

# Three Corners Adventure Playground

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** EY229697

**Inspection date** 26 March 2008

**Inspector** Tina Kelly

**Setting Address** C/o Play and Youth Office, Block B, Barnsbury Complex, Offord Road,  
London, N1 1QG

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**Registered person** Islington Young People's Services

**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](http://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?

Three Corners Adventure Playground is situated in the Spa Fields recreation area, Clerkenwell, in the Borough of Islington. The setting has been running since 1983. The site was registered with Ofsted in 2002 to provide open access out of school and holiday care for a maximum of 30 children aged between five and eight years. The playground also caters for children up to the age of 15 years. There are seasonal variations in the attendance patterns.

The setting operates between 15:30 and 18:30 after school, term time and in school holidays between 10:00 and 17:30.

A low-level building is used for indoor activities, art and craft sessions. There are suitable cloakroom facilities and a small kitchen. The setting does not provide any food. The extensive grounds provide children with a wide range of free play opportunities.

Islington Council manages the service and employs a core team of appropriately qualified staff who are led by a senior play worker. additional staff are employed during school holidays to reflect the overall increase in attendance. At the time of inspection there were approximately 10 children between the ages of five and eight attending.

In 2007 the site was severely damaged by a fire. The setting currently runs from a temporary building. During 2008 the site will receive a complete overhaul with a new multi-use building that will accommodate the playground activities, youth groups and other community services.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's physical health is promoted as they have free access to extensive adventure play apparatus. Children are encouraged to explore their own physical boundaries as they swing on ropes, climb up on large ramps to slide down. They are able to ride bikes around the playground. Children also have opportunities to practise their sporting skills, team games and basketball skills with the equipment that is available.

Children learn about healthy eating as they take part in topics that extends their understanding of where food comes from. The garden project encourages them to take part in the preparation of the site, digging and sowing seeds. Four apple trees have been planted and the crops that are harvested later in the year will be used for cooking and eaten on site.

The children's registration forms contain relevant details to ensure any special care and health needs are recorded and met.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

The adventure playground provides children with a secure area to play, there are boundary fences but the open access means that older children are free to come and go as they please. Children under eight years are monitored, they know they must not leave the site. A register is in place to record their attendance. The experienced staff are aware of safety issues, they are well deployed around the site to ensure the children's safety. Children are encouraged to explore their own physical limits and make decisions about how to extend their play in a well-managed setting.

Children's well-being is maintained by qualified staff who are all aware of the importance of safeguarding children. Emergency evacuation procedures are displayed around the building, fire fighting equipment is in place and regularly maintained. Most staff hold current first aid certificates, the manager is aware of the need to update this training. The setting works with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to provide a safe environment for all children. The play department provides the site with child protection policies and procedures. However, parents are not made aware of the commitment that the setting has to protect children and to provide a safe place to play.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The large adventure playground structures provide children with excellent opportunities to explore and extend their physical skills in a well-managed environment. The free play ethos of the adventure playground gives the children total responsibility for their own play decisions.

The grounds are set out to provide various areas for the children to play. Bike riding is a popular activity on the large hard-standing playground. Children climb, swing and adapt the structures to make camps. They are free to take paints outside to decorate their creations. Children have complete freedom to move freely between all areas. The building provides a large area for creative activities. A separate 'paint room' provides storage and water for the craft activities. The local scrap bank is used to provide the children with a vast range of coloured and textured materials, paper and card that are used in any way the children choose. Children show great inventiveness, they ask staff for advice which is given in a sensitive and enabling manner.

Photographs show children taking part in a vast range of interesting activities they have planned and organised themselves such as barbecues, talent and fashion shows. Visitors to the playground include animal encounters, children are introduced to snakes, giant snails and frogs. During the summer scheme a local theatre group comes to work with the children. Masks, costumes, wigs and fabrics are used to create a short animated film. Children are given a copy of the dvd to take home. Older children have the opportunity to go camping. Children under eight years are taken to a local forest for the day to experience a 'camp' with appropriate support and staff involvement. Children have very good memories of these events, they clearly enjoyed these exiting experiences.

Projects planned for the older children and youth groups have a positive impact on the children under the age of eight. The older children take part in a bike project with links to the local police team. This means they can repair the younger children's bikes and act as good role models in helping and teaching them new skills.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they come onto the site they call out to staff who remind them to sign themselves in. Strong friendships have developed, children are confident in accessing all areas.

The setting strives to ensure all areas are fully accessible. Staff are aware of the limitations of the current building, these issues will be dealt with once the new building is in place.

Overall, children behave well and act responsibly. They are developing an understanding of how their actions impact on others playing nearby. Staff use appropriate language such as 'do you remember the agreement we have' to remind children of basic site rules such as not to drop litter and to take care when moving apparatus around the site. Children are asked to be polite and to remember their manners in general discussions. Staff are proactive in engaging children in conversation regarding their behaviour.

The Borough of Islington provides extensive information for parents about their children's services, childcare and play provision on their website and in brochures.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a very enthusiastic and committed team of play workers. They plan outings and events that are exiting and suitable for the children attending the scheme. The team work well together to promote adventure play and child-centred play ethos. The setting is currently working towards achieving a Level 2 Quality in Play accreditation. They work with

projects that promote young adults in achieving and working as part of a team. This provides all children with good role models with the older children taking part in their play and activities.

All the required documents are in place to ensure the well-being of the children and the smooth running of the site. Information for parents is limited, parents are not informed about the registration with Ofsted for out of school care, the inspection process and report or the Ofsted complaints procedure. This means that parents are not fully informed about these important aspects of the service. Overall, children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the time of the last inspection the setting was given two actions: to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and to ensure Ofsted are informed of serious accidents to children.

The setting has relevant documents in place with regard permission from parents to take appropriate action in the event of an accident and the manager is aware of the regulation to inform Ofsted of any significant events.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- ensure parents are informed about the setting's commitment to child protection and to safeguarding children
- ensure parents are fully informed about the registration with Ofsted, the inspection process, the report and Ofsted's complaints procedure.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)