

Ashfield Play Care Scheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253034
Inspection date	29 August 2007
Inspector	Esther Darling
Setting Address	The Lammas Compound, Lammas Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 2AD
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Registered person	Ashfield Play Care Scheme
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?

Ashfield Play Care Scheme (after school and holiday playscheme) registered in 1996. It operates from a purpose built single storey unit with a large secure outdoor play area comprising of grass and hard surface. It is located in Sutton-in-Ashfield and serves the town and surrounding communities. It may care for a maximum of 52 children under the age of eight years at any one time. Children over eight also attend, and are included in this number. There are currently 180 children on roll and the setting supports children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

It is open throughout the year offering after school care Monday to Friday 15:00 to 18:00 and during school holidays Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00. Of the 18 staff employed to work with the children, the vast majority hold the basic or higher level qualifications in either teaching, childcare or playworks.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about how to promote their own good health. For example, they understand that they are expected to wash their hands properly before eating and after using the toilet. The facilities are maintained well and kept clean, and staff use appropriate methods for cleaning down the tables after snack time. Children are treated sensitively and nurtured when they are feeling ill, which promotes their emotional well-being. Staff go to great efforts to make them feel comfortable and children know that they can rest and relax according to their own needs. Accidents are dealt with efficiently by capable staff who hold first aid certificates. Parents are kept informed via efficient records, and although existing injuries are discussed with them, the details are not recorded. This has the potential to impact on children's welfare and continuity of care. Children are adequately protected from the sun through the application of sun cream.

Children clearly understand that the reason they no longer have biscuits for snack in the afternoon is because fruit and vegetables are better for them. They appreciate the variety offered to them, especially fruits such as kiwi and pineapple. Children enjoy the independence of spreading their own toast when they are ready for their snack in the mornings. The variety of breads and spreads on offer is somewhat limited, thus missing the opportunity for children to broaden their tastes and to think about healthier options. Children independently access water and dilute fruit cordial to drink, but milk is only offered during term times.

Children love playing outside whilst at the play scheme, and do so frequently. The staff understand the importance to children of being able to move about freely, whilst enjoying some challenge. All aspects of their physical development are catered for throughout the day due to careful planning by the staff and the excellent facilities available. Climbing, balancing, playing football and action games promote children's strength, coordination and fitness. Also, a sports coach visits on a regular basis, and the children report that they really like the table tennis, running and cricket. Constant access to a sound range of equipment such as scissors, glue and drawing materials promote children's small hand skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into a light, bright and attractive environment where they learn to value their own creativity because their art work is thoughtfully displayed. The unit in which they are cared for and has been thoughtfully planned to create different zones to cater for the needs of children of various ages. For example, a whole area is dedicated to role-play and comfortable seating, whilst other areas are well furnished with IT equipment. Children move around safely and responsibly, benefiting from the high levels of security offered at this facility. The entrance is kept locked at all times, and visitors are required to identify themselves. There are systems in place to ensure that children are released only to persons who are authorised. Staff deploy themselves well and arrange regular fire drill practises so that they and the children understand how to act in the event of an emergency. Trips out are managed well because they are risk assessed to ensure that children do not have unsupervised contact with people who have not been vetted.

Children benefit from access to a wide range of toys and equipment that promote their learning and development. Some of this is stored safely, but not according to type, in unlabelled boxes

that are accessible to children. This means that staff and children are not able to readily access toys easily because they cannot find them. The impact of this is that some activities are not sufficiently resourced in order to make them attractive and stimulating to children. All toys and equipment are well maintained and conform to safety standards.

Children are protected because there is a thorough and clear policy guiding staff on best practice and what to do in the event that they are worried a child is being abused. This is complemented by regular training to enable staff to understand what the current local government safeguarding children procedures are. Staff understand their personal responsibility to ensure that the welfare of the child is paramount and that procedures are followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children choose from a wide range of activities and are encouraged to make suggestions as to what kind of experiences they would like to be provided. Staff actively seek out children's opinions via a questionnaire, and use these to evaluate and improve the service that they are offering. This in turn enriches the time that the children spend at the setting and makes worthwhile. A children's meeting is arranged near the end of each play scheme, so that the staff can benefit from direct feedback from the children.

Children have opportunities to express their creativity whilst making beautiful models of insects, experimenting with various types of painting and engaging in role play. Regular trips are planned to ensure that children enjoy finding out about their environment. The learning experience is continued outside where children benefit from the therapeutic properties of water and sand play. Various IT equipment appeals greatly to the children, and is sensibly monitored by the staff to ensure time limits are observed, and games are age appropriate.

The staff have a good understanding of the age group they are working with, and pitch their involvement with the children at the right level. Adult and child interaction is positive because of this and children are content because they are able to form small friendship groups. Children develop at their own pace and demonstrate their pleasure in being at the setting. They are confident and approachable, initiating conversations with visitors.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children display very good levels of behaviour at the scheme because they know exactly what is expected of them. For example, they point out the list of rules displayed near where their coats are hung up. The staff follow a comprehensive policy that gives very clear guidance about how children should be encouraged to behave well, and exactly what the staff conduct must be. Children are aware that bullying is unacceptable and that adults attention must be drawn to this. Adults understand children's developmental stages very well and this helps them to promote their behaviour in a consistent and positive way which promotes their welfare and development.

Children benefit from good partnership between their parents and carers and the staff at the play scheme. Information pertaining to the care of each individual child is shared at the beginning of the placement and this helps to meet any particular needs a child may have. The record of complaints is not made in a format that makes it accessible to parents who may request to see it. Parents are kept well informed via various methods. This includes information displayed on

the notice boards and regular newsletters with interesting and relevant details about upcoming events and themes. Parents have the opportunity to influence the way the scheme is run because they are made aware that they may be nominated to become part of the committee. Parents questionnaires are sent out to enable the staff to find out what people think, and use this where possible to improve the service offered.

Children's confidence and self-esteem flourishes because the staff show high levels of respect for them, acting as good role models. Their lives are enriched as they are able to value their own and other cultures through the use of a sound range of appropriate resources that positively reflect the wider society. Acknowledging and celebrating festivals, and tasting foods from different countries makes this aspect of learning enjoyable and relevant to the children. Systems such as working cooperatively with parents and children, and appropriate training for staff ensures that children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are included and make good progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive good levels of support and supervision to help them feel secure. Staff and volunteers are most clear about their designated responsibilities and work very well together to meet the needs of the children. They receive the support of the voluntary management committee, which ensures that good recruitment procedures are in place to guide the appointment of new staff. All of the written policies are thorough and have been reviewed. Children's care, welfare and development is promoted because the vast majority of records and procedures that are required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are maintained accurately.

The setting is committed to improving practice and enables all staff to attend important training in areas such as health and safety, behaviour management, safeguarding children, food hygiene and first aid. A thorough induction process enables staff to work effectively and confidently within the first two weeks of their appointment. The staff team is well-balanced in their experience and training, a few being teachers, and others have play works or childcare qualifications. This has a direct impact on the positive experiences that children have whilst attending the setting.

Children show a strong sense of belonging and clearly feel at home. There is a calm productive atmosphere where staff work directly with the children at all times. The setting is well organised, for example, children move around confidently and safely and the session runs smoothly. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was recommended that the policy on behaviour management included procedures for bullying. That the child protection procedure was made current in line with recent legislation. Also to develop staff's understanding of equal opportunities issues.

A new and comprehensive policy on bullying enables staff to understand its definition as well as how to prevent and deal with any bullying. Children also understand what they should do if they believe someone is being bullied. This has a positive impact on children's experiences at the setting, and serves to reassure parents. The child protection procedures have been amended and are in line with current local government procedures. Staff have been trained and understand

what their role is in order to safeguard children. Parents are made aware of this. Some of the staff, including the chair of the committee have attended training to enable more inclusive practice and how to more effectively promote diversity. This has enabled the children to gain a better understanding of the differences in society and to value this.

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 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):

- develop the system for recording complaints to ensure that appropriate information from that record may be shared with parents on request
- ensure that sufficient equipment is available to provide stimulating activities for the children with regard to the method of storage and how this is organised
- promote the good health of children by ensuring a record of all accidents is kept, with regard to existing injuries and further improve the nutritional quality of some of the snacks.

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