

Jousters at Wheatfields

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY360917
Inspection date	04 August 2008
Inspector	Gail Groves
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Registered person	Jousters Childcare Limited
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Jousters at Wheatfields is one of seven provisions run by Jousters Childcare Limited. It originally opened in 2004 but was re-registered in 2008 because the owners became a limited company. It operates from Wheatfields Infant School which is situated in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The group has access to a resources room with integral kitchen, the school dining room and the use of the school hall. A maximum of 32 children may attend the setting at any one time. The after school club is open each weekday from 15:00 until 18:00 during school term times only. The group also offers a breakfast club from 07:45 until 9:00 during school term times and a holiday club from 08:00 until 18:00 during most school holidays. Jousters at Wheatfields also provides out of school care for children aged over eight years which is based in the nearby junior school. The older children join the younger children at the end of each session for collection by parents. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 42 children from five to 11 years on roll for the holiday club. Children come from the local area. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

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

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally protected from infection and are appropriately taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, staff encourage children to undertake some simple, good health and hygiene practices such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet so that they begin to develop appropriate hygiene routines for later life. They also ensure that tables are cleaned before children sit at them to eat their lunch and exclude children with infectious illnesses for appropriate periods of time to prevent the spread of infection. A suitably trained member of staff ensures that children who are injured are given appropriate first aid. However, because written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment is not sought for children attending the holiday club their health cannot be not fully protected.

Children are appropriately nourished. They bring their own packed lunch to the club and are provided with a light meal at teatime which is healthy and nutritious. Healthy snacks of fruit are provided and water is readily available at all times so that children can help themselves to a drink if they are thirsty. Information about children's health and dietary needs is sought before they begin to attend so that staff can work with parents to meet any particular requirements. This information is readily but confidentially available to staff at all times.

Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors and as a result, they are developing coordination and muscle skills and are learning to enjoy fresh air and exercise. For example, they use the school's large climbing frame and play football, tennis, cricket, dodge ball and hockey. If they wish to do so, they can also bring their own bikes and skateboards to play with in the playground. Inside they play table tennis and enjoy dance sessions. Active play is well balanced with less energetic activities such as circle games, art activities and sedentary games such as cards or chess. Consequently, children can rest according to their needs and do not become overtired.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment in which the risks to their safety are generally minimised. For example, daily safety check lists are usually completed to ensure that all areas accessed by the children are safe, parents are asked to sign their children in and out with times of arrival and departure so that staff can be aware who is present in an emergency and a fire drill is carried out on the first day that the club operates. Resources are stored in low-level units so that children can access them safely and independently and there are areas of the room designated for different kinds of activities so that groups of children can play safely without blocking walk ways or preventing access to other areas of the room. For example, there is a carpeted area for floor play and another area with cushions for sitting quietly to talk or read where children will not create a trip hazard or be trodden on accidentally by others who are passing by.

Children use good quality, well-maintained suitable and safe equipment which meets their differing needs. As a result, they are able to play and take part in activities safely. In addition, they are encouraged to learn to keep themselves safe through some discussions and practical

experiences within their daily routine. For example, a member of staff shows children who are watching a game of table tennis that they need to stand away from the table so that they are not hit accidentally with the bat and children who are playing with plastic sticks are reminded that they must be careful not to wave them around too much in case they hurt each other.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and all staff receive appropriate checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. In addition, there are procedures in place for recording concerns about a child's welfare and well-being and all of the necessary contact details for seeking advice or reporting any such concerns are available. However, children are not always fully safeguarded because although staff generally understand their role in child protection, some unqualified staff do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be able to implement the appropriate policies and procedures when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well and are happy in the setting. Consequently, they are able to confidently join in with all of the play and learning opportunities provided for them. Staff are careful to recognise and value their efforts and achievements at all times and as a result, children develop confidence and self-esteem and are eager to explore and investigate new activities and resources. For example, they explore how to make a costume out of a bin liner and some string and decide how they wish to decorate it as part of a creative activity during 'Fashion Week'. Because staff constantly interact with children and are interested in what they do and say, children relate well to others and are developing good communication and social skills. For example, children show good concentration and involvement in activities and they play well together in pairs and small groups. Older children help younger children to play chess correctly by explaining how different chess pieces move and children of all ages confidently take part in circle games involving the whole group.

Children are involved in a broad range of interesting planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and learning. Specific activities are planned around a different theme each week and in addition children can enjoy a free choice of activities using any of the group's available resources. For example, children enjoy opportunities to develop their creative skills as they colour pictures with felt tip pens, decorate their bin bag costumes and make jewellery using beads and elastic. They use scissors, play parachute games and use bats and balls to develop hand and eye coordination and physical skills. They enjoy cooking activities and play card games to develop and extend their understanding about number, size and weight and use their imagination as they develop role play scenarios with dressing up outfits, tents and tunnels. Books are always available in the book corner for children to look at and read and they have opportunities to draw and write freely whenever they wish to do so. Activities such as dancing to music or singing with a karaoke machine are also popular.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging because many of them also attend the after school club and are already familiar with the environment and know where the resources and other facilities can be found. Consequently, they are able to be independent and to demonstrate self-reliance. The club's behavioural expectations are discussed with the children at the very beginning of the play scheme and they are involved in devising and writing the club's rules. As a result, they

feel valued and included and because they clearly understand what is required of them they behave appropriately. Children have opportunities to make choices and take decisions throughout their daily routine and are developing confidence and self-esteem. For example, they choose what they would like to play with, decide when they would like to eat their snack and choose whether they wish to watch or to take part in activities such as a fashion show.

Children learn to share and take turns so that they are aware of their own needs and are learning to respect the needs of others. For example, staff ensure that the names of children wishing to take part in popular activities such as table tennis are written on a list and that each child is given the same amount of time for their turn. When it is time to tidy away the toys all children are encouraged to help so that they learn to work harmoniously with others. Children benefit from some activities and resources which help them value diversity and begin to develop a positive awareness of the differences and similarities between people.

Children generally have their individual needs met because staff work in partnership with parents and carers. Information about children's needs is sought before children begin to attend and these are listed and made available to all staff. The club is aware of the requirement for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be offered appropriate help and would liaise closely with their parents in order to meet their children's particular needs. The club's policies and procedures are available for parents to see on request but the complaints policy contains inaccurate information. As a result, parents are not fully informed about the way their views and concerns are respected and acknowledged and their children's welfare and well-being is monitored and protected.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

During the initial part of the inspection visit it was found that there was no appropriately qualified manager present and that neither of the two staff on duty held any childcare qualifications. Staff work to a shift pattern which means that the club's manager is not present throughout the whole day. However, because there is no named deputy who is suitably qualified and able to take charge in the absence of the manager, staff are insufficiently supported and children's safety and well-being is at risk. In addition, although individual staff records are kept on the premises the information that they contain about the level of each member of staff's qualification is unclear. This means that the requirement to ensure that at least half of all staff have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of child development cannot be accurately monitored. Consequently, children's care and development is potentially compromised. However, the correct adult to child ratio is maintained at all times and this contributes to the way that children's care, learning and play is supported.

The club's policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Record keeping systems are generally used appropriately and all of the necessary documentation for the efficient and safe management of the setting is in place. In addition, the use of time, space and staff deployment contributes to positive outcomes for children. For example, the premises are well organised and the indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. As a result, children enjoy a stimulating environment in which they are able to play and learn effectively. Staff spend all of their time interacting with children to develop and support their communication and social skills and help to facilitate their play by making suggestions and finding any required resources.

Overall children's needs are not met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that there is a named deputy who is appropriately qualified and able to take charge in the absence of the manager

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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