



Highland Games

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	147553
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Inspector	Maggie Thorp
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Registered person	The Highland Games Activity Weeks Limited
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?

Highland Games is a privately owned summer holiday play scheme that has been registered since July 1997. The group operates from King Alfred School which is situated in Golders Green. Children have use of a number of the school's sports halls, classrooms and outside games areas.

The emphasis is on children participating in art, craft and sport, although there are other activities on offer. The scheme operates during three weeks of the school summer holidays.

Their hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 09:30 until 16:00. A maximum of 150 children under 8 years may attend at any one time. There are currently 103 children aged between 4 and 8 years on roll, and they attend for a variety of sessions. Children over eight years also attend. Children with special needs are included.

Highlands Games has 22 staff working directly with the children, of these 12 work specifically with the children under 8 years, and of these 7 hold an appropriate sports or child care qualification. The staff team also includes 11 helpers who are aged under 17 years and are not directly responsible for the children. The director and a nurse are on site and also work with all the children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are kept healthy through being cared for in a clean environment with good measures in place to prevent the spread of infection. The large site is regularly patrolled to maintain this. Toilets are regularly checked and cleaned and litter is picked up. Children are also learning how to keep healthy themselves. They are reminded to drink plenty on hot days, use their sun creams and wear sun hats. Shady areas are created with the use of marquees for outdoor activities where ever possible.

Children's health and well being is safeguarded effectively by there being a dedicated first aider, who is very well trained and experienced. In addition there are well thought out procedures in place meet children's particular health needs. Staff are alert to any special needs. They have a sheet with that child's photo on, details of the child's condition and what might trigger ill health, what symptoms to look out for and how to respond. Children bring their own packed lunches and staff supervise meals times well to ensure food is not shared with any child who has an allergy. Children sit in small groups at mealtimes which are relaxed social occasions.

Children have very good opportunities for physical exercise and they take part in a wide range of sports. Children enjoy ball games and are refining their skills, guided by staff, as they play such games as badminton, table tennis, and football. They have fun bouncing on the trampoline and bouncy castle. And younger children take pride in mastering the monkey bars on the climbing frame which offers just the right level of challenge for four and five year olds.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy the ample space and resources for indoor and outdoor play on this large site. Each area has a different activity and these are well equipped. There are plenty of balls, rackets, and other outdoor play equipment. Art activities, cooking activities and computer games sessions are equally well resourced.

Some effective measures are in place to protect children's safety but there are weaknesses. Children are escorted safely to the activity of their choice. The steps taken to ensure the safety and security of premises is good as is fire safety. Regular health and safety checks are carried out throughout the day to prevent children accessing hazards.

However, not all staff are clear about children not being supervised by unchecked staff. Staff are aware of the possible signs that a child might be being harmed. There is an experienced senior member of staff who is responsible for child protection, but all staff do not have a good understanding of the procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of sports and art activities, which are well matched to different children's ages and interests. There is a good balance of lively and quiet play. Children also enjoy a variety of different environments. Children aged six and seven have fun running around in their base room playing bench ball, then relaxing with their friends over snack time. Later some children refine their skills in playing badminton, whilst others sit quietly, painting in the art room or modelling under the pottery marquee. Children take part in charades and drama sessions where their creativity and imagination is also fostered well.

Younger children aged four and five years enjoy cooking activities, each able to work independently to make their own batch of chocolate chip cookies. Their art skills and creativity are encouraged by painting and craft activities such as making name plaques for their bedroom doors with paint and printing materials or making and decorating pasta bracelets. They enjoy the challenge of lively play outdoors and in the sports halls.

Children are confident and independent as they are able to make decisions and choices throughout each day. They are learning new skills and enjoying the setting because staff are enthusiastic and encourage each child. Younger children aged four and five years play in a two small groups. Each group moves freely around their base room which is attractively resourced and set out. On any particular day children can choose from a number of activities that are always available or participate in the planned activities led by staff.

Older children are also grouped and each group has a particular member of staff who they get to know well over the week. Children are confident in turning to staff for help and support. In addition the groups are organised so that children can be with their friends. Team games such as football and those requiring a degree of co-operation like parachute games are designed both for children to have fun and to enable them to learn to work well together. Children are not left out when teams are picked because staff organise these times well to foster children's self esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children relate well to each other and their good behaviour is praised to reinforce this. Camper of the week awards are used as an incentive for children to be helpful, try hard and be willing to learn new things. All children receive something at the end of the week presentation which parents attend. Staff think carefully about how to encourage children. They look out for children who doubt their sporting or artistic abilities and actively find things to praise them for.

Children play well together in the rich mix of different cultures and abilities represented by those attending Highland Games. Staff encourage both boys and girls to discover the fun that can be had through participating in all activities whilst respecting the choices they make. A number of children with special needs attend and there are good systems in place to ensure their needs are understood by staff. All children are included and involved.

Children benefit from the partnership between staff and parents. This helps staff to get to know children well, and children are happy and settled. Staff respect parents wishes about how their children are cared for and a careful note is made of any information parents provide regarding a child's care. Parents receive adequate information about arrival and collection procedures, activities, and the provision of refreshments in the brochure provided. Newsletters are also sent out to alert parents to additional information. However, parents are less well informed about some important procedures for example, how to complain should they wish to.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of activities provides children with a wide variety of art and sports activities to choose from each day. Children benefit from the combined knowledge of the staff team which includes a mix of sports and early years qualifications. However, there are some weaknesses in staff's understanding of child protection partly due to omissions to this policy. Checks are carried out on staff and staff wear colour coded T shirts to distinguish who can be in sole charge of children. However, these measures are not sufficiently comprehensive to fully safeguard children. Overall, the group has many effective policies in place and a committed staff team. This results in children having fun and their good behaviour being encouraged and reinforced. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection satisfactory improvements have been made. Children are partly protected by the more effective procedures for recruiting staff that are in place. However, these do not include applicant's previous work histories and references are not sent for. The Provider has developed an operational plan that includes policies in relation to the 14 National Standards for Out of School Care to ensure he is meeting these. Records of all staff, volunteers and persons employed on the premises are kept and are available for inspection

A procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost or a parent failing to collect a child is now in place. Detailed information and risk assessment was sent to Ofsted regarding work done during the 2005 play scheme and the group was in the process of informing Ofsted within the 14 days required of 2006 maintenance work. Children were not at risk because risks from current maintenance work had been assessed well and appropriate action taken to safeguard children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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

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):

- develop more rigorous procedures for checking that staff are suitable to work with children
- ensure that the child protection policy is comprehensive and staff fully understand how to implement it
- make sure all staff are clear that unchecked staff can not be on their own with children

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