



Barracudas Summer Activity Camp (Chelmsford)

Inspection report for early years provision

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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?

Barracudas Summer Activity Camp (Chelmsford) opened in 1994. It operates from the Chelmsford County High School close to the town centre. The summer camp serves the local and wider community.

The group is registered to care for a maximum of 146 children aged from 4 years to under 8 years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are 29 children attending who have special needs and the group could support children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during certain weeks in school holidays. Sessions are from 08.00 until 18.00.

There are 26 members of staff who work with the children. Staff members either have teaching qualifications or are trained sports instructors. The scheme has recently completed the Aiming High Quality Assurance Scheme organised by 4Children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected by the appropriate policies and procedures that are in place. Staff can deal effectively with any emergency or illness that may affect a child in their care. Parents are notified and the children are made comfortable. Staff members are made aware of any child who needs specialised treatment, for example asthma and the location of inhalers.

Children are already aware of good personal hygiene routines as most are older and able to take care of themselves. Children do need prompting from staff to wash hands before their snack time but there is a good routine in place for their main meal. The children are also encouraged to keep their environment clean by picking up rubbish and keeping the play areas tidy.

Children have ample opportunity to exercise and use large pieces of outside equipment to extend their physical skills. They are actively encouraged to try out new challenges, to push themselves to extend their range of movement and gain a sense of achievement.

Children bring their own lunch boxes and can access drinks throughout the day. Parents are consulted and any allergies are noted. Whilst fizzy drinks have now been replaced by water, children do not have the choice of healthy options when visiting the tuck shop. This is predominantly stocked with highly coloured sweets and crisps. Children are more aware of the need to eat wisely and a choice will be beneficial. Children enjoy a sociable, happy meal time and can chat about their experiences with each other and the staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are able to move freely around the premises, using classrooms as their home bases and visiting the other building for specific activities. Staff complete written risk assessments not only for the premises but also for the use of equipment. Children are encouraged to take care of themselves and stay safe when using materials and equipment. Rules are explained, for example the use of the trampoline; children repeat the safety measures and remember them from session to session.

Children access a range of toys and equipment suitable for their developmental

needs. Children benefit from using clean, well maintained toys and equipment. Staff members identify any damaged resources and these are repaired or removed.

Children are using a large site, accessed by other users. Groups stay together and staff are very aware of where the children are located. Children are aware that they must not wander away or talk with strangers. Staffing ratios are occasionally compromised. This is for brief periods at changeover times. Children could be at risk and this needs to be addressed.

Children are safeguarded by the policies in place regarding safety procedures and child protection guidelines. New staff benefit from the induction course familiarising them on how to use the sound advice contained in the documentation. Children's safety and well-being is protected by this good practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive range of sports and arts activities. Each day is organised to provide children with equipment that extends them physically and stimulates them to use their imaginations purposefully.

Children are motivated to explore and investigate. The 'finds' on a treasure hunt became the inspiration for a collage about the environment. Children are inquisitive, animatedly asking questions about the activities, how games will be organised and the rules regarding the use of equipment.

Children are able to cooperate, share and take turns. They have already made firm friends, understand the rules of the scheme and respect each other. Staff members are aware of each of the children's needs and are alert when problems arise or if there is a need to organise something different for an individual child. Children grow in confidence as they accomplish tasks and master the use of unfamiliar resources.

Children move confidently between the home bases, activity rooms and outdoor area. The large, grassed field is used for the bouncy castle, ball games, archery and motor sports. The professionalism and eagerness shown by the staff is infectious. The children take their lead from the adults, committing themselves to taking part and enjoying the experiences the scheme has to offer.

Children are able to talk with confidence, approach the staff for their needs and feel safe and reassured during the day. Staff members give their praise and acknowledgement of children's achievements generously.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well, respecting each other, their surroundings and the club rules. These are written on the chalkboards in each classroom and contain advice such as 'have fun' and 'think sensibly'. There is an over emphasis on the negative instructions

and these could be changed to be more encouraging. Staff understand the behaviour management policy and this ensures that they deal with the children in a consistent manner for all ages. As older children attend the club, staff members talk over problems rationally and expect the child to apologise and understand why the behaviour is wrong.

Children quickly identify with their groups and work together as a team. They are valued by the staff and they show concern for each other. Staff members are aware that in such a large group of children, the less outgoing children can feel isolated and all effort is made to ensure that these children are acknowledged and their needs met.

Children are aware that we have similarities and differences and value each other's abilities. There are some resources on site reflecting equal opportunities, particularly art materials. However, this is an activity based scheme and emphasis is placed on using sports equipment. Adaptations are made so that all children can have access. Children with identified special needs are welcomed, this year a group of children with hearing problems is using the scheme once a week throughout the summer. The group is also supporting older teenagers aged 14 to 16 years gaining play work experience and they join in with the younger age groups.

Parents are made welcome and information is freely available to them. Staff spend time giving feedback to parents, listening to their views and making note of any concerns they may have.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff members work well as a team. They are qualified in providing the broad range of activities on offer to the children. Staff use initiative to organise the groups of children, successfully responding to the suggestions and requests from the children, for example some have asked to learn sign language and this is being organised.

Children are grouped by age and activities are organised to meet their developmental needs. Children move around the site to access sports indoors and outdoors. The daily programme encompasses a wide range of experiences, using equipment that for many children is new and exciting. Staff members are enthusiastic and motivated and this buoyancy is infectious. The children respond well to the challenges each piece of equipment presents.

Children and parents benefit from a range of policies and procedures implemented by the staff. Parents can access information about the scheme through the introduction booklet, notice boards and by talking with the staff. Staff members are given induction training to familiarise them with the expectations of good practice. Records are in order and kept confidential. However, staff must record pre-existing injuries apparent on children, countersigned by parents.

Overall, the needs of the range of children for whom care is provided are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, it was required that staff record their movements around the camp. A system is now in place that records the whereabouts of all staff members. It can now be easily established the location of each staff member and which group of children is being supervised at any time.

It was also required that staff members are suitably qualified to work at the scheme. It is recognised that finding staff with early years qualifications and activity based knowledge is very difficult. It is recommended that providers seek help from the British Activity Holiday Association for endorsement of the qualifications of their staff.

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 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):

- ensure staff members are suitably qualified, for example by obtaining a certificate from the British Activity Holiday Association
- record existing injuries, countersigned by parent or carer.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk