



Strathmore After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	146767
Inspection date	25 September 2006
Inspector	Gyatri Rupal
Setting Address	Strathmore Infant School, Old Hale Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2NP
Telephone number	01462 438499
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Registered person	Strathmore Fun Club
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Strathmore After School Club opened in 1998 and operates from the Strathmore School Building in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The club use the dining room, hall, reception area, kitchen and there is an office on the site. There is a large enclosed playground for outside play.

A maximum of 40 children may attend the club at any one time. Currently there are 21 children on roll under the age of eight years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The club is open each weekday from 15.00 to 18.00 during school term time only. The club supports children with learning difficulties. The club employs six staff members to work with children. Most of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a varied, worthwhile range of physical activities which helps to promote their good health. They keenly participate in free-play and organised activities on a daily basis. For example, children use the climbing apparatus in the playground, moving across it confidently. Children have freedom to choose what they play with and opportunities to challenge themselves when using new and familiar resources and equipment, extending their knowledge and skills. They also use the school hall to dance to music, make up their own games and enjoy using a range of sports equipment.

Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They talk about why some types of food and drinks are better for their bodies than others. Some posters are displayed in the dining room to promote a healthy diet. Children enjoy their snacks at the after-school club which offers them a selection of fresh fruit from a basket. Parents' wishes are respected and children can also have crisps, biscuits and hot snacks such as toast and sausages. Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the session and children are able to help themselves independently. Children's individual health and dietary requirements are met because staff maintain written records for each child. Children are able to rest and relax in comfortable surroundings according to their individual needs. For example, a child lies down on the cushions covered with a sheet to watch a favourite video.

Children are protected from infection because the staff have a sound understanding of children's healthcare matters. They implement policies and procedures which generally promote good health and children's well-being. For example, most staff hold a valid first-aid certificate so that they can treat minor accidents. All accidents and medication records are kept and signed by the parents. However, sometimes a qualified member of staff is not present in the club which compromises the children's well-being. Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene practices through their daily routine. They wash their hands when they arrive at the club and are offered gentle reminders by the staff to wash their hands before they have their snacks. Children have made posters about washing hands which staff place every day on their snack table.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. The staff carry out daily risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe for children. Space and resources are organised appropriately to ensure children can move freely and safely between the activities. Children are given gentle reminders when they wander into restricted areas. Children use a broad range of safe, well-maintained and developmentally appropriate resources. All items are checked regularly for safety. Children learn to keep themselves safe through the staff's guidance and discussions. The club also displays some rules for children to follow for their safety. For example, children must not open doors to anyone and must not run in the corridor. Children learn about fire safety as they practise emergency evacuations regularly.

Children are protected from harm or neglect as the staff understand their duty to protect children. The leader has accessed appropriate child protection training and therefore has a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if the club has any concerns. The staff has access to appropriate child protection documentation which has been updated in line with the National Standards.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy taking part in a suitable range of activities throughout the sessions. They have a sense of belonging as they come into the club and know the routine. They are confident in their relationships with each other and the staff. They play well together and are learning to take turns. Children are free to select their choice of activities which are already laid out by the staff before their arrival. They can also access other play resources independently which are kept within easy reach of the children.

Children are able to concentrate and persist at self-chosen activities. They particularly enjoy art and craft activities, making presents for their parents, drawing and making models with Lego, listening to the music, playing games with their friends and outdoor play. Some children enjoy relaxing quietly as they read books or watch their favourite films or cartoons. The staff have an understanding of the children's individual needs and capabilities and adapt activities to meet their needs. They are available to support and engage children, helping them to access the activity at an appropriate level.

Children understand the need to negotiate and take turns with others when playing games and using the play station. Children's growing self-esteem and confidence is promoted. They benefit from appropriate interaction from staff who maintain a good balance between allowing children to play without intervention and knowing when to step in to offer guidance and support. Children receive plenty of praise for their efforts and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are able to feel welcome and comfortable because staff value and respect their individuality. Children who have learning difficulties have their requirements identified and met as there is a clear policy relating to this. Staff are skilled in ensuring that all children are able to participate at a level appropriate to them and are offered activities and opportunities which reflect their needs and abilities.

Children are offered an appropriate range of activities and play opportunities which promote their understanding of the wider world. Their behaviour is generally good throughout the sessions as they understand clear boundaries for their expected behaviour. They play well with each other and help each other with their play. The staff deal appropriately with unexpected behaviour and remind children why certain behaviour is not acceptable.

Children benefit from the positive partnership the club has established with parents and carers. Staff regularly share information with the parents. The parents are welcomed and staff go

through most of the policies and procedures with them to ensure that they are aware of these. Parents are also asked to sign the statement to confirm they understand all the policies and will obey the club's rules. Parents are updated regularly with newsletters and in addition, important information is displayed. However, parents are not made aware of the updated complaints procedure.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well settled in the setting. Their play opportunities are enhanced by the clear organisation of space. They feel confident in initiating their own play and learning. Their welfare, care and safety are generally promoted through the implementation of policies and procedures. Staff review most of their policies and procedures regularly and this ensures that they follow them at all times, although the complaints procedure does not comply with the recent amendments issued in October 2005. A suitable system for registering staff and children is implemented. However, occasionally a member of staff is left in charge of all the children, this compromises ratios and children's safety. The setting does not always ensure the presence of a staff member who holds a valid first aid qualification.

Children are happy and well-settled because they feel comfortable approaching staff for help and support. The staff are very friendly and work well with each other. Staff work well with the parents which helps build a trusting relationship with the children. Children are suitably protected as the club has robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. The staff greet parents and carers as they collect their children. They inform all staff members when collection arrangements have been changed so that children can only be collected by the named person. Children's care is enhanced by the clear staff induction programme. The club has full support from the committee to improve the quality of the service they provide to children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to develop an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met.

Since the last inspection the setting has encouraged staff to undertake further training and most staff have completed their level 2 qualification. The person in charge has a level 3 qualification.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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):

- update the complaints procedure in line with guidance issued in October 2005 and share this information with parents
- ensure suitable contingency arrangements are in place to cover emergencies and unexpected staff absence and ensure there is a minimum of two adults on duty at all times
- ensure there is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises at any one time.

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