



Great Group After School and Holiday Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	146803
Inspection date	12 July 2005
Inspector	Marie Tyler
Setting Address	Baldock Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5DF
Telephone number	01462 896292
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Registered person	The Great Group After School and Holiday Club
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?

The Great Group After School Club opened in 1994 and operates from the Community Centre, Baldock.

A maximum of 40 children may attend the club at any one time. The club is open on each weekday from 15:15 to 18:00 during term time. The Great Group also runs a holiday club on this site during school half terms and for 1 week before Christmas. The holiday club is open from 8:30 until 18:00 hours each weekday. A nearby field is used for outdoor play.

There are currently 50 children aged from 4 to under 14 years on roll. Children from local schools, including Letchworth and Stevenage, attend the club.

The club currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The club employs 16 staff. Five of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Five staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about healthy eating through themes and topics which explore diet and health. They enjoy a choice of healthy snacks and regular drinks and a weekly menu encourages children to choose healthy food for themselves. Children develop an understanding of their own needs with unrestricted access to drinks throughout the session and additional food available on request. Appropriate records allow staff to comply with any special dietary or family requests for the exclusion of specific foods.

Children develop physical strength through regular daily exercise, walking from school to the club and enjoying lively play in the nearby field. They develop physical skills in a good range of outdoor activities which include opportunities to use small apparatus, play football, run, jump and skip.

Children decide for themselves whether to be active or quiet. They learn about their individual capacity for physical exercise as they set goals for themselves and each other to see how far they can jump or kick a football. They choose to sit on the rugs to play less active games when they need to rest.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene as they follow established daily routines, washing their hands before eating and after going to the toilet. Children's health is protected by staff who have developed a good understanding of health and hygiene through regular training and by records and policies which help to maintain sensible health and hygiene practice.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure and confident in this cheerful, friendly setting. There is lots of space indoors for children to pursue their separate interests allowing them to develop independence and confidence in this secure environment. The large field nearby provides plenty of scope for outdoor play. In both areas children demonstrate self-assurance as they choose from an extensive range of suitable and well maintained resources.

Children demonstrate a very good awareness of keeping themselves safe when they

walk from school. They all wear fluorescent waistcoats. They stay together in one group, wait sensibly to cross the road and then wait on the opposite pavement until everyone is safely across the road. Children are very obviously used to this regular routine. They understand the importance of road safety and staff rarely need to remind them about safety as they negotiate these very busy roads.

Children are aware of safe practice in play. They are lively and energetic but are careful not to put each other at risk. They are alert to safety and demonstrate this when they check if an adult is nearby when they see a child standing near to the exit gate in the field.

Children are protected because staff are vigilant in their supervision and very aware of possible risks in most areas. Regular risk assessments and comprehensive and effective procedures enable staff to identify potential risks and take appropriate precautions to keep children safe but there is no thorough risk assessment for the use of field which is a public space and this may jeopardise children's safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by the staff who have a good understanding of child protection through training and regular staff discussions. However, children's welfare may be compromised because there is no clear procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are lively and confident, chatting readily to staff, visitors and each other. They attend local primary and secondary schools and there is noisy and excited chatter as they greet each other at the end of the school day. They are obviously very relaxed and comfortable in this familiar environment.

Groups of children independently organise games and challenges in the field. They negotiate turn taking and establish rules. They vary challenges to suit different ages and abilities, showing an affectionate consideration for younger children. Older children demonstrate skills with a football or balance ball and cheer each other on as some struggle to master this new skill. Younger children are encouraged with equal enthusiasm. Children offer each other praise and encouragement and loudly applaud each others efforts. Children demonstrate high levels of self esteem and confidence. Staff are always nearby, ready to help and support. They make constructive suggestions to support children's ideas for practising scoring goals and join in with children's games. Staff and children have relaxed and friendly relationships based on mutual respect.

Children choose active or quiet play depending on their levels of energy and individual preference. As the afternoon progresses more children opt for games which allow them to sit on the rugs with their friends. They clearly enjoy this time after school when they can relax or be active depending on their needs and interests.

Staff plan stimulating and interesting activities which are suitable for children of different ages and which promote children's overall development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the after school club because staff value and respect their individuality. Children are asked for their views on club activities and staff vary plans to suit children's interests. Staff record appropriate information about individual needs and have good systems in place to update information.

Children have opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, including celebrations of different cultural festivals. Children increase their knowledge of different languages and customs through posters displayed in the hall. They attend different local schools and learn about the community as they interact with each other. This friendly social interaction stimulates and supports their understanding of their local community.

Children with special educational needs are welcomed into the group and given appropriate support. Their contribution is valued and their skills recognised. They are treated with respect and sympathetic understanding by staff who have a sensible and sensitive understanding of individual needs.

Children behave very well. Older children help and encourage younger children, allowing them to join in with games and modifying rules or challenges to suit different abilities. Children learn to share. They take turns, treat each other with consideration and demonstrate a sense of responsibility. Staff help children to negotiate with each other when there are minor disagreements. Children understand that good behaviour is recognised and rewarded. The same systems are also used to recognise any special effort for children of all abilities. These strategies promote self esteem, establish good behaviour and help children to understand expectations. Staff provide good role models to help children learn about respect for each other.

The good relationships with parents have a positive impact on the children's sense of belonging, trust and confidence. Parents' views about their children's needs and interests are recorded. This ensures staff have ample information to allow them to provide good individual support and care for children during their time at the after school club. Children benefit from the generally good communication between staff and parents. Parents and staff exchange information formally and informally and parents are well-informed about the club through the comprehensive welcome pack, information posters, regular newsletters and detailed policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work well together to promote children's health, enjoyment and achievement. All staff are appropriately vetted and several are qualified while others are currently undertaking training for professional qualifications. All staff continue to develop their skills through on-going training.

Children are relaxed and confident. They are secure in this friendly environment where they develop confidence and self esteem as they move around freely, organise play and choose from the interesting and stimulating resources. They understand the daily routine and respond in a rapid and orderly way when it is time to walk to the field. They follow a familiar pattern, sitting for a snack and then organising activities with a minimum of direction from staff. Staff are alert and helpful, supporting children and engaging with them consistently throughout the session.

Children's welfare and care is supported by good practice, attention to safety and detailed records and documentation. However, parents report that they sometimes find it difficult to contact a member of staff during the school day and are concerned that this could compromise children's welfare or safety.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations from the last inspection advised the provision to improve safety measures by removing hazards in the toilet and checking the outside play area for litter. An additional recommendation advised that healthy eating options should be improved. The provision has taken positive steps to meet all these recommendations, improving safe practice and offering healthy choices on the daily menu.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- make sure the child protection policy includes a procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff
- conduct a thorough and regularly reviewed risk assessment of the field and develop an action plan to minimise identified risks which may arise from the shared use of this public space

- make sure there is an operational telephone number where parents can contact a member of staff during the school day

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