

The Alpha Club Breakfast/Afterschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Jeannette Waring

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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?

Alpha Breakfast and After School Club operates from the church hall at Holy Trinity Church in Eltham. Children from St Mary's School and Eltham Church of England School currently attend. The club is registered to provide care for a maximum of 24 children aged from four to under eight years. Currently there are 35 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. A small number of children who speak English as an additional language attend, and the club also provides care for children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Alpha provides care Monday to Friday during term time. Session times are from 08:00 to 09:00 and from 15:00 to 18:30. Children who require care during the school holidays attend one of the other Alpha Clubs at Deansfield School.

A total of four staff work with the children in the club, three of whom hold a relevant childcare qualification. In addition the club employs an escort who assists staff taking children to and from school on days when numbers are high.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a bright, clean and welcoming environment. Staff carry out routine checks at the start of each session in order to ensure that all areas used by children are in a clean condition. They make sure that all surfaces used to prepare food are effectively cleaned before use and they follow careful hygiene routines when preparing the children's tea. Children learn about the importance of good hygiene as they follow staff's good example when helping at tea time, and as they clear away and wash up afterwards. Children routinely wash their hands before tea and after using the toilet.

Staff are able to provide good care for children in the event of an accident, most of the staff hold a current first aid certificate. A fully stocked first aid box is maintained and a carefully detailed accident log is maintained. The accident record is routinely shared with parents which helps to ensure continuity of care for children. A clear policy relating to the care of sick children ensures that all children are protected from the spread of infection. There are also good procedures for the administration of medication, and for the safe storage of any medication provided by parents.

Staff encourage children to develop a positive attitude to physical exercise as they plan a variety of physical activities for them. Children enjoy almost daily access to outdoor play activities, they have hall games one day every week, which children said they look forward to, and staff regularly provide dance workshops. A dance workshop was taking place on the day of inspection and the children who chose to take part did so with great enthusiasm.

A variety of healthy, nutritious food, which children enjoy, is offered at tea time. On the day of inspection children enjoyed pitta pockets which they filled with a variety of salad vegetables and a choice of ham, chicken or cheese. This was followed by fresh fruit. Drinking water is available to children throughout the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure at the club. There are good arrangements in place to ensure children's safety on the walks to and from school, for example, children and staff all wear high-visibility jackets or sashes and the children know the rules for walking the route safely. Staff ensure that the hall is fully secure throughout the session and, when children are playing in the outdoor area, good supervision makes sure children are safe. There are good procedures in place for the safe handover of children at the end of the session and registers are carefully completed.

Staff carry out regular risk assessments and make sure that any identified hazards are minimised. No hazards were noted during the inspection. However, there is a risk that safety could be compromised because it would be difficult to access the fire blanket quickly in an emergency, as it is stored away in a cupboard rather than being fixed to the wall in the kitchen.

Children have access to a good range of age appropriate toys. Many resources are stored in sheds located just outside the hall, others are stored in a large walk-in cupboard in the hall. Although children are not able to directly access all of the equipment for themselves, staff

ensure that a varied range of activities are set up in each session. In addition, children know that they can request specific toys if they want them and children regularly take part in session planning and the review of past activities. Staff routinely check toys for safety and all of the equipment seen at the inspection was of good quality and in good condition.

Children are protected from the risk of harm and neglect because the staff team have a clear understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. The manager is fully aware of her role in safeguarding children, she knows how to make a referral and that she should keep Ofsted informed. She is also aware of the correct procedure to follow should an allegation be made that a child has been harmed whilst at the club. However, the club's current written policy does not detail the correct procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and relaxed when attending the club. When they arrive at the club following their walk from school children greet staff warmly and immediately settle in to play. They clearly feel 'at home' in the club and they take the opportunity to re-organise activities to suit themselves. For example, staff had set out the role play area as a hairdressers. A group of children separated the two tables, one containing the hairdressing equipment and one containing the till and books for appointments. They decided that the table with the till and paper work on should be a bank and they played happily for some time making credit cards and organising the money.

Children enjoy helping with the daily routines and chores, for example, as they help to prepare and serve tea and to wash up afterwards. Staff encourage children's independence by allowing them to organise themselves in these activities and children enjoy this responsibility.

Staff plan an interesting range of activities for children at each session and there are weekly opportunities for children to make choices for the following week. In addition both staff and children carry out a brief evaluation of each day's activities. These arrangements provide children with the opportunity to share in the organisation of their club. During the inspection children enjoyed playing with a range of games, using art and craft materials, playing in the outside area and taking part in a dance workshop.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to value and respect each other in the harmonious atmosphere at the club. Staff set a good example by valuing each child as an individual and by showing every child respect. Staff know children well and understand their individual needs and differences. Children who have disabilities and/or learning difficulties are welcome at the club.

Children are very well behaved. They are polite, friendly and sociable, and staff encourage them to be well mannered. Children have been involved in setting the club rules, they have written out and illustrated these rules and they are displayed on the notice board. The club has a relaxed atmosphere, children are encouraged to enjoy their free time at the end of the school day and they respond well to the staff's kind, calm and patient care. Children who are upset for any reason are kindly comforted by staff and other children also offer kindness and support to their friends.

There are good partnerships with parents in place. Parents value the service provided, they said that their children are safe and secure and that they are confident in the staff's ability to provide good quality care for their children. Contracts and consent forms are used to underpin the partnership and parents are welcome to spend time in the club when they come to collect their children. Staff spend time chatting to parents and ensure that any messages from school are passed on. These arrangements help to ensure that children have good continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The good organisation of space and resources ensures that children have space to rest and to play at the end of the school day. There are clear and robust procedures in place to ensure that all staff are vetted and remain suitable to work with the children. Most of the staff hold a childcare qualification and staff are encouraged to attend training workshops provided by the local authority in order to ensure that their practice is up to date. Because children share in the planning and organisation of activities and routines they have a strong sense of belonging within the club.

The club's manager has a clear understanding of the requirements of the National Standards and associated regulations, she makes sure that all required documentation is in place, up to date, carefully stored and, where appropriate, shared with parents.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints 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 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):

- improve safety by making sure that the fire blanket is fixed to the wall in the kitchen
- review and update the child protection procedure and make sure that it complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and with Ofsted requirements.

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