



The Ace Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133481
Inspection date	14 June 2006
Inspector	Jan Leo
Setting Address	Burford Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5DZ
Telephone number	01608 644440
E-mail	ace.centre@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Registered person	Trustees of the Ace Centre
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day 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?

Gems Day Nursery and The Out of School Scheme are part of the Ace Centre which is a children's centre located in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. Both these services have charitable status and are currently separately managed by a Board of Trustees. The Ace Centre, provides a number of other services which include: a family centre; local authority nursery school; health clinic; adult learning facilities; outreach support to other settings and families; parenting support and a forest school. These additional children's services are managed separately.

The Out of School Scheme opened in 1995, operates from a large room and

adjacent hall and offers both after school and holiday care. The nursery opened in 1999, operates from four interlinked rooms and offers full day care. The centre serves the local area, outlying villages and other towns as needs dictate.

There are currently 42 children on roll in the nursery and 108 on roll who use the out of school facility. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the centre welcomes children with special needs. Some children attending the nursery school at the Ace Centre use Gems Day Nursery for wrap around care.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round (except a week at Christmas) from 08.00 until 18.00. The after school club opens each weekday during term times from 15.00 until 18.00. The play scheme operates during each school holiday (except a week at Christmas) from 08.00 until 18.00.

Three part-time and five full-time staff work with the children in the nursery. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level two or three. Three members of staff are currently working towards a recognised level three early years qualification.

The provision receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Each day children benefit from activities and opportunities that contribute to their good health. Young children sleep according to their needs in a clean and relaxed environment. Staff follow strict health and hygiene procedures to avoid the spread of germs by carefully labelling bedding and nappy changing equipment. All children have frequent opportunities for fresh air and exercise because they play outdoors regularly and older children walk to the provision under escort. A number of staff members have undertaken first aid training and injured children receive appropriate treatment to relieve their distress. Staff record all accidents but the layout of the records results in a lack of confidentiality. Several items in the first aid box are out of date. Children eat healthy snacks and have free access to drinks. Young children sit sociable together when eating and staff discuss foods and preferences to broaden children's tastes. Older children attending the provision after school do not routinely follow good hand washing routines, and they walk around when eating. This compromises food hygiene and results in resources becoming sticky and unhygienic. The general standard of hygiene in the nursery area is high, but staff fail to complete the cleaning rota form to provide an accurate record of when they clean the kitchen.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children receive close supervision at all times to keep them safe. Staff use barriers to protect young children from falling down stairs, and they keep high staffing ratios in order to monitor activities closely throughout the day. This results in all children

getting the support they need to play safely. Older children follow well thought out collection arrangements and staff deploy themselves effectively to safeguard children while escorting them to the setting. Registers are in place but are not consistently completed which has an impact on safety during evacuation in an emergency. All resources are sound, suitable for the age and stage of development of the children, and provide appropriate challenges within a safe environment. For example, older children successfully build a den using soft play equipment. Some confidently climb onto the roof to make adjustments, with a staff member looking on and supervising the positioning of the crash mats in case of falls. Staff complete risk assessments regularly to ensure the environment remains hazard free and exit routes are clear. Children practice fire drills from time to time to find out how to evacuate in emergencies, but not all children are present to learn the procedure. Staff have a good knowledge of the child protection process and fully understand the need to protect children from harm and report any concerns. They have reference material clearly displayed in case a prompt response is necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children mix well and form close bonds with the staff because they thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. The staff work very well as a team and have an excellent understanding of how children learn and develop. As a result, children play well together from a very young age, successfully developing their games and learning from each other. Staff give children choices to ensure their learning is relevant, frequently asking them what they want to do and expanding play to develop knowledge and understanding. For example, some suggested going on a trip. They splashed in imaginary puddles on the way, straddled the bench and whistled like a train as their journey took them to see the elephants; they roared like lions and gently stroked rabbits all swept along in the excitement of the outing. The staff are uninhibited and join in enthusiastically. As a result, children's imaginations grow and others feel compelled to join the fun. The children learn from each other showing great interest in everything around them. Young children concentrate well for extended periods and learn without realising it. All children have opportunities to select resources for themselves because staff like play to be child initiated. Older children share resources with the family centre and, whilst they know they can get equipment out, the store cupboards are not left open to invite children to do so. Children welcome staff's input, which is readily forthcoming.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to accept diversity because they see staff treating everyone as individuals, with respect and interest. The staff act as very good role models. They get on well together both in and outside work and as a result, they provide a cheerful, friendly environment where everyone is valued. Some staff are skilled in adapting activities to ensure all children can be included, and they offer a varied programme to suit the needs and preferences of each child. Children know how to behave because

they receive consistent messages from staff. Staff support each other very effectively, taking action whenever necessary, to preserve harmony and promote positive behaviour. As a result, all children feel secure within the setting. Parents and carers of young children have easy access to policies and general information about the setting but they have limited opportunities to discuss their child's day when they collect. Discussion with adults collecting older children is easier due to the layout of the area, but there is limited space for written information to be displayed. Both provisions are expected to change areas in the near future. This will automatically remove some of these difficulties.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from a varied and interesting programme and they receive a high level of support to help them develop and learn. The day to day organisation preserves children's safety effectively and all children are happy to attend. Staff have a sound understanding of the national standards and have successfully implemented recent changes in regulation. All the required documentation is in place but some records are not confidential and others lack detail. Some of the procedures designed to improve efficiency and consistency are not routinely followed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provision was given two recommendations. The first was to ensure accident forms are always signed by a parent or carer, and the second was to increase the range of toys and resources for the children in the out of school provision.

Staff are currently trialling a message board to ensure parents of children who have wrap around care know of any accidents and sign the record as soon as possible. This method of communication appears to be effective to keep parents and carers up to date about their children's health issues and ensure the record is signed as required.

The staff at the out of school provision have gone some way to improving the range of resources by securing an agreement that they can share equipment with the family centre. This ensures that a wide range of resources is available for the children, but access is poor and does not encourage children to use the full range.

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

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 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):

- improve hygiene by ensuring first aid supplies are within date (GEMS); promoting hand washing, providing appropriate eating equipment, and identifying a clean designated area for children to eat their snack (Out of School Care)
- oversee practice more closely to make sure cleaning records are completed, accident records are confidential, and policy files hold the most up to date information
- improve documentation by ensuring that the daily record of attendance accurately reflects when children and adults are present.

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