

Schools Out Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	319297
Inspection date	08 May 2008
Inspector	Julie Larner
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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Schools Out is a privately owned after school club which has been established for 10 years. In September 2002 it moved to new premises. The club now operates from a two room demountable classroom building in the grounds of Archibald First School, Gosforth. The group also has use of the school yard area for outdoor play. The group is registered to take 40 children under eight. There are currently 75 children on roll, who attend a variety of sessions. The group operates during term time from Monday to Friday, from 08:00 to 09:00 and from 15:00 to 18:00. The club is attended by children from the school in which it is situated and three other local schools, St Charles Primary, Gosforth Junior High and Gosforth Central Middle School. The group employs six staff, including the manager; of these, four hold relevant childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have lots of opportunities to enjoy fresh air and physical exercise. They plan activities themselves, such as organising teams for football games that are clearly enjoyed by everyone,

as children shout excitedly and praise others when they score a goal. Outdoor play is child focused, because of this, children are motivated and interested in being active as they ask staff to play 'piggy in the middle' or join them in a game of tennis. A great deal of children play outdoors for the majority of the session.

Children benefit from healthy, nutritious snacks, such as breadsticks, chopped fruit and crackers. Their independence is promoted well as older children serve themselves with appropriate utensils to prevent the spread of cross infection, and younger children readily seek support from staff. Children sit in small groups when they arrive from school to participate in snack time, because of this, they choose who to sit next to and talk to their friends about what they will do at the club and their day at school.

Good staff knowledge of policies and procedures ensures that children's health and welfare is maintained well in the setting. Children are consistently encouraged to wash their hands before they eat. Staff are clear about what to do when children are ill, to ensure they feel comfortable in the quiet area, whilst their parents are contacted and asked to collect them.

Good progress has been made by the group to ensure that children are cared for in a suitable environment which is clean and hygienic and provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the children. Nice comfortable areas, where children can relax or play quietly are readily available in both of the rooms, meaning that children can rest according to their own needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children happily play with a fair range of interesting equipment. Staff use a mixture of child-directed and planned play, as children choose the equipment they want to take outside. Staff set out table top activities that have been prepared before the children arrive, which provide a balanced range of play opportunities for the children. Equipment and toys are mainly well maintained, however, checks are not sufficient to ensure that all outdoor toys are safe, for example, some skipping ropes have broken handles. This compromises children's overall safety.

Staff conduct visual checks on the areas the children use to enable children to move freely and safely around the setting. However, checks done during the session are less rigorous and securing some safety equipment, such as making sure sockets are covered, is sometimes missed. Children are interested in the toys and equipment provided for them, they happily move from indoors to outdoors to find activities that motivate them and keep them occupied during the session.

Positive safety procedures, well known to the staff team, ensure they can protect the children's welfare. Steps are taken throughout the session to make sure that the risks to children are minimised, for example, as staff place posters on the gates, to remind parents and visitors of the importance of securing these, when children play outside. Consistent staff vigilance and awareness of safety procedures further contributes to the children's safety, as staff gather children together to come inside when visitors picking children up from school based activities come into the school yard.

Staff have a fair understanding of child protection procedures to ensure they can help to safeguard children's welfare. They are aware of signs and symptoms and know how to ensure that any concerns are passed on to the relevant agencies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They are happy and relaxed as they chat about games they will play together and approach staff confidently to ask questions. Children excitedly rush in from school and make decisions about what they want to do and where they want to play. Staff provide a warm welcome, as some staff ask children what they have been doing at school and how they are.

Children have developed very good relationships with other children in the group. They easily plan their own activities, such as football, by deciding teams and where the goalposts will be and enjoy this immensely, playing for long periods of time together. Children are all motivated in their play as they keenly find something that interests them, such as playing imaginary games with their friends or participating in planned activities with staff.

Planned activities appeal to the children. They enjoy weaving and creating wind socks from recyclable materials. Children are confident as they approach staff for support with more detailed work, such as gluing small areas and use their own ideas creatively as they decide to rip the plastic bags instead of cutting them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to learn about diversity through some books and resources that are readily available. Staff show a sufficient understanding of equal opportunities as they make sure that all children can be involved in all of the activities. This works well as girls and boys enjoy playing ball games and arts and crafts activities, such as weaving, meaning that staff create a comfortable, safe environment where children can explore a variety of equipment and activities themselves. Staff cater for children's individual needs effectively, for example, as they collect information from parents by using the registration records and pass on any relevant information, for example, about children's dietary needs.

Children behave well. They competently take turns, for example, on the computer, with very little prompting from staff. Some staff set firm, clear boundaries for children and because of this, children learn about the consequences of their behaviour and the expectations within the group. Staff manage behaviour overall, fairly well and show a satisfactory understanding of the setting's policies and procedures. A monitoring system helps staff to identify and deal with any consistent behaviour issues by talking to parents to resolve situations, however, not all staff have a full understanding of the system to ensure this is consistent.

Partnerships with parents are friendly. Staff share information well with parents to ensure they are informed about the care of their children, for example, they discuss accidents then ask parents to sign the accident record. Any concerns that parents and carers raise are dealt with adequately, as staff clearly explain the policies of the group, such as issues about healthy eating, to ensure that all parties are sufficiently informed about how the group operates.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settled and relaxed in the setting. They make their own decisions about what they want to do and where they wish to play, moving freely from indoors to outdoors for

the whole of the session. The environment is organised well to provide different play opportunities for children and they use most of the areas for different types of play throughout the session.

Staff support children well. They deploy themselves sufficiently to ensure that they can provide guidance and help. New staff are directed by the manager to ensure they are aware of policies and procedures and receive adequate induction to ensure they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the setting. Mostly, staff's attitude towards training is positive as they attend training and development to keep their knowledge and understanding up to date. This, in turn, benefits the care of the children as they are cared for by a mostly, well qualified staff team.

Paperwork, documentation and policies are well organised to ensure they are confidential and contain the necessary details, however, key policies, such as the fire evacuation procedure, are not displayed. This means that a regulation is not fully met.

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 the group agreed to, ensure that children are cared for in an adequately clean, hygienic and suitably decorated environment. Ensure that children have access to an attractive comfortable area where they can relax or play quietly and which is equipped with appropriate furniture. Ensure that all staff are fully informed of hygiene procedures which contribute to the health and welfare of the children, for example, by encouraging children to wash their hands before snack time and ensure that a record is maintained of any accidents.

The group have successfully ensured that the actions highlighted at the previous inspection have been completed. The building has been redecorated and the carpets have been replaced. This means that children are cared for in a bright, suitably decorated environment which is clean and hygienic. A comfortable area is available in each room that children use. This means that children can choose to relax or play quietly throughout the session when they choose to do so.

Staff now consistently encourage hand washing before children have their snack. This contributes to children's overall welfare and helps them learn about good personal hygiene. Staff consistently record accidents and share this information with parents to ensure that children's health is securely maintained. Regulations are met with regard to recording accidents and parents are adequately informed of these issues consistently.

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 that fire evacuation procedures are clearly displayed
- ensure that toys and equipment are checked regularly and maintained in a good state of repair
- ensure regular checks throughout the session help to ensure children's safety, for example, by checking that electrical sockets are covered consistently.

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