



Bennetts End Adventure Playground

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129321
Inspection date	01 June 2006
Inspector	Kim Wailling
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Registered person	Dacorum Borough Council
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bennett's End Adventure Playground is an open access play facility and one of four adventure playgrounds run in the Hemel Hempstead area by Dacorum Borough Council. It has been opened for many years and was registered in 1992. It operates from a single storey building with a games and activity area, an art and craft area, a kitchen and toilets. There is also an office, first aid room and storage facilities. The outside area is fully enclosed.

The scheme is registered for 100 children between six and eight years and accepts children up to the age of 13 years. In term time, the adventure playground is open on

Monday to Friday from 15:30 to 18:30. On Saturdays and Sundays it opens from 13:00 to 17:00. During the school holidays it is open from 09:30 to 17:30.

The setting employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is adequately promoted as the setting has in place sound ways of working. Satisfactory procedures, for example, to care for children if they become ill are in place, as well as sickness and administration of medication policies that are shared with parents and carers. In addition, staff remind children to wash their hands before eating, a message which is reinforced by posters around the room. The children's toilets are very clean but do not always have adequate supplies of soap. This limits the effectiveness of the setting to minimise cross infection on an every day basis.

Children's health, if they have an accident, is appropriately safeguarded. The setting has a designated first aid room which has a range of first aid requisites. Accidents are recorded and recently implemented procedures are now in place to ensure the parents and carers are informed of minor accidents to children under eight years. The manager holds a twelve hour first aid at work certificate, and along with other staff members, also holds a current first aid certificate based on a four hours training. However, the setting does not have confirmation that this training attended by the majority of staff is consistent with any guidance issued to local authorities by the Secretary of State and contains a sufficient paediatric element. This potentially compromises the health of children.

Children have extensive opportunities to play in the fresh air and enjoy physical activity. This contributes towards a healthy lifestyle. Children play team games, which are well organised, for example football tournaments. In addition, children enjoy exploring the range of large apparatus outside which promotes balancing, climbing and running skills.

Children can use a small comfortable area set aside for them to relax and enjoy quiet activities. However, this sometimes is not available to them as it is used to store equipment such as billiard cues. Subsequently, insufficient supervision of the quiet area means that children's need for rest and relaxation is overlooked.

Children dietary needs are adequately met as the setting ensures that drinks and foods that the children enjoy are available. Children access the water fountain throughout the day. Wall charts provide children with relevant dietary information so that they can make informed choices from the available range of snacks. Snacks and hot foods are served from a clean kitchen by staff who are aware of good food hygiene practices. The setting is encouraging children to widen their diets and tastes by introduction events such as 'apple tasting day'. Children who prefer to bring in

their own food from home are encouraged to do so. Packed lunches are appropriately stored in cool boxes in the kitchen area. Consequently, positive steps are being made support children's healthy eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well designed and maintained environment. Effective steps are in place to enhance children's safety in a setting where some activities are physically challenging and as a result carry a limited degree of risk. Children use equipment and furniture which is age-appropriate and fit for purpose, such as child height tables and chairs. Robust risk assessments are in place which are carried out by the manager on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Staff are very vigilant and take immediate action to minimise potential hazards to children. This includes carrying out running repairs to wooden fences to prevent injury by splinters. Children keep themselves safe by following the setting's sensible safety rules. Children report infringements to members of staff, as when children ride bicycles in playground. These incidents are dealt with calmly. Staff explain to the children why such actions are potential danger to others. As a result children are not exposed to unnecessary risk.

Children's welfare is well protected as staff members demonstrate a good working knowledge of child protection issues. This is underpinned by relevant documentation. However, it is not documented that induction for new staff includes an element of child protection. This oversight, potentially, impacts on the effectiveness of the setting to fully protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enthusiastically join in with the activities that the club has to offer. There is a wide range of indoor resources that are challenging and motivating, such as art resources, billiard tables and a disco mat. Alongside these, children make good use of the outdoor environment. This is very well resourced, offering impressive large fixed climbing apparatus and an enclosed woodland area. All areas are used freely by the children. Staff announce when group activities, such as organised football matches, begin which enables children to make decision about their play.

Children play cooperatively with each other and form strong friendships with others. Younger children are befriended by older children. There are many opportunities for children to initiate their own games and imaginative play. There are spaces where children can make outside 'dens' for quiet play alongside team games which are popular and include all children. Children have a friendly and relaxed relationship with staff, who take a genuine interest in what the children have to say. Staff members teach children how to play board games and make models which supports their learning in an enjoyable way. Overall children are offered a good balance of activities and resources. This means that the setting is well attended by children who have fun

in a secure and welcoming environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents and carers is well developed. Comment sheets are made available to parents and carers so that they can share their views. Remarks such as 'a safe and friendly place for kids of all ages' illustrate the positive feedback given. Parents and carers share initial information on their child through the registration process. This forms the basis of meeting children's individual needs. Notices, brochures and policies are readily available and provide valuable information to inform parents and carers about children's care. Complaints procedures are in place should they be necessary, including recording concerns. Currently, recording is not linked to National Standards. Those parents and carers who collect their children are welcomed into the scheme and share relaxed conversation with staff.

Children feel a sense of belonging as they confidently use all available areas and move around freely. Children from a variety of backgrounds are welcomed into the scheme. Children's social and emotional development is very well supported as staff take time to find out about children's likes and dislikes. Children develop a positive attitude towards cultural similarities and differences as they take part in craft activities which celebrate festivals such as the Chinese New Year. Children's work is valued and attractively displayed. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome to attend. Their needs are discussed with parents at the outset and strategies agreed to support them.

Rules are displayed for children to observe. Children behave well and play harmoniously together. They make friends at the club and enjoy playing together. Children are asked their opinions about how to develop the scheme. This means that mutual respect has developed which empowers children. During supervised group activities, the staff skilfully stand back to allow children to find their own solutions before intervening. This enables children to begin to take some responsibility for their own behaviour. However, when staff identify inappropriate behaviour this is challenged or dealt with through appropriate strategies that include warnings and exclusion. This means that children's enjoyment is not dulled by the actions of others.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is enhanced by good staff deployment. At the time of the inspection visit the staffing ratio exceeded minimum care standard requirements which meant that children's play and involvement in activities were positively supported. Staff members work well as a team. They have experience of working with children of differing ages and are aware of the need to help all children feel included and settled. All staff members attend regular training courses to keep their knowledge and skills updated.

All records and procedures were available for inspection. These are well organised and fully support the effective and efficient running of the setting. Induction procedures are in place but do not indicate sufficiently when child protection procedures are discussed with new staff. Regular team meetings and support from the local authority Children's Service Manager enable the staff team to review procedures and practices that support children's development. The manager of the scheme is enthusiastic and forward thinking. She evaluates what the club has to offer children and makes changes, in consultation with children and staff members, to improve the provision. Consequently, effective organisation means that the open access play scheme offers a good quality of care to children under eight who attend.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to date staff induction records, organise space so that children can participate in quieter activities, provide children with sufficient resources including play materials to reflect culture and disability, to review procedures for minimising possible hazards to children and ensure child protection guidance is available at the setting.

Most areas have been fully addressed which has resulted in a positive impact on the standard of care offered to children. However, two areas, ensuring that space is made available for children to rest and participate in quieter activities at all times and checking that staff induction records detailing staff training on child protection are dated, remain underdeveloped. Consequently, this oversight means that procedures to enhance children's health and welfare are not fully comprehensive.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children's good health is promoted at all times and positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, with particular reference to the availability of soap
- provide evidence to show that staff first aid qualifications include training for infants and young children which is consistent with any guidance issued to local authorities by the Secretary of State
- ensure that provision made for children who wish to relax or play quietly is made available at all times
- devise recording procedures that show staff have induction training, which includes child protection, in their first week of employment.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk