



Pied Piper Activities Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113646
Inspection date	22 August 2006
Inspector	Felicity Gaff
Setting Address	Ardingly College, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6SQ
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Registered person	Pied Piper Activities Ltd
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?

Pied Piper at Ardingly College is one of six play schemes run by Pied Piper Activities Ltd. It opened in 1997 and operates from an independent school at Ardingly, West Sussex. There are extensive grounds for outdoor play and the setting has the use of an indoor swimming pool at pre-arranged times. Pied Piper is registered for a maximum of 70 children at any one time and children aged from four to 12 years attend the play scheme. It is open each weekday from 08.30 to 17.45 during some school holidays. There are variable numbers of children on roll. Children are drawn from the surrounding rural and residential areas. The play scheme currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting employs

13 staff. Of these, four hold appropriate recognised qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about and follow a healthy lifestyle; staff promote their well-being by providing a suitable balance of active physical play and opportunities for quieter activities. Children develop their self-care skills as they follow good sun care routines and learn the reasons for them. Although staff monitor the cleanliness of the toilets effectively and sometimes remind children about good hygiene practices, this is inconsistent. For example, a staff member did not ensure that a group of four and five year old children washed their hands properly after visiting the toilet. This puts children at risk of illness and infection. Staff manage minor injuries appropriately and there are suitable procedures to care for sick children. However, the written records of accidents and medication to support children's welfare are incomplete. Staff do not follow company policy when recording any medication they give and minor accidents are not always recorded in ink. Children's dietary requirements are met, because there is an effective system to ensure staff know of any specific needs. Parents know how packed lunches will be stored and are reminded to include ice packs, so that children enjoy fresh food. Staff explain the importance of not sharing food clearly, which protects the welfare of children with allergies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, and generally safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. The extensive grounds are well maintained and indoor areas are in reasonable decorative order. Staff ensure potential hazards are minimised and children use appropriately-sized sports equipment, which is in acceptable condition. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they consider the consequences of their actions as they devise their own behaviour agreement. Children's safety while swimming is well-promoted. Sessions are overseen by qualified life guards as well as by regular staff, and children know and follow the pool rules conscientiously. There are clear, comprehensive policies to promote children's safety. However, these are only partially effective as the provider does not ensure they are fully understood by the person in charge of the setting. As a result, staff lack the leadership they need to keep children safe in an emergency. Although child protection policies and procedures are complete and provide appropriate guidance to staff, the provider does not ensure that all supervisory staff have sufficient understanding of the issues. This limits the ability of staff to protect children from abuse or neglect by recognising and reporting concerns promptly.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children feel secure and form trusting relationships with staff and other children because they belong to small, stable age groups. Staff help children settle and feel at ease by placing friends or siblings together where possible, if this is what they wish. Children enjoy their time at the setting, because they participate in a well-balanced range of activities that promotes all areas of their development. All children have ample opportunities for physical play, including a daily swim. They also enjoy creative activities, sessions where they can relax and imaginative play such as den-building in the woods. Staff offer sensitive support to the younger children to ensure their needs are met. For example, when they became tired on the bouncy castle, four-year-old children were able to sit quietly and rest while chatting with their team leader. Swimming sessions are particularly well-organised. Parents rate their children's swimming ability before they attend the setting and staff confirm their skills at the pool, before allowing children to go out of their depth. They provide arm bands for children who need them. This ensures all children feel confident in the water and are able to participate fully. Parents comment on how eager their children are to attend the play scheme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met well at the play scheme because staff work effectively with parents. Parents receive clear information about the setting and the way it is organised. For instance, the prospectus clearly sets out arrival and collection arrangements, costs and optional extras, as well as giving information on possible sources of financial assistance. Staff seek information about any special needs and the provider discusses these in depth with parents before children attend. As a result, parents have sufficient information to judge whether the setting meets their requirements and is suitable for their child, and staff are able to adapt the service they provide to meet specific needs. There are good arrangements for staff and parents to exchange information at the start of the session and parents feel confident to raise any concerns they may have informally with staff at any time. The provider encourages parents to provide written feedback to monitor their satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. Children are exceptionally well-behaved. Each new group of children devises a behaviour agreement for the week and discusses the reasons for the rules they suggest. As children understand the reasons for the agreement and have contributed to it, they are happy to comply.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. All the required documentation is in place, although some records are not always fully maintained. Children's personal details are stored discreetly to protect their confidentiality and are readily available on the premises. The provider takes appropriate steps to ensure staff are suitable, and actively supports them in obtaining relevant training to enhance their skills. Supervisory staff hold suitable qualifications,

and they receive in-service training that allows them to share their skills and experiences. The provider visits the setting regularly, to give staff feedback on their performance and works with them to enhance the care they offer. However, the provider does not always ensure that staff who are in charge of the setting for short periods have enough understanding of emergency procedures or of the National Standards, to provide adequate leadership or to promote children's welfare consistently.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to improve documentation, improve the cleanliness of the toilet area and improve the activities provided. Staff are now able to act swiftly in children's interests, because children's personal details are readily available on the premises and there are clear procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or uncollected. Although there are clear procedures for protecting children from abuse or neglect, key staff are not always familiar with them, which limits their effectiveness. Staff ensure toilet areas are kept hygienic, which reduces the risk of illness and infection. They adapt planned activities adequately, to meet the developmental needs of children of different ages. Parents are aware of the conditions of registration because the certificate is prominently displayed.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration 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 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):

- promote children's welfare by consistently encouraging good handwashing routines
- maintain clear records of medication administered and complete all accident records in ink

- ensure that supervisory staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the National Standards, company policies and procedures and child protection issues.

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