

Cambridgeshire Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337359
Inspection date	03 April 2007
Inspector	Emma Bright
Setting Address	Meadowgate School, Meadowgate Lane, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 2JH
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Registered person	Cambridge County Council , Cambridge Playschemes
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Cambridgeshire Playscheme is one of five provisions managed by Cambridgeshire County Council. It opened in 2006 and operates from Meadowgate School in Wisbech, offering a holiday playscheme for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties and disabilities.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the playscheme at any one time. The playscheme is open from 10:00 to 15:30 for two weeks during the school summer holidays and some additional days during other school holidays. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 30 children aged from four to 18 years on roll. Children come from the local area.

The playscheme employs 25 staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate qualifications and one is currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's individual dietary needs are met as very clear information is gathered from parents about allergies or special dietary requirements. Children are well nourished and staff help them to learn about making healthy choices through a range of practical activities, such as cooking or making fruit kebabs. Staff provide a good selection of food for snacks and ensure that there are alternative versions so that all children can eat safely. Children have plenty of water and juice to drink throughout the session so that they remain well hydrated.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities, and make good use of the outdoor area, school gym and soft play area to participate in active games. For example, they enjoy practising their football skills in the playground and they bounce around in the indoor ball pit. Children relax in the sensory room, where they can listen to music or watch light patterns on the wall and they participate in relaxation sessions. This helps them to feel calm and enhances their sense of well-being.

Children's good health is promoted because staff help them to understand about good hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before meal times. Staff act as good role models, wiping down surfaces before serving food to help children stay healthy. If the children become unwell whilst they are in the care of the setting, very clear records and procedures are in place to make sure that they are appropriately cared for in the event of a medical emergency. Children's medical needs are met as clear and detailed information is in place; this is updated regularly to ensure their on-going health is very well maintained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's overall welfare is very well promoted by clear procedures and documents that consistently ensure their safety. For example, all staff attend regular child protection training to ensure their knowledge is completely up-to-date. However, some of the detail within the child protection policy is unclear. Staff have a very good understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. They are confident to act in children's best interests in the event of concerns for their welfare, which means that children's welfare is fully protected and they are kept safe from harm.

Children play with a good range of toys and resources, which have been very well chosen to stimulate their interest and support their individual abilities. All resources and equipment are regularly checked by staff to ensure they are in good condition and safe for children to use. Children play in a safe, well-maintained environment where risks are clearly identified and minimised. This means they are able to move around safely and independently under the constant supervision of the staff. A daily check of the premises is carried out at the beginning of each day to ensure all areas used by the children are safe. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff carefully explain the dangers to them, which helps children to develop their understanding of hazards. A clear written emergency escape plan is in place and children regularly practise the fire drill so that they know what to do in an emergency and are familiar with the routine.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the playscheme; they arrive and enter excitedly, and are warmly welcomed by the staff. They demonstrate great enthusiasm for the range of activities on offer and settle down readily to an activity of their choice. Children enjoy creating puppets from a range of colourful materials and manipulating playdough, rolling it with concentration between their fingers. They choose to relax in the library and look at their favourite books with their key worker or they can join in with the activities playing alongside their peers if they wish. This ensures they can make their own decisions about what they want to do and their individual needs are very well met.

Children are extremely happy and settled, and they form positive relationships with the staff who are particularly caring and sensitive to their individual needs. They benefit from staff's exceptionally good knowledge and understanding of children with learning difficulties and disabilities because staff ensure that there is a varied range of activities which reflect children's abilities and interests. Staff work very well together as a team to support children's play and provide plenty of opportunities for fun and relaxation. They are adept at organising spontaneous activities to respond to children's requests, which ensures children are interested and involved according to their ability. Children choose to spend time in the light room where they enjoy singing along to their favourite songs and competently operate the switches to change the music. This choice and spontaneity contributes to children's sense of belonging and promotes their self-esteem. Children's communication skills are greatly enhanced by the range of additional strategies in place to help children communicate. For example, pictorial symbols are used to demonstrate the timetable so that children know about the structure for the day and this helps them to feel safe and secure.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the setting's high emphasis of working with parents and carers. Excellent settling-in procedures that are based around their individual needs helps to support children in the transition between home and the setting. For example, staff complete home visits before children begin at the playscheme, which enables them to gather good information to be used as starting points for care, teaching and learning. Written feedback demonstrates parents high regard of the setting and staff. Parents receive clear and detailed information about the setting so they know about activities and events, and have daily opportunities to discuss their child with staff. A comprehensive written daily record is shared between staff and parents, and this ensures parents have additional information about their child's day. This helps children to settle quickly and ensures their individual needs continue to be met. All documentation is in place to share information with parents and carers so that they know about the setting's policies and procedures.

Staff respect and value children's individuality and work extremely well with parents to ensure that the specific needs of all children are met. Children benefit significantly from the staff's experience and caring support. For example, when children become upset or distressed staff ensure that each child can work through their routines or coping strategies and this helps them to become calmer and reduce their anxiety. Staff are proactive in working with parents, carers and other agencies to support the children's needs and this ensures that they are fully included in the life of the setting. Individual behaviour plans are in place so that there is consistency between home and the setting. Children learn through purposeful routines and sensitive

expectations. Staff are very consistent in their approach and establish clear boundaries so that all children are beginning to understand what is expected of them. They use play to teach children skills such as turn-taking and sharing. Children enjoy games of pool and they celebrate each other's achievements with 'high fives'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the very good quality organisation; they benefit from a very well prepared environment that promotes positive outcomes for all children. Staff develop warm and affectionate relationships with children and the effective key worker system means they benefit from the individual care and attention. Clear and comprehensive policies, records and procedures underpin the very good practice in ensuring children's welfare is safeguarded. Children's individual records and details of any medical needs are obtained and stored with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

Children are kept safe because rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that adults are suitable and have appropriate skills and knowledge to work with children. The thorough induction procedure and a detailed operational plan, with up-to-date information for staff, ensures that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. Staff work well together as a cohesive team, and demonstrate great enthusiasm for ensuring that the environment meets the needs of the children. They attend a range of training opportunities, which means that children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 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):

- update the child protection policy to ensure the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff are clear.

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