



Hertswood Centre Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	130528
Inspection date	09 August 2005
Inspector	Karen Molloy
Setting Address	Hertswood Leisure Trust, Hertswood Centre, Potters Lane, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 5LG
Telephone number	020 8387 5600
E-mail	
Registered person	Hertsmere Leisure Trust
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?

Hertswood Centre Play scheme opened in July 1996 in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. It is a registered charity run by Hertsmere Leisure. The scheme has sole use of the leisure centre during school holidays. Children have access to the sports hall, squash courts and dance studio. Supervised outdoor activities are organised in the playing fields behind the centre and a shaded tarmac area is used to set up a bouncy castle.

The scheme operates during school holidays, Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 17:30. The facility are registered for 70 children aged between 5 and under 8 years, at any one time. The play scheme also accommodates children over 8 years.

The setting supports a number of children with special needs and offers 'assisted' places through Hertfordshire Social Services.

The scheme is under new management and the new manager and scheme co-ordinator have sports coaching background and update their skills in childcare, through the local authority. Some members of permanent staff are employed by Hertsmere Leisure and work in the crèche or on term time leisure activities for children. Many of the remaining staff team are students, some who have completed the level 2 in play work training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities which contribute to their good health and help develop their physical skills. Throughout the day, children are involved in activities, such as, soft play equipment, bouncy castle and active games. They participate enthusiastically in the opportunities that are available to them and respond well to the challenges provided.

Children are developing an understanding of healthy living as the scheme is pro active in encouraging this. Fruit is available to buy, parents are given information on healthy eating and a talk on nutrition is to be organised. Children have the opportunity to take regular drinks throughout the session and time is given to eat snacks and lunch. However, good hygiene practices are not always observed, as children eat their food on the floor and do not wash their hands before eating.

Children's needs are met when they are unwell or hurt. A first aid room is available and there are currently five staff that are qualified in first aid. Detailed medication records are in place and any necessary medication taken on trips. All the relevant documentation is maintained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor environment, both indoors and outdoors. Any risks are identified and addressed through a daily risk assessment. Appropriate safety precautions are in place, for example, staff 'check in' children on arrival, noting any relevant information and children are given a coloured wristband to identify their age group. Children are regularly counted and the register taken three times a day.

Children are well supervised outdoors and when walking from the centre to another venue, a good staff ratio is maintained with 26 children and 6 adults. Children are protected by staff who are well deployed during the walk and procedures ensure an adult monitors them as they approach and cross any roads.

Children use safe and suitable equipment and play areas are checked daily. They are reminded of any safety rules before using certain equipment, such as, the bouncy castle. Children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe as they explain to others why they have crash mats. Children are able to play safely on soft play equipment with plenty of adult supervision and involvement. Any minor injuries are dealt with quickly and calmly.

Children are protected because most staff understand their role in child protection (through in-house training) and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy the activities that are on offer to them and feedback from the children is positive. They are generally enthusiastic and participate happily. Children experience a range of physical play opportunities, such as, bouncy castle, soft play and games. However, all children are expected to take part in the same activity so there are limited opportunities for children to make choices or take part in other activities that are quieter or less active. Therefore, some children become tired and others have to wait long periods of time for their turn or if they are 'out' so become bored and/or restless.

Children respond well to staff who interact with them in a positive and enthusiastic manner. They are well supported and encouraged when necessary and develop a good rapport with the staff. Children are happy and settled in their environment and chat easily and confidently to staff who listen and respond to their needs.

Children have the opportunity to acquire new skills during additional activities, such as, trampolining and dance and drama.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave well and understand responsible behaviour. Children and staff have developed the 'golden rules' at the beginning of the scheme and they are shared with the group each day. Children are familiar with the rules and can explain them to others. They are clear of the boundaries and know the group's expectations. Children's good behaviour is positively encouraged by the adults and children generally play well together.

Children's individual needs are generally met well by staff. Children are responded to quickly and appropriately, for example, a child who was upset in the soft play was approached quickly by a member of staff who spent time talking to the child. However, some children's needs may not be met, as information about individual children is not always shared effectively, for example, staff were not aware of two new children to the scheme.

Children with special needs integrate well into the group with the support of knowledgeable staff who work with them on a one to one basis, to meet their needs effectively.

Parents feedback (talking to them and viewing parent questionnaires) is positive and they are happy with the service they receive. Parents are given a brief leaflet about the scheme and policies are displayed in the entrance. They complete a short registration form and can relay additional information about their child, to staff, as they arrive each day.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well protected and cared for by staff who undertake vetting procedures and receive in-house training. This covers areas, such as, child protection, rules and behaviour for staff and emergency procedures. Therefore staff are well informed and aware of the expectations of the play scheme. Any staff awaiting checks are not left unsupervised. The good adult; child ratio positively supports children's care and play, with 26 children and 6 staff visiting the soft play venue.

Children are sufficiently supervised and staff are well deployed during various activities. Staff meet on a daily basis to discuss the day and may use this time to plan the following day's activities.

All the relevant documentation is in place with the exception of minor accident records. These are recorded although parents/carers are not always informed. Consequently, these are not all signed by a parent/carer.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the play scheme has developed their documentation. They have included contact details on the complaints procedure, implemented a medication and lost/uncollected child policy and established records relating to behaviour.

However, quiet activities are still very limited and this is referred to in 'Enjoying and Achieving'.

Complaints since the last inspection

A complaint was received in relation to standard 11:Behaviour. This was investigated and the childcare inspectors were satisfied that they found no breach of the National Standards. No further action was taken.

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):

- develop the range and choice of activities to include quieter/less physical play opportunities
- develop effective strategies for informing and sharing information with staff to ensure children's individual needs are known and met
- ensure that appropriate hygiene procedures are carried out, in relation to hand washing and eating arrangements.

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