Welcoming parents into nursery at arrival and home times each day.
- Welcoming parents into nursery whenever they have a query or concern. We offer meetings the same day that parents raise any concerns. We do not have scheduled parent's evenings etc we feel that our families are unique so we adapt to meet individual families needs.
- Inviting parents to pop in and join us for fun events – fire engine / Road safety road show / guests at lunchtime etc.
- Newsletters, photos, memo notes to inform parents of curriculum coverage.
- Encouraging parents/carers and families to come in and help in the classrooms / outdoors.

### **Appendices**

Top tips – joining nursery – all prospective families will be given a hard copy during their tour of Sandcastles.  
Top tips – joining school

### **Further Reference**

- Seamless Transition: Supporting continuity in young people's learning, Ref DFES – 0267 – 2006
- Every Parent Matters, Ref LKAW/2007
- Progress Matters – Reviewing and enhancing children's development, Ref. 00217 – 2009BKT-EN
- The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Education, Ref DCSF – 00924 - 2008

[www.standards.dcf.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dcf.gov.uk)

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

## **Staff Training**

Sandcastles currently employs 7 Nursery Practitioners who work as key people to named groups of children. We also employ an 8<sup>th</sup> Nursery Practitioner (SEN support specialist) who does not have a named key group but supports other staff and covers annual leave. All of our 8 staff are qualified to level 3 (NNEB or equivalent) and continue to attend additional training / in house coaching / online tutorials throughout their career. Our manager holds Early Years Professional Status (level 6). Our manager/EYP is available to parents, children and staff 5 days a week.

Our SENco & Manager hold termly meetings with our local authority Inclusion Teacher where we discuss our ongoing training needs, named supported children and any parents requests for guidance.

Our team of Nursery Practitioners have many years of varied experience. Our SENco works directly with staff and children and is supported in the administration of SEN paperwork by our manager/EYP.

Sandcastles delivered the Every Child a Talker programme before it was superseded by WellComm.

### **Sandcastles Staff with Additional Responsibilities**

All Sandcastles staff keep their skills updated with regular training. Named staff take responsibility for specialist roles within our nursery. Please see the 'our team' section of our website for our full list of specialist roles. <http://www.nursery-morecambe.co.uk/our-team.php>

Child Protection & Safeguarding: Janet Burns & Helen O'Hagan

Special Needs Co-Ordinators: Julie Parlane & Helen O'Hagan

Hearing impairment: Claire Hayes & Kat Pughsley

Behaviour Management: Judith Stewart & Helen O'Hagan

Equality Named Co-Ordinator: Kat Pughsley & Judith Stewart

Health & Safety: Helen O'Hagan & Claire Hayes

## Further Information

### **Queries and questions:**

If parents or prospective parents/carers have any queries, comments or suggestions please phone Helen O'Hagan on 01524 831932 or contact us via our website. <http://www.nursery-morecambe.co.uk/contact-us.php>

**Choosing a nursery:** We are happy to discuss your child's needs and your ambitions many months in advance of your child joining Sandcastles. Touring our nursery does not imply any obligation for you to sign up to Sandcastles – we are happy to discuss how we might theoretically provide for your child's individual needs. Every child is different and whilst this document will hopefully have helped to inform you it cannot replace the value of visiting our nursery with your child to discuss your needs in detail.

**Working in partnership with Parents/Carers:** Sandcastles families have daily access to our manager and our team of nursery practitioners. Your child will have a named 'key person' who is your first port of call for all questions and queries. Staff are available to share information at the start or end of each child's day, however our priority is the welfare and interests of children in our care as such we aim to keep adult conversations brief. Whenever you wish to have a longer chat with your child's key person or Helen / SENco please either phone us or mention this as you drop your child off in the morning and we will make time to meet with you the same day.

**If you are worried about your child's progress:** Please share your worries with us, you know your child best. It is not possible for our small team to effectively deliver expertise in every field however we are well equipped to guide you towards the most relevant help and professional advice where needed e.g. speech therapists, educational psychologists, physiotherapists, dieticians etc.

We welcome feedback, if you feel you need to **compliment or challenge our conduct** please find our complaint management process and our anonymous feedback facility at <http://www.nursery-morecambe.co.uk/feedback.php>

Document prepared by Helen O'Hagan 29/06/2014

*Revision due July 2015 – to include any FAQ following on from the introduction of this document*