



Alton Primary School Playcentre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	159336
Inspection date	03 August 2005
Inspector	Linda Close
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Registered person	Wandsworth Borough Council Play 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.

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 Alton Primary School Play centre has been registered since 1992. It is held in Alton Primary School, which is situated within the Alton Housing Estate in Roehampton. The local authority is the London Borough of Wandsworth. The housing estate and surrounding areas are designated 'Sure Start' areas.

The play centre uses designated areas of the school, including the reception area, an office, a staff room and a large dining hall within the school building. Children also have the use of further corridor space close to the hall and two classrooms. Outside, they have access to a playground, a fenced ball play area, a large field and an

adventure playground with fixed play equipment. Each area is used for different activities, including indoor and outdoor sports, art and craft activities and games. At least one member of staff is situated in each play area. Children are free to make choices about what activities they want to participate in and can move from area to area at their own pace.

The play centre is registered to accommodate a maximum of 150 children aged from 5 to 8 years of age although in practice a maximum of 60 are accepted each day. On the day of the inspection there were 50 children present aged from 5 to 14 years. Eight children with a range of special needs attend the play centre. The centre has a policy of assessing each child's individual care needs, and if necessary, a one to one key worker can be provided.

The number of staff working each day depends on the number of children in attendance, and the number of children with special needs. A correct ratio of staff to children is maintained. The manager has just completed a level 3 qualification and over 50% of the staff hold appropriate qualifications. The registration does not include overnight care.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy energetic play in the fresh air using an extensive selection of fixed climbing and balancing equipment. They eagerly take part in dance and team games indoors and outside which helps them to keep fit and healthy. Children are assured of good opportunities to take part in vigorous play throughout the weeks of the play scheme because the staff have planned many worthwhile games and activities in advance for every week.

Children's minor accidents resulting in grazes or bumps are dealt with appropriately by a trained first aider, one of whom is always on the premises during opening hours. Children's individual health needs are well managed because the staff know if the children have any existing conditions and have information from parents about how to care for them. A first aid kit is kept to hand and taken on outings and most of the contents are in good order. Children's accidents are recorded on forms in a way which ensures confidentiality although not all forms are fully completed. Staff regularly check the toilet facilities for cleanliness. However, this routine is not always completely effective because the boys toilets are not always pleasant for them to visit later in the day.

Children can take a drink from the water fountain at any time. They have further drinks at snack time and lunch time. Children enjoy food brought from home and they know about good hygiene practices including washing hands before eating. However, children's food packs are sometimes left in direct sunlight which could lead to the deterioration of perishable food. Children learn to eat their savoury foods first. They also talk and learn about other aspects of healthy eating in well chosen activities in their 'Be Healthy' week.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe in this secure school building. They have free access to a level outdoor area which is securely enclosed and extremely well equipped with large fixed apparatus for outdoor play set in impact absorbing materials for safety. They have ample space in the indoor rooms and the hall where they use furniture that has been chosen specifically for children of their own age. Children have no books at present and the school library is not open to the play scheme. The toys and games available for indoor play are suitable and safe but limited and some are well-used. Children have a good range of resources for use in the room set aside for art and craft activities.

Children and their parents are warmly welcomed by the staff each day in the reception area. Fire evacuation procedures are known to staff and children and practiced regularly. Children benefit from careful supervision at all times with staff showing a good awareness of the need to be vigilant as there is refurbishment work taking place in the building. Those children who have special educational needs benefit from individual support from staff to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Children's safety in relation to child protection issues is supported well because the manager ensures that staff are aware of the policy to protect children. This policy includes most of the necessary detail.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take part wholeheartedly in sports activities, dance and free play in the outdoor areas. They are also looking forward to an outing to the seaside and they describe what they will do there with great enthusiasm. Children have free choice of the indoor and outdoor activities available at the play scheme. Most children are very active but a few choose to remain indoors for some of the time playing board games, making music, creating art works or learning child-led dance routines. Limitations in indoor resources and the lack of books mean that children do not have an extensive choice for quiet activities.

Children feel valued as they see examples of their art work on display. They are able to express their own thoughts and ideas about their activities in 'Team Time' and in the 'Kids Forum'. The children take part in interesting conversations with staff for example concerning the differences between the growth and texture of curly hair and straight hair. More reticent children gain confidence from the good natured support given by the staff who join in energetically with the games.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about fairness and equality from the staff who are patient and give

clear guidance and explanations. The programme includes valuable activities that teach children self-respect and to show respect for others. Unfortunately the resources do not reflect a broad cross section of our society and there are no books to further underpin the valuable activities about relationships and behaviour that are shown in the plans.

Children who have special needs are assessed and given individual support if necessary. They benefit from the encouragement they receive to join in suitable activities. Their personal care is approached sensitively. Their privacy is assured and good standards of hygiene are maintained. Overall the children's behaviour is lively but acceptable. They are gaining an understanding of the expectations of the staff who help them to recognise right and wrong and the consequences of their actions. Children enjoy adult approval and praise for being kind and helpful.

Staff are available to talk with parents at the beginning and end of each session. This ensures continuity of care for the children. Parents give specific information about allergies and healthcare at registration. These details are carefully noted and known to all staff which ensures that all children are cared for as their parents wish. Children's safety is promoted appropriately because parents sign permission slips for outings that include permission for emergency medical treatment or advice to be sought if necessary.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The local authority takes responsibility for ensuring that all members of staff are suitable to work with children thus ensuring children's safety. Children are carefully supervised in all areas of the building particularly as there is refurbishment work being conducted at this time. The manager has recently completed studies for a suitable level 3 qualification and over 50% of the staff have at least a level 2 qualification. Some staff have specific qualifications and experience of working with children who have special educational needs.

Outdoor space and activities are well organised to provide the children with beneficial ways to expend their energy. Correct ratios of adults to children are maintained at all times through good forward planning on the part of the manager. Indoor space is also well organised notwithstanding the limitations in some of the resources for indoor use. Attendance records are in place and these documents include all necessary details to meet legal requirements. Appropriate medication records are held in readiness and accidents are recorded on suitable forms although not all have sufficient detail and some have not been signed by parents. Most policies and procedures are in place although details of keeping Ofsted informed are missing from the documents relating to child protection procedures particularly should an allegation be made against a member of staff. Documents and records are not kept in a very orderly way for easy retrieval although all are present.

Staff meetings are held daily to assist the team in working together and to ensure that staff are kept informed about children's needs and safety issues. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Actions and recommendations made at the last inspection include improvements needed to grouping so that the younger children are not adversely affected by the older children. Children choose freely and they are now well supported by the staff. More toys and resources were required to enable staff to provide a wider variety of play opportunities. The range of activities offered is now good in most respects but indoor quiet play opportunities are still limited by a lack of resources.

The provider agreed to inform staff about what actions to take should a child arrive with existing injuries. Staff are now well informed through daily discussion and induction procedures. Behaviour management was noted as being inadequate but is now good. This is due to actions taken by the provider to employ at least 50% of staff with appropriate qualifications and a suitably qualified manager.

Accident records were formerly written in a way that did not preserve confidentiality and this has been remedied by using a separate form for each accident. Meal times were previously disorganised and this has been improved so that children do not spend long periods of time queuing. The child protection procedure was noted as making no mention of keeping Ofsted informed and this lack of detail has not been addressed.

Complaints since the last inspection

A complaint was received in May 2005 regarding the care provided at the play centre. The complaint related to Standard 1; inadequate staff qualifications, Standard 2; staffing ratios not maintained; Standard 8; children's dietary needs not being met, Standard 10; children with special needs not receiving appropriate care and support; Standard 11; children's behaviour poorly managed; and Standard 14; poorly maintained records. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate as the play centre was not operating at the time the complaint was received. The provider gave due consideration to all aspects of the complaint and devised an action plan to develop areas in need of improvement. As a result no actions were made and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?
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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 that children's lunch boxes are stored in a cool place out of direct sunlight
- ensure that accident forms are signed promptly by parents and that clear and concise details of the subsequent steps taken by the staff are included on all forms
- ensure that the boy's toilets are still pleasant to use in the late afternoon
- review and improve the policy and procedure document for child protection issues which currently makes no mention of keeping Ofsted informed particularly if an allegation is made against a member of staff
- improve the range of toys, books and games that are available to the children for indoor play and ensure that these resources reflect an appropriate cross-section of our society

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