

The Ark After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY281515
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Inspector	Penny Wood
Setting Address	St Bede C of E Primary School, Gordon Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 7DD
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Registered person	The Ark After School 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 Ark After School Club was registered in 2004 and operates from St Bede's Church of England Primary School in Winchester and is run by a voluntary management committee. The club have use of specific classrooms within the school on a rota basis, the school hall and the outside play area.

The club operates Monday to Friday from 15:20 to 18:00, term time only. A maximum of 24 children between the ages of four and under eight years old may attend the club at any one time. At present there are currently 87 children on roll aged between four and eleven years old. The club supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are six members of staff on roll, of which three are working towards a relevant childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and staff follow appropriate hygiene routines in order to reduce the spread of germs, such as wiping the tables and washing their hands before snack time. Children enjoy daily access

to the outdoor area, allowing them to burn off energy after their day in the classroom. They enjoy playing games, such as football and taking part in their own mini Olympics.

Children's health is promoted through the care they receive after accidents or when they require medication to be administered. For example, staff comfort children after they fall over and administer first aid appropriately. Appropriate systems are in place for the recording of such events, although staff do not request parents to acknowledge medication records at the end of the session to ensure the parents are fully informed of when the last dose was administered. In the event of a major incident, written parental consent allows the staff to seek professional medical treatment.

Children enjoy a choice of healthy snacks, such as pitta bread with a choice of filling, breadsticks and crackers, and fruit is readily available. Records of children's allergies ensure staff only provide foods that are suitable for individual dietary needs. Children enjoy access to drinks at snack time, ensuring they do not become thirsty, particularly after enjoying the physical activities outside.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within the familiar school environment, with the group rotating on a weekly basis between the available classrooms. Children have access to an appropriate range of resources which staff check to ensure they are safe for the children's use.

Children enjoy staff's attention during activities, although they are not always appropriately supervised when moving between one area and another. For example, when children choose to return indoors after playing outside, staff use an intercom system to inform staff inside of a child's imminent return. However, this system does not always work sufficiently, resulting in children being unsupervised whilst waiting to be let in.

Appropriate systems ensure children and staff are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures. Suitable systems in place promote children's welfare and safety with particular regard to child protection issues. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in order to identify, record and refer concerns when they arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children participate in a suitable range of age appropriate activities. At the beginning of the session staff discuss the options for play with the children, ensuring they are aware of what activities are available. In addition to activities provided by the staff, children enjoy opportunities to select toys from the storage cupboard. However, some activities are overly adult directed and not all activities are sufficiently resourced. For example, when playing outside, children only had access to one football, limiting the opportunity for them to follow their own independent play choices following a disagreement during a game of football.

Children enjoy daily physical activities outside, and each week they enjoy special activities on a Friday, which includes either watching a movie or baking. Children receive praise and encouragement from staff, which boosts their confidence and self-esteem. For example, staff verbally congratulate children on completion of their running races which the children clearly

enjoy. Children are developing their relationships with each other. They enjoy chatting during social snack times and coming together for craft activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy opportunities to participate in the celebration of festivals, such as Divali and Christmas, re-enforcing their learning at school. However, there are few opportunities to develop their awareness of diversity naturally through play as a result of the limited range of resources which depict positive images of culture and disabilities. Appropriate strategies ensure the inclusion of all children, in particular those with additional needs. Staff liaise with parents and school staff to ensure they work in partnership when caring for children who require extra support.

Most of the time children behave well. Children are learning to respect each other, with strategies in place to address inappropriate comments and behaviour towards others. For example, following a disagreement staff encourage children to recognise that inappropriate comments and language are not acceptable. Children are expected to continue to follow the school rules, with opportunities to add their own rules which they consider applicable to the after school group.

Parents receive appropriate information regarding the group, with notice boards displayed both inside the classroom and outside of the school. Parents receive a handbook on joining the group which informs them of the groups practice. Staff seek information about each child, such as children's health requirements and children's likes and dislikes in order to be able to provide appropriate care and activities which interest the children. Regular newsletters keep parents informed of changes and events within the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Appropriate recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitably checked in order to work with children. However, the committee do not have a suitable plan readily available to ensure the group meets with the required qualification requirements for the staff.

Good procedures ensure the committee are informed of changes and events within the group through a weekly report compiled by the manager. The manager and committee are actively working to review the provision and procedures in order to improve the provision for children and families. Staff have clear procedures for the recording of children's attendance. Strategies establish children's whereabouts if they fail to turn up for the session and when parents fail to notify the group of absences in advance. All required policies and procedures are in place. Children's records maintain confidentiality and are stored securely. However, not all documentation is readily available for inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the setting has improved their practice based on the recommendation that was raised. The group were requested to implement a written statement on special needs and to ensure that it was understood and implemented by all staff. As a result, a policy is in

place and there are appropriate procedures to ensure that any child with additional needs is included within the group.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required 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 acknowledge medication administered to children within the appropriate records
- ensure children are appropriately supervised at all times and communication systems between staff inside and out are effective
- ensure activities allow children to develop their independence and play opportunities are sufficiently resourced to enable children to follow independent play choices
- improve the range of resources which depict positive images of culture and disabilities
- develop and implement an action plan, with timescales, to ensure the person in charge will meet the minimum qualifications requirement and at least half of all childcare staff will hold an appropriate level 2 qualification.
- ensure all documentation is readily available for inspection.

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