

The Gap

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311859
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Inspector	Geoffrey Watson
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Registered person	The Gap Out of School 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?

The Gap Out Of School Club opened in 1996. It operates from a one room pre-fabricated building situated within Crookhill Primary School in the Ryton area of Gateshead. The club serves the local community.

There are currently 32 children aged from four to eleven years on roll; this includes 12 children aged from three to eight years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group offers support to children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during term-time only. Sessions are from 08.00 to 09.00 and 3.15 to 6.00, Monday to Friday.

There are three regular members of staff and one standby member of staff who work with the children all have childcare or play work qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff are aware of the importance of personal hygiene and its contribution to health. Children develop a very good understanding of the importance of washing their hands after carrying out activities, before they eat and after they have been to the toilet. Even the youngest children are very good at carrying this out independently.

Children appreciate the drink that is ready to welcome them upon arrival and they use the water that is available throughout the session. Staff understand the importance of nutritional balance and provide an adequate snack at the beginning of sessions. The timing of the snack is good, taking into consideration children's needs after a busy day at school. However, the choice of the snack is limited and fruit is not available regularly enough to encourage children to eat more healthily. Whilst the staff have ensured that table tops are clean, in order to provide a hygienic, safe surface, children's snacks are placed directly onto them. Food handling and the promotion of the principles of hygiene would be improved if children were given individual plates for their snacks.

Children enjoy the opportunities for physical exercise. There are good arrangements with the primary school to ensure that they can do this. When weather and season permit, staff plan carefully for outside activities on the yard, school field and even a wooded area. The club uses the facility of the school hall well to extend its provision.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children spend their time safely in the setting due to the care taken by staff to keep them safe. The room, equipment and furniture are appropriate for their purpose and enable the staff to provide a safe environment. The premises are warm, clean and secure, which promotes children's sense of well-being whilst in the setting. Staff are careful to ensure that precautions are in place to prevent accidents: they prepare the equipment carefully. For example, before each session, they wipe down the table tops and a member of staff carries out a thorough risk assessment. Staff are diligent when checking the outside areas and this ensures children are safe and secure in an environment that provides extra opportunities for play and physical exercise. Children feel secure when they are in the club because the security arrangements are good. For instance, no one is able to gain entry to the club without first being identified, only then do staff unlock the outside door. Through these arrangements, and the physical characteristics of the building, staff are in control of access at all times. When children see these precautions being taken by adults, it further develops their understanding of the need to keep themselves safe.

Staff ensure that key documents relating to children's safety, such as the accident record book, are kept up to date. Should any accident arise, it is fully recorded and parents are informed so that the child's needs can be met after they leave the club. The registered person and staff ensure they can meet any specific requirements for individual children by maintaining detailed information on each child.

The registered person and staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and safeguarding children and they implement them effectively. Their training in child protection and first aid is appropriate and up-to-date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well at the beginning of sessions and are happy to be in their out of school club. They enjoy taking part in the activities that are available and choose what they wish to do. Whether working, or taking a snack, the children chat together and enjoy the company of others, including the adults. The staff work with the children and are effective in giving them encouragement and praise.

The staff prepares a basic plan for the month, often taking account of children's ideas. However, the planning is not detailed enough and does not inspire children's imagination. The range of activities does not systematically take into account the need to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Opportunities are missed for children to take more responsibility for activities, for example, promoting children's understanding and skills in preparing their own nutritional snacks with ingredients chosen from healthy options. Although the monthly plans are displayed within the club, they are not easily accessible for parents or carers to see.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well and have a good sense of being valued and respected by other children and staff. The displayed list of rules for the club works well because they have been drawn up by the children themselves and, as if to form a contract, they have each signed the document. This is effective practice in encouraging a sense of ownership and belonging.

Children show that they are able to make choices in what they wish to do, although sometimes the range and nature of activities limit choice. When children with physical difficulties join the group, others treat them no differently. This demonstrates their understanding of the needs of others. The staff are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and developing children's understanding of diversity in relation to personal needs, cultural and religious beliefs and practices. For instance, appropriate activities are provided that link to celebrations such as Christmas, Diwali and the Chinese new year.

Children with additional needs play a full part in the club's provision. The staff have a good understanding of how to support these children and have a good range of policies that they use in practice. Staff work closely with these children's parents to make sure that they understand all the details of their particular needs.

The close links with parents are a feature of the club's provision. Staff carry out surveys to find out parents' views and respond to them by carrying out changes. They have good relationships with parents and spend time with them when they come to pick up their children to exchange information.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The qualifications and experience of the registered person and her staff ensure that they can effectively care for children in this childcare setting. The staff share a common understanding of the importance of the well-being of the children in their care. This is evident in the training that they undertake as well as the quality of relationships and the steps they take to ensure the children's continued safety. Staff organise the space and resources effectively to meet the children's needs.

The required documentation is in place although some policies are outdated. The 'incidents' log is in a format that does not ensure individual's confidentiality when communicated with parents. Although the written procedures lack this aspect of confidentiality, staff do ensure that any information concerning events and incidents during the session is communicated discretely to parents, when they collect their children.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations made at the time of the previous inspection.

The setting was asked to put a written procedure in place in the event of a child being lost or not collected. There was not a sufficiently detailed record of significant issues and or arrangements to share this with parents. The contact details of the Ofsted complaints procedure were missing as was the procedure to be followed in the event of allegations being made against a member of staff. All of these issues have been addressed and further improve the welfare and care of the children attending the setting.

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 actions 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):

- provide snacks that are more healthy and nutritious and provide individual plates for children
- develop planning for a wide range of activities to support learning and play and share planning more effectively with parents
- ensure that records of incidents are in a format that guarantees confidentiality when shared with parents
- ensure that documentation and policies are regularly updated.

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