

Wirral Play Council Special Needs

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306348
Inspection date	22 October 2007
Inspector	Margaret Patricia Mellor

Setting Address	1 Berner Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 4JJ
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Registered person	The Trustees of Wirral Play Council
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Type of inspection	Childcare
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Type of care	Out of School care
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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?

Wirral Play Council Special Needs Playscheme was registered in 1998. It is committee run and it is a voluntary organisation with charitable status. It operates from the Wirral Play Development Centre in Birkenhead.

Children use the main hall, art room, sensory 'snoozelum' room and a quiet room for their care and activities. There is a secure, fully enclosed area for children's outdoor play. Access to the play scheme is on a referral basis.

The play scheme is registered to provide care for 43 children aged from five to under eight years at any one time. It runs term time, on a Tuesday and Friday from 18.00 to 20.00 and Saturday from 9.30 to 12.30. During the school holidays, the sessions are Monday to Friday from 10.00 to 15.00. There are 94 children on roll aged from five to 14 years.

All the children attending have learning difficulties or disabilities. It also supports children who have English as a second language.

The play scheme employs 16 staff to work with the children, who all work part time. All staff have a relevant playwork or child care qualification. Additional staff are employed to support

with the children's activities during the holiday play schemes. They receive support from Wirral Play Council and are a member of '4 Children'.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment, which meets their needs very well. Staff vigilantly follow good health and hygiene practices, for instance, children's total care needs, wiping down surfaces and cleaning the toys.

Children themselves are developing awareness of some simple personal hygiene, through their daily routine and as staff gently remind them to wash their hands after going to the toilet. This also helps to prevent the spread of cross infection and promote children's wellbeing.

Children's health is safeguarded. Staff ensure that they use sun creams, wear hats and have plenty of drinks on hot days. They regularly review the contents of the first aid boxes and 14 of the staff team have a relevant first aid certificate, therefore children's minor injuries are dealt with appropriately.

There are effective procedures for sharing information about children's dietary needs, so that parents' wishes are respected and children stay healthy. Staff act in the children's best interests when they are ill and store medication in an accessible place out of children's reach. This is well supported by the detailed sick child policy and medication records.

Children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle is generally promoted well. Staff are keen to share healthy eating ideas with the children through practical activities, for instance, making salad wraps or fruit tasting sessions. This increases their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. However, snacks in the tuck shop are less wholesome and nutritious.

Children bring a packed lunch and staff ensure that their food is stored appropriately, so that their wellbeing is safeguarded. They have plenty of drinks throughout the day, which quenches their thirst and benefits their health.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities planned by staff that encourage them to be physically active. They benefit from fresh air and respond with gusto as they play outdoors. They love to push or ride on wheeled toys and play ball games.

Indoors, children build on their coordination and spatial awareness skills through activities, such as inclusive circle games, climbing on soft play and exploring rhythms to music on the dance mat. Staff encourage cooperation and participation through the effective use of group games and resources in particular, the parachute and bean bags.

Children relish painting and their fine motor skills are further enhanced through threading beads, cutting with scissors and mark making. They are able to be active or restful, according to their respective needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and with confidence in the setting, as there are good safety arrangements in place. Cleaning systems are organised well, so that they reduce the disruption to children.

Staff vigilantly monitor access to the premises, which is well supported by visitors records, closed circuit television and locked door policy. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, for instance, door finger guards.

Staff carry out a daily visual premises check to effectively address any areas of concern. The outdoor play area provides a variety of safe challenges for children in a secure enclosed area.

There are effective and well thought out procedures for keeping children safe and well, whilst enjoying outings. Therefore, the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves is minimised.

Children are cared for in a warm, spacious and well maintained environment. They develop their independence as they move freely and safely between the different areas within the premises, as staff creatively organise the space. They have access to a broad range of toys and equipment that are suitable for their age and individual needs. The toys and equipment also stimulate enjoyment.

Staff follow appropriate health and safety procedures, so that the resources are maintained well and children remain safe. Children relax in comfort with their friends because the chairs, tables and comfy floor cushions are suitable for the range of children who attend.

Children learn aspects of personal safety as they regularly practice what to do in the event of a fire. They build on their awareness through activities staff plan. They have plenty of fun, as they role play crossing roads and as they listen to stories about 'Francis Fire Fly'.

Children's wellbeing is further safeguarded because there are effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. There is a designated child protection coordinator.

All staff have accessed training and are very knowledgeable about child protection issues. They demonstrate a strong understanding of the procedure to follow should they wish to report a concern, ensuring that the wellbeing of children in their care is a high priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the setting and staff provide a stimulating, fun environment for them. They are clearly relaxed and at ease, promoting their personal, social and emotional development. They are given a warm welcome by staff as they arrive, who have set out a variety of toys and activities for them.

Children are happy to see their friends, engage in creative play and chat about what they are doing. They talk fondly about their family, friends and where they go on holiday. They have a very positive relationship with staff who spend time talking, listening and playing with the children.

The children are keen to engage staff in their play, such as a circle games and the spiders they make, which they talk excitedly about. Children are listened to by staff, confidently asking,

signing or pointing to picture symbols to make their needs known to the adults, fostering their sense of belonging.

Children have plenty of fun and gain confidence, as they take part in well organised activities that staff plan, which actively engages their interest. Staff provide interesting activities to encourage children's curiosity and investigation skills.

The children learn about living things, for instance, nature trails in the park when they collect twigs to make collage pictures and examining bugs they find under stones with magnifying glasses.

Children eagerly join in creative play and are encouraged to freely express their own ideas and feelings through arts and crafts. They relish free painting and making key-rings, fridge magnets, bracelets and mobiles out of recyclable materials.

The children have a strong sense of belonging and are proud of their achievements, which they eagerly share with others. They happily show adults their displayed paintings, fostering their self esteem. Children build on their creativity, responding gleefully as they spontaneously dress up.

Children are involved in their play and more able children make decisions, choosing whether to listen to music, draw with crayons, relax on comfy cushions with a book or join in group games. They explore using their senses, for instance, fruit tasting sessions, looking at the creative lighting in the sensory room and respond gleefully as they run their hands through the sand or water.

Most of the children sit and concentrate well when listening to stories. They relish going on outings too. They go to places such as the farm where they feed the goats, football club or museum which supports a topic they do about under the sea. This further enhances the children's play scheme experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued and their individuality is respected. Staff have a strong understanding of learning difficulties and disabilities. This involves them in working in close partnership with parents and accessing specialist training. All children are included and happily join in with the day's activities.

They enjoy celebrating special events in their own lives, such as birthdays when they make a card for one another. Children attend from different family backgrounds and gain awareness of other cultures through festivals they celebrate, for instance, Diwali, Halloween and the Chinese New Year.

They begin to learn about diversity through the toys and resources. They play with dolls in wheelchairs and look at books or do puzzles that reflect positive images. However, multi-cultural resources are not fully incorporated into the range of play materials, therefore children's awareness of people in the wider community is not fully explored.

Children are happy, relaxed and confident in the setting. Their sense of belonging is promoted well as they happily select activities, which helps to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to them. They are encouraged to feel good about themselves.

Staff use plenty of praise to acknowledge what children have done well and manage challenging behaviour in an appropriate manner, creating a positive environment for the children. They are very attentive, encouraging children to express their interests and talk about what they are doing.

Children are developing their social skills. They show good awareness of acceptable behaviours as they begin to understand what is expected of them, for example, sharing or taking turns. They are supportive of one another as they welcome and befriend new children to the play scheme.

Children settle well because staff work closely with parents to ensure they understand children's individual needs and home routines. Parents are given information about the setting as part of the enrolment procedures, reassuring them that children's interests come first. They are very warmly greeted by staff as they arrive and there is plenty of discussion about the children.

Parents comment very positively about their children's care, activities and opportunities to socialise with other children in a supportive environment. This meaningful relationship between the home and the setting, positively enhances children's continuity and the quality of care offered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, comfortable and generally well equipped environment. Information is shared with parents regularly, promoting children's continuity of care.

There are well written policies and effective procedures so that children are not left unattended with non-vetted persons, safeguarding the children's wellbeing.

There are appropriate systems for the recruitment of adults who care for the children, but the induction programme is less rigorous. Staff have accessed first aid, maketon, peg feeding and child protection training, helping to provide an effective service for the children.

All the necessary regulatory daily documentation is maintained well, stored with regard for confidentiality and made available for inspection.

Children benefit from good adult support and the experience of the qualified staff. The manager and staff work well together and this is reflected in the children's happiness and strong sense of belonging.

Staffing ratios afford children good levels of individual and small group support, helping to meet all their needs. Staff regularly attend courses for instance, 'Team teach', 'Approach' and 'Circus skills' together with weekly planning meetings to help staff share ideas. This contributes to the quality of care offered.

Children are involved in purposeful activities, enhanced by the staff, who have knowledge of play. Staff organise the environment allowing for both active play and relaxation, assisting children to develop their independence and create friendships. Children have plenty of fun as they pursue interests that appeal to them and join in group games.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, one action and two recommendations were raised to meet the National Standards and improve the quality of care, which referred to organisation.

They have reviewed the medication records, policies and procedures and updated staff records, therefore improving the quality of care offered.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards.

The concern related to National Standard 2 Organisation, National Standard 10 Special needs, National Standard 11 Behaviour, National Standard 12 Working in partnership with parents and National Standard 13 Child protection.

As a result, National Standard 10 Special needs was not met and the provider took action by preparing a special needs statement. Ofsted is satisfied that by taking these steps, the provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- improve children's access to healthy snack options
- continue to build upon the range of resources that promote children's awareness of people in the wider community
- continue to develop the staff induction programme.

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