

Alpha Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY270216
Inspection date	11 April 2007
Inspector	Julie Denise Edmonds
Setting Address	Alpha Road, Great Yarmouth, Gorleston-On-Sea, Norfolk, NR31 0LG
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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?

Contact Playscheme is for children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities and is run by the trustees of Great Yarmouth and Waveney Contact. It registered in July 2003 and operates from the Alpha Centre in Gorleston. The premises are a portacabin, with one large play room and a smaller room. There is also a small outdoor play area. Contact have sole use of the building whilst the scheme is running.

A maximum of 20 children between four and eight years may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 10 children in this age group on roll. Children over eight also attend the scheme. It operates on selected days during the school holidays from 10:00 until 15:00 on a Saturday all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The scheme serves families of the town and local area. It supports children who speak English as an additional language.

A total of 21 staff work with the children. This includes employed and volunteer staff. Over half the staff have appropriate early years qualifications at level two, three or above. The number of staff working each session varies according to the individual needs of the children attending. Ratios offered are a minimum of one to three and include one to one care.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted at the provision, with the premises kept clean. This includes areas where food is prepared and served. The children access toilet and hand washing facilities independently or with appropriate support to meet their individual needs. Children's personal care needs are met with dignity and privacy respected. Action taken to protect them from illness and infection includes staff use of disposable gloves and appropriate hand washing routines followed. Recognised guidance about the exclusion of sick children is observed. Children's individual medical needs are met as administration requiring specific knowledge and skills is only undertaken by staff with appropriate training.

Children have regular and sufficient food and drink during sessions. They are provided with nutritious snacks served in bowls for them to help themselves. Fresh fruit such as banana, apple and grapes is offered, with a choice of milk, juice or water to drink. The children enjoy a packed lunch provided by their parents. A healthy diet to support the children's growth and development is promoted by the group. Children are encouraged to eat and drink sitting at tables together, with staff giving assistance as appropriate. Individual dietary needs are met because detailed information is gained before they begin attending and taken heed of.

Children take part in enjoyable physical activity, including outdoors in the fresh air. They ride trikes and scooters and have opportunities to use apparatus including slides outdoors. They climb and tumble in the soft play area and ball pool indoors. Group activities include action rhymes led by staff with the children enthusiastically joining in.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in warm, welcoming and child-centred premises. Facilities and equipment in use is suitable to meet the needs of the children attending. The main playroom is prepared and set out attractively prior to children arriving. The children access suitable toys and activities presented on table tops and on the floor, with additional items and books stored within their reach around the room. Further choices are available as the session progresses when staff introduce more items from the wide range at the provision. Good use of available space includes use of the smaller room for craft activities and at lunch time. Children freely move between the playrooms and outdoor area.

High priority on safety ensures children are cared for in premises where risks are assessed and action is taken to reduce hazards. Detailed risk assessments are regularly reviewed and individual to children where appropriate. Checks undertaken by staff promote children's safety on a daily basis. Security is monitored closely at all times to prevent intruders from entering and children from leaving the premises unsupervised. Emergency evacuation practice raises children's awareness of fire safety. Parents supervise their own children on outings, with support from staff to ensure safety is maintained.

Children are protected because the provision has suitable safeguarding children procedures. Staff understand their role and are able to take appropriate action if they have concerns about a child. Training is attended to update knowledge and support protecting children in line with current practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed at arrival by the friendly staff speaking to them individually by name. They receive sensitive reassurance to help them settle and achieve a sense of belonging to the group. Children who become unsettled during the day receive immediate support with soothing words and appropriate physical contact. They benefit from the staff successfully establishing a rapport with them and from the fun and happy atmosphere. They relax and have an enjoyable time.

Children choose freely from the toys and activities provided. In the main playroom children play with small world, pretend play with dinosaurs, different size construction bricks and with puppets. They can see themselves in large mirrors as they dress up, play with dolls in buggies and prams and use the large rocking horse. Seasonal activities include making chocolate Easter egg 'nests'. Outdoors they play in the sand tray with a variety of buckets, spades and moulds. In the smaller playroom they make hats using a range of collage materials, glitter and glue. Children enjoy spontaneous group games organised by the staff.

The children respond well to staff encouraging their conversation and involvement in their play. For example, as they take part in a cutting out and colouring activity with staff sitting at the table with them. They receive prompt support from the observant staff when appropriate. Children confidently ask for help at times and receive competent assistance, such as to use the computer. They are directed to more purposeful play if they become restless or boisterous. Further toys are introduced to direct their energy. For example, various musical instruments, such as drums, shakers and tambourines. Children are invited to take part in ongoing activities during sessions. Their varied energy levels are recognised by staff, who take action in response, for example, encouraging outdoor play as appropriate. They are supported to take part fully at the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children benefit from the calm, polite and kind role models provided by staff. They are spoken to with respect and in a positive manner at all times, supporting their self-esteem and helping them to feel valued. They respond well to the skilled staff redirecting them to manage their behaviour and maintain a calm atmosphere. Staff know the individual children well, are able to anticipate behaviour and take swift action to avoid incidents.

Excellent knowledge and awareness of inclusion is reflected in the care offered to meet children's individual needs. Children are regarded with equal concern. Additional needs are assessed prior to children attending to ensure they can be met at the provision. Children's preferences to spend time with individual staff members of their choice are respected. The group works in partnership with a range of other professionals. Resources such as puzzles, books and dolls reflect diversity, supporting awareness of the wider world. Occasional outings give children the opportunity to visit local attractions, such as wildlife parks.

Children are cared for by staff that make strong links with parents to work in close partnership with them. The children benefit from a gradual settling in process offered. Parents have the opportunity to stay with their children initially. Trusting relationships are built, with parents praising the support offered to them. Children's changing daily care needs are met with exchange of information between staff and parents at both arrival and departure times. Senior staff keep

a record of activities children have taken part in ensuring detail can be shared with parents. Appropriate written consents are gained, such as to take photographs, promoting the working relationship. Parents are generally well informed in writing about how the setting operates, with newsletters giving updates. They are encouraged to share any concerns they may have, promoting early resolution and continuity of care for the children. However, the written complaints procedure is not comprehensive. This compromises the relationship with parents to ensure children's well-being. In addition, Ofsted contact details are not included to promote exchange of information with the regulator.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Sessions at the group are well prepared for with staff arriving well in advance to set up. The staff have a high regard for the welfare of the children in their care. The children receive much individual time and attention. The playscheme is part of a range of support provided for the parents, to meet children's needs and provide support for families.

Children are protected as staff checks are completed, following appropriate vetting procedures. The children benefit from being cared for by mainly qualified staff that have experience caring for children with additional needs. Staff are well supported. They have a comprehensive induction and regular supervision takes place. This includes group supervision promoting the particularly good team work to ensure smooth running. Staff are encouraged to attend training days and workshops to keep their knowledge and practice up to date, including in-house training. For example, lifting and handling and behaviour management.

Documentation in place meets regulations to support the safe and efficient management to promote the welfare of children. Confidentiality is respected and records stored securely.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This is now in place, ensuring that children are cared for in line with their parent's wishes. Written information for parents has been improved as useful leaflets about the provision are provided, supporting communication. The group's policies and procedures are on site. Although, systems do not ensure that parents are aware that they are in place and how to access them. This does not fully promote working in partnership with parents to support children's well-being.

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 complaints procedure and include Ofsted contact details.
- make policies and procedures available to parents.

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