



Birchwood Leisure Centre Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148164
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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?

Birchwood Leisure Centre Playscheme registered in 1995 and is run by Hatfield Town Council. It operates from Birchwood Leisure Centre which is situated in Hatfield. A maximum of 72 children aged from 5 to 11 years attend at any one time. Only 40 of these children may be aged from 5 to under 8 years. The play scheme is open each weekday from 08.30 to 18.00 during school holidays only. All children share access to secure, enclosed outdoor play areas and a large open playing field. These areas are also used by the public.

There are currently 158 children from 5 to 11 years on roll who mainly come from the

local area. The play scheme currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and employs 19 staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have regular access to a wide variety of physical activities both inside and outside. These encourage and develop their motor skills, give them the chance to enjoy fresh air and help them to develop a healthy lifestyle. Staff encourage children to learn about healthy living by suggesting they take part in some physical play every day rather than become too involved in playing with electronic games they might have brought with them from home. The routine of the day is well planned and provides periods of intense physical play followed by quieter periods during which children take part in table top activities, watch videos or enjoy some refreshment. This ensures that they have the chance to replenish their energy levels and continue to fully enjoy the range of activities available to them.

The group generally works well with parents to ensure that staff are aware of and meet children's health and dietary needs. For example, children who need regular medication can be given it whilst attending the scheme. However, parental signatures are not obtained on the records of medication administered to children. This means that there is no system in place to monitor that parents have been fully informed. This could therefore put children at risk of being given an overdose. Appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures help to ensure that children play in a clean and healthy environment. They are beginning to understand some simple, good health and hygiene practices which will help them to develop good habits in later life, such as washing their hands after using the toilet. However, some hygiene routines at snack time are not sufficient to protect children from the risk of infection. For example, whilst staff carefully clean the tables used for preparing drinks, children are not asked to clean their hands before eating a biscuit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment in which generally well-implemented policies and procedures ensure their safety. They use suitable and safe equipment which is age appropriate, well maintained and checked regularly. Carefully devised procedures ensure children are kept safe when they leave the building to use the outside play areas. For example, staff always take hand held radios with the group so that they can summon support if needed. Children learn to keep themselves safe both through practical experience and during discussions with staff. For example, they are asked not to throw bean bags at other children because they might hurt them and they learn that they must always check in and out of the play scheme room when they go to the toilet.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The child protection policy is appropriate but does not cover what would happen if an allegation was made against a member of staff or volunteer. The lack of a sufficiently clear procedure means that children's well-being could be at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem because staff are supportive, interested and involved with them at all times. They are able to use their initiative to select from a variety of play and sporting activities which are varied, interesting and age appropriate. For example, art and craft, gymnastics, ball games, dance and drama. This means that children are eager to take part and can extend and develop their concentration.

With adult support and encouragement children form positive relationships with each other, acquire new knowledge and skills and begin to respond to challenge. For example, children eagerly learn the rules of a new game and take turns to score runs for their team, they collaborate together to devise their own play and perform it for the rest of the group and they work to carefully construct and paint models of Egyptian mummies. Children begin to distinguish between right and wrong because staff regularly help them to think about and review the group's rules and praise them for thinking of relevant new ones. They discuss issues such as why equipment should be shared and how children feel if they are not given a chance to have a turn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work well with parents to meet individual children's needs and so can offer them appropriate support to ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. For example, children with special needs are supported and helped to become aware of the needs of others so that they can develop good relationships and play successfully with other children. Adults are careful to praise children's efforts, encourage them to recognise and respect the achievements of other children and give them opportunities to work harmoniously with each other. For example, children work together in small groups and in pairs to devise and organise a sequence of gymnastic movements, which they then perform for the rest of the group. Lead by the staff, the children applaud the displays.

Children feel a sense of belonging and are therefore sufficiently confident and settled to take advantage of all the activities and learning experiences which are available to them. They begin to understand responsible behaviour through the careful use of rules, discussions and practical experiences. For example, children are reminded to go to the toilet in pairs and be responsible for each other's good behaviour. They have some opportunities to become aware of wider society through themed activities.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and are cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. All of the necessary documentation to ensure the efficient running of the scheme is in place and the information the group keeps about the children is relevant and helps to promote their welfare. The adult to child ratio is usually high, which positively supports children's care, learning and play because children are able to receive a lot of support and attention. Group sizes and staff deployment mostly contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part on the setting. For example, children eat their lunch in age related groups rather than in a large group, which means that staff can monitor those children who might need help and encouragement in managing their packed lunch.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection the play scheme has improved children's health and safety. They now ensure that all electrical sockets in areas accessed by the children are covered to prevent possible injury. They have improved hygiene procedures at lunch times, although not at snack times, by ensuring that children clean their hands with wipes before eating, in order to prevent the possibility of infection. Parents now sign records of accidents and incidents involving their child so that the group can monitor that they have been kept fully informed of injuries. This ensures that parents can then seek further medical advice or treatment if they feel it necessary. The group does not yet ask parents to sign records of medication administered. Information regarding Ofsted's contact details are now readily available to parents both in the group's policies and on their notice board. This means that parents are more easily able to report any concerns they have regarding the care and safety of their child should they wish to do so.

At the last inspection the group was asked to ensure that the play scheme leader was suitably qualified and efficient in the day to day organisation of the scheme. They now have an experienced leader who holds the correct level of qualification and understands how the scheme operates. This has improved the organisation of care for the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- review hygiene procedures at snack time
- ensure all records of medication administered to children are signed by parents
- ensure the child protection policy contains the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk