

St Johns Wood Adventure Playground

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	135093
Inspection date	09 May 2007
Inspector	Chris Banks
Setting Address	St. Johns Wood Terrace, London, NW8 6LP
Telephone number	020 7586 1884
E-mail	no email
Registered person	Committee of St Johns Wood Adventure Playground
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?

St. John's Wood Adventure Playground for children aged between five and 11 years was registered in 1999. It is managed by a voluntary committee and operates from purpose built premises in the NW8 area of Westminster. The open access facility is open during term time between 15:15 and 19:00. Holiday play schemes operate between 09:30 and 17:00.

There are currently 100 children on roll. Of these, 50 are aged under eight years.

A core team of two staff work with the children, one of whom is about to undergo a qualifying course in play work. Additional temporary staff are employed to work on a sessional basis and during school holidays. There is also a volunteer scheme.

The setting may care for a maximum of 52 children between the ages of five and eight years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Hygiene standards are appropriate to the adventure playground setting. Toilet facilities are clean and hygienic and standards of cleanliness in the kitchen are good. Children understand simple hygiene practice and are familiar with simple routines which includes hand washing before eating or preparing for cookery activities.

Children are suitably protected from the risk of infection because there is a clear sickness policy and staff act in their best interests if they become ill or injure themselves. Staff are well prepared in the event of an accident or emergency but the First Aid certificates held by two staff require updating.

Snacks are not provided but children are able to freely access water from the outdoor drinking fountain.

Physical activity is an integral part of the activity programme. A large outdoor play space is the main focus of activity and children enjoy the freedom of exploring their environment which often involves experimenting with natural materials. Children enjoy playing in the fresh air in all weathers and have a great deal of fun on the adventure structures. They also invent their own physically challenging games

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a setting with clear, easily identifiable boundaries. Gates are closely monitored by staff to ensure there is no unauthorised access to the site by unknown adults. Staff supervise children well and explain it is in their own best interest to remain on site at all times. It is however, made clear to parents that the playground cannot take responsibility for keeping children on site if they choose to leave.

Children negotiate space with confidence. They take risks in a controlled environment where high priority is placed on their safety during play activities because staff take suitable precautions to prevent any accidents. Staff work well with children to also help them understand about the importance of behaving in a responsible way as part of keeping themselves safe. Structures and equipment are checked on a daily basis and there is the added good practice of having regular safety reviews carried out by an accredited agency.

The overall safety of children is protected because staff are suitably informed about their role and responsibilities in child protection but there are some gaps in the procedures. The role of Ofsted is not included nor what action to take if any allegations are made about a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome from staff and volunteers who know the children well because they are regular users of the playground. The playground is a lively and friendly place where children enjoy a good range of outdoor physically challenging opportunities. Children mostly

initiate their own outdoor play but for those children who prefer to play indoors there is a variety of equipment and activities to keep them well occupied.

Project work mostly takes place during holiday play schemes during which time children enjoy taking part in photography, gardening and small building projects.

Younger children are well integrated in the mixed age range setting and older children behave in a considerate way on adventure structures if smaller children are around them. New children are well introduced to the playground and receive an informal induction which includes outlining the physical boundaries to them, discussing risk taking and monitoring their first few days at the playground to help ensure they settle well. Staff and volunteers are friendly, relaxed and approachable.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Parents are given a warm and friendly welcome at the playground. They receive key written information about the service which includes how they can play an active part in the running of the playground by assisting with fundraising and other activities.

The open access nature of the service is made explicitly clear to parents at the outset, both verbally and in writing. In this way they can make an informed choice as to whether open access provision is suitable for their child. They are also informed about how to make a complaint but the procedure does not include the telephone number of the regulator.

Children enjoy learning about the backgrounds and traditions of other children through a range of interesting activities. Project work is also used to help children learn about tolerance and respect in practical ways by exploring different festivals such as Passover and taking part in projects to raise their awareness about children with differing abilities.

Children are encouraged to interact in a considerate and responsible way towards staff and each other. Their behaviour is guided sensitively and they are positively encouraged to negotiate their way through minor conflicts. They are familiar with safety rules surrounding use of the adventure structures and take turns fairly.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are sufficient experienced staff for the number of children aged under eight years the playground is registered to provide for. Arrangements are in place to ensure qualification requirements will be met as part of the settings ongoing training programme.

Staff and volunteers are efficiently deployed which helps ensure children are well supervised during their play activities. Staff are familiar with safety procedures and although not all are in writing, they understand what process must be followed in particular circumstances. The role of Ofsted is, however, not made clear in two key areas.

Children enjoy using the outdoor space in a range ways and also have the benefit of using a bright, well maintained indoor playroom if they prefer.

Documentation is suitably organised and confidentially stored. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was required to develop an action plan to outline how qualification requirements will be met. A qualified play worker was subsequently appointed but has since left the setting. There are now arrangements in place to ensure a new member undertakes the relevant training.

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):

- further develop knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and ensure procedures include the role of Ofsted and what to do if an allegation is made against a member of staff
- ensure the complaints procedure includes details of Ofsted
- ensure First Aid qualifications are kept up to date

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