



Dunstable Park Leisure Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219288
Inspection date	04 January 2007
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Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School care, Crèche

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?

Dunstable Park Leisure Centre is a multi purpose centre close to the town of Dunstable and offers a swimming pool, gym, indoor bowls, and many other sports. A crèche is provided for children aged 0-5 whose parents are taking part in one of the centre's adult activities. The crèche employs seven staff. Most of the staff in the crèche have appropriate child care qualifications. The centre also run school holiday play sessions for children under eight years. These session run for under four hours, with staff who are trained in specialist activities. These sessions do not run every school holiday.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally protected from infection with satisfactory hygiene routines carried out by staff. For example, the use of disposable gloves when changing nappies and the cleanliness of the toilet area. However, the implementation of health and hygiene procedures is not consistent. The standard of cleanliness of the carpet and the walls is poor. There is no clear procedure to ensure that play provision and equipment is cleaned and maintained regularly to protect children from cross-contamination and infection. Detailed registration forms ensure that children's health needs are documented and staff are kept informed of any changes. All suitable consents are in place from parents and accidents are documented to ensure a full record is kept and shared with parents.

Children generally have fresh drinking water which is accessed by staff from the water coolers in the leisure centre and transferred into a jug. However, on the day of inspection there was no fresh water available to the children. Parents provide their children with drinks and bottle feeds which are administered by staff. The crèche does not provide any food.

Children explore and investigate a variety of toys and equipment to encourage their hand-eye coordination and small motor skills. However, there is no equipment available to children to practise large movements. For example, children who are developing walking skills do not have any equipment to pull themselves up into a standing position or lean on to help with balance. There is no equipment for these children to crawl under or over to extend dexterity. Older children do not have opportunities for outside play on large equipment and there is limited provision for them to practise body movement and control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is important to the organisation of the group. Practitioners recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Thorough safety and security precautions are in place to promote and safeguard the children's welfare. However, the crèche does not have a visitors book to ensure that all visitors are monitored. Older children can play in a secure designated area with age-appropriate equipment that is not suitable for younger children. This ensures that children are kept safe and are still able to use a wide variety of play provision.

Children use a broad variety of developmentally appropriate resources. Most equipment and activities are attractively presented at the children's height to encourage independent access. Younger children have their own space on a large play mat where they can independently choose toys and equipment from boxes. There is a good range of books however, children did not use the book corner independently. There is no comfortable place for children to rest and look at books. The book corner is situated next to the busy buggy park at the entrance to the crèche, making this area unattractive to children who wish to be quiet.

Children gain some knowledge about fire safety as they take part in evacuation procedures and fire drills. However, the children's needs are not being met. The designated meeting place is too far away and staff are expected to take very young children across a main road and are concerned about their safety. The manager will seek guidance from the fire safety service to ensure that an appropriate fire evacuation procedure is in place.

Children are protected by practitioners who are knowledgeable about child protection and have undertaken recent training. Appropriate procedures, guidance and information is in place to ensure that the protection of children is a priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the Crèche, they arrive happy and eager to participate. Children who are new are helped to settle by staff who are understanding and sensitive to their individual needs. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. For example, children learn building skills as they construct with blocks and persevere as they manipulate shapes to post in the shape sorter. Children delight in the praise and encouragement given by the staff and some show good concentration skills as they investigate and explore play materials. Communication skills are well supported by staff who take every opportunity to extend children's language through activities. For example, staff gently encourage and support the children as they investigate different concepts such as colour, shape and form. Staff are extremely kind to the children. They talk in quiet voices and create an atmosphere of calm which helps the children feel secure.

Children explore the wider world using every day equipment such as child-size cooking utensils and play food that depict different cultural uses. They show emerging social skills as they involve others in their games, take roles and use their imagination. For example, organising a tea party. Children benefit greatly from the knowledge of well-qualified and experienced staff who are fully involved with the children's play and learning.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework has been received and is being implemented into the planning of activities for the younger children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with utmost respect and given lots of good quality attention and affection from the staff. All the children are greeted warmly as they arrive at the crèche and the hand over from parents to staff is sensitive to the needs of the children. The staff have a positive attitude and provide children with a well balanced view of the world around them through activities, books and other resources. All children are accepted and activities can be adapted to meet the needs of all who attend.

The children are happy and secure and play well together. Staff make consistent efforts to make new children welcome and spend good quality time building trusting relationships. Children respond to the behaviour management policy and procedure with good guidance and positive

implementation by the staff. For example, staff work with parents to ensure that children's individual needs are met through a very good settling-in procedure and personal support.

Parents and children are given a warm welcome and greeted at the door by staff. Children are relaxed and reassured when they first arrive and eager to play. Staff have developed good relationships with parents which impacts on the confidence and security of each child. Children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between staff and parents. Parents are involved in discussion about their children's needs and share details about the activities at the end of the session. Parents are provided with detailed written and verbal information that covers the personal care of the children on a day to day basis. This actively contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. However, the complaints procedure does not give clear guidance to parents about making complaints and does not include the address and telephone number of the regulator.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are secure and confident within an organised environment. This enables them to interact with other and initiate and extend most of their play and learning. The range and quality of the activities for children enables them to be challenged in some areas. Staff have a secure understanding of how children learn and are generally deployed well to meet the needs of the children attending. However, the manager is not always present for every session and a deputy manager is not in place to ensure the smooth running of the session and take responsibility. This impacts on the overall organisation of the crèche, the supervision of the staff and the welfare of the children.

Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the care and learning of all the children. A range of documents are shared with parents to keep them informed about the provision. These are used successfully in the daily routine, updated regularly and impact directly on the continuity of the children's care. Parents value the dedication and professional attitude of the staff as they make complimentary comments about the staff's practice.

Overall, the needs of the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to appoint a named person to take the role of deputy supervisor; develop (staff's) knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; ensure evacuation plan is known to all the centre's employees; ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; ensure that sufficient/suitable furniture/equipment is available to meet the needs of children; ensure that the child collection procedures are working effectively; ensure that the ventilation system in the toilet area is working and effective; ensure that toys and equipment are clean, well maintained and safe; ensure water is freely available if wanted, without reducing staff numbers in the crèche; make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint; provide a suitable range of toys and

activities; plan a range of activities and play opportunities for children's overall development, which children are able to access easily.

The appointment of deputy supervisor has not been filled, therefore further recommendation made. Staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues is satisfied. All staff have had child protection training.

The fire evacuation plan devised for the leisure centre is not satisfactory for the crèche, therefore further recommendation made. Children now have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. There is sufficient and suitable furniture to meet the needs of the children but equipment for the physical development of children is limited, therefore further recommendation made. Child collection procedures are working effectively with a good registration procedure. The ventilation system in the toilet area is satisfactory. Toys are generally clean, however a further recommendation is made regarding the poor condition of the changing mats. Fresh drinking water is not freely available to children, therefore a further recommendation is made. Parents do not have clear information and guidance about how to make a complaint, therefore a further recommendation is made. A suitable range of toys and activities are planned for children's overall development and most are accessed easily by children.

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 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):

- ensure that the manager or a named deputy is always present when sessions are running
- comply with any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer regarding emergency evacuation procedures for the creche
- provide suitable activities and equipment for children to develop and practise physical skills

- implement effective health and hygiene procedures to ensure that the premises, equipment and toys are well-maintained and cleaned regularly. This refers to the poor condition of the carpet, walls and changing mats and the lack of regular cleaning
- make sure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- monitor access to the premises and keep a record of visitors
- ensure that parents are fully informed about the complaints policy and procedure which includes the address and telephone number of the regulator
- provide an comfortable area for children to rest and play quietly.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk