

The Playscheme @ Meadow Wood School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY364508
Inspection date	28 July 2008
Inspector	Karen Molloy
Setting Address	Meadow Wood School, Cold Harbour Lane, BUSHEY, WD23 4NN
Telephone number	0208 420 720
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Registered person	Totally Different Playscheme
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?

The Totally Different Play scheme at Meadow Wood School has been registered since 1997. However, they became a limited company in 2007 and re-registered to reflect this status. The play scheme operates from Meadow Wood School in Bushey, Hertfordshire. The school has been specially designed to accommodate children with physical and neurological impairment. Children have access to a large bright hall, a soft play room, sensory room, a library area and a playground with apparatus adapted for the use of children with limited mobility and wheelchair users. The school also has a hydrotherapy pool and swimming is offered.

A maximum of 14 children may attend the play scheme at any one time. The scheme is open for four days during the Easter holiday and for three weeks during the summer from 10:30 to 15:30. The scheme serves children from the local and surrounding areas, supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of the children who attend the scheme also attend the school although it is open to children from other schools. The provision has a suitably qualified manager and deputy in place. They have relevant skills and experience in caring for children with special educational needs. The number of staff and/or volunteers on duty depends on the number of children booked into the scheme. The play scheme receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by staff and volunteers who are fully aware of the children's individual care needs. They support those children that need it and follow their individual routines to ensure their health needs are effectively met. Children are able to develop independence in their own personal care and staff promote children's dignity and privacy when they need help. All the required accident and medication documentation is in place, with detailed information gathered about children's individual health needs. This ensures children's well-being is fully promoted. Information is shared at the beginning of the day between staff and parents to ensure everyone is up-to-date with children's current needs. Senior staff have completed a number of courses in relation to administering various medication and there are safe and robust procedures in place for administering medication. However, staff have not completed an appropriate first aid course in line with regulations and this must be addressed to ensure children are fully protected in the case of an accident or injury. Health and hygiene policies support the good practice.

Children have good opportunities for physical play throughout the day. They are able to make choices and decide between the soft play area, sensory room or excellent resources in the garden. Children enjoy rolling around, climbing and moving freely in the soft play area, with staff on hand to support them. Visits are regularly organised to the local park so children receive fresh air and exercise to promote their well-being. Children are able to rest according to their needs. A quiet and comfortable area is available for them to relax and have some quieter time.

Children and staff come together for lunch time, which is a calm and social part of the day. Children in wheelchairs have trays or adaptable tables in place to ensure they are fully involved. Children's dietary needs are discussed with parents and recorded. As some children have restricted diets, parents provide all food and drinks. Water is available at all times and staff remind children to take drinks throughout the session. Where children have specialist feeding systems, senior staff manage the routines well. They are knowledgeable in the various procedures and hygiene is of a high priority. Children are exceptionally well-supported with designated one to one helpers, who are sensitive and take great care when assisting the children in all aspects of their personal care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where risks are identified and minimised. This means that children can move around safely, freely and with some independence. Children learn about their own safety as they are reminded to take care as they negotiate their way around the building. They show great skill and determination in manoeuvring independently between the various play areas with the support and encouragement of the staff. The building is a purpose built school which is well maintained, bright, airy and welcoming. The school carries out a risk assessment so any potential hazards are identified and addressed. Staff at the scheme also carry out regular checks in relation to the children, equipment and resources, indoors and outside to ensure all areas are kept clean and safe. Staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities with regards to the children's safety and well being as they seek advice and assistance when taking the children to the toilets or accessing the sensory

room and soft play area. Safe procedures are in place for children's arrival and departure and staff are always at the entrance to greet parents.

Children are kept safe outdoors. The garden is exceptionally well designed and offers interesting and stimulating opportunities for the children. Areas with impact absorbent surface enables the less mobile children to play with confidence. Staff support children well and help them to access different areas. Although a protocol is in place for the park, staff are currently developing their own risk assessment to cover other activities such as outings and swimming. This will ensure any risks are identified and will further promote children's safety. Children use a variety of safe and suitable equipment that provides them with challenges and stimulates their interest. Many are easily accessible and enables children to make independent choices. Toys and resources are clean and well maintained.

Children are protected because staff have a sound knowledge of child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures in place when necessary. Senior staff have attended child protection training and are booked to attend a further course. Staff are clear of their role as polices and procedures are explained to them at an induction evening. All the relevant leaflets, contact numbers and details about child protection referral procedures are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and settled in the play scheme environment. There is a calm and relaxed atmosphere which is welcoming and inviting. Staff greet the children and parents as they arrive and time is taken to hand over and exchange information about each child. Excellent staff develop positive and trusting relationships with the children. They know many of them as they attend the school and new children are made very welcome. Staff and volunteers are caring and sensitive to children's needs and enthusiastic in their approach. They respond positively to children's requests for a particular activity or area they want to use. Children communicate in a number of ways both verbally and non-verbal and staff support them in the various methods of communication. A high number of staff and volunteers ensures a good ratio, which enables them to work closely with each child, offering them the necessary support.

Children are keen to get started and involved in the many activities and opportunities. Senior staff gather everyone together and an introduction ensures everyone is included. They talk about who was at the scheme previously and introduce anyone new. Staff and children say hello to each other and time is taken to talk about each child and their holidays. Children's contributions are greatly valued and staff show a genuine interest in their comments and input, encouraging them to participate. An introduction to the morning activities is given and everyone is well informed as to what is happening.

Children participate in a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities and play opportunities both indoors and outside. They begin the morning using clay and staff are involved encouraging and extending their interest. This tactile experience enables children to feel the clay, pat it and squish it! They are asked questions to develop their thinking and show great excitement as staff mould a car. Children laugh and respond well to the staff who chat comfortably to them. Children are involved in this activity for a long while as they become absorbed and interested. They move onto other, more individual activities and use sound toys, cook, have access to sand and make good use of the soft play and sensory rooms. Staff monitor the children well whilst allowing them to explore and investigate freely. In the sensory room, children take great delight in pressing buttons to operate the various stimulus, they watch the

big lava lamp and use the UV drawing board. Free play in the specially designed soft play area enables children with limited mobility and some who may spend most of their day in a wheelchair the freedom to stretch and explore.

Children have many opportunities throughout the scheme to enjoy fresh air and physical play. A walk to the nearby park is organised within the weekly routine. Swimming is offered during the summer scheme. In the garden, children in wheelchairs are able to use the specially designed roundabout and swings. They can experience the sensory area, with its unusual curry plant and various herbs. A bridge and walkway leads children to a musical area where they can explore various sounds and use the 'instruments'. Children participate enthusiastically in a treasure hunt which utilises both indoor and outdoor areas. Staff support the children in working out the clues and finding all the items on their list. Children take great delight in showing off their 'treasure' when they all gather as a group at the end. Story time provides a quiet and relaxed time for all children to listen and join in with the story and songs. They sit wherever they are most comfortable, in their chairs or on the floor with staff there to support and involve them, asking questions and listening to their comments.

An excellent range of additional activities are organised for the scheme and include Hartbeeps a musical session, story sessions with props and sensory books, kite making and snakes, spiders and bats are brought in, all by outside providers to broaden children's knowledge and provide exciting experiences. Staff do plan ahead but are flexible and use this a guideline, generally taking the children's lead, enabling their needs and interests to be met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop strong links with the helpers who support them throughout the scheme. They have a great sense of belonging, they have individual baskets for their belongings and staff ensure all children are fully aware of the activities that are available to them. Details of the routine and activities are explained so children know what to expect and what is on offer for them. Children learn about the needs of others, they are reminded to sit quietly during story time and not to disturb people next to them. Children's individual needs are met extremely well. An information sheet is completed at the start of the scheme to find out about each child; mobility, toileting, communication, dietary requirements, medication and interests.

Children's behaviour is dealt with positively. The aim is for children to develop self-esteem and self-discipline in an environment that encourages mutual respect. Any challenging behaviour is dealt with in a way that is appropriate to individual children and any concerns are discussed with parents. Group routines and behaviour is discussed with the group so everyone is aware of the expectations and this helps children to feel secure and develop positive social behaviour. Staff are good role models and use praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour.

Children are cared for by staff who work very well in partnership with parents to meet children's needs. Staff are very flexible and accommodating. Communication is effective and time taken to share information at the beginning and end of each day. An introductory letter goes out to parents and they receive a copy of the scheme's policies and procedures to ensure they are kept well informed. The entrance displays photographs of past activities and events and a notice board gives parents any necessary information. Most of the required documentation is in place. However, not all the required information is available in relation to complaints. Parents feedback is very positive and they comment on the excellent staff, the valuable service and the opportunities available to them. .

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have a high regard for the well being of all children. Staff and volunteers are dedicated and committed to providing a welcoming and stimulating environment for everyone who attends. Senior staff have a commitment to ongoing training and development to ensure they are up-to-date with current practice. The scheme is staffed by regular core staff and volunteers, many whom volunteer on a regular basis. Induction sessions at the start of the scheme ensures everyone is well informed. Volunteers often work in pairs to support each other and anyone who has not completed appropriate checks is never left unsupervised.

The daily activities are well managed, staff are able to take time out for their own lunch when children are taking part in the story time. Appropriate strategies are in place to ensure adults taking responsibility for the children's personal care are suitable to do so. The excellent one to one care ensures children are able to take part in all aspects of the schemes outings and activities with sufficient support and meet their individual needs well.

Most of the required records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are in place. These are kept safe and secure although easily accessible when needed. The manager is aware of the need to inform Ofsted of any significant changes or events.

Overall, children's needs are 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop risk assessments to cover outings and swimming activities

- improve knowledge and develop systems for the recording of complaints, in line with regulations
- ensure at least one member of staff with an appropriate first aid training certificate is on the premises at all times.

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