



Merlin Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	161476
Inspection date	10 August 2005
Inspector	Karyn Yarnold
Setting Address	Highweek Community Primary School, Coronation Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1TX
Telephone number	
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Registered person	Merlin Playscheme Committee
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?

Merlin Play scheme opened in 1995 and is run by a committee. It operates from Highweek Primary School, close to the town centre of Newton Abbot. A maximum of 40 children aged from 5 to 8 years may attend the scheme at any one time. The setting is open from 08:30 hours to 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday, during school holidays and operates a breakfast club between 07:50 hours to 08:50 hours during school term times. There are currently 94 children on roll.

There are eight staff working directly with the children; three staff are qualified to level three, four staff are qualified to level two and one on teacher training. The setting

receives support from the Local Authority and is currently working towards a quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a satisfactory selection of fresh fruit and are offered adequate drinks throughout the day which include water, blackcurrant and orange squash. Older children are confident to ask for additional drinks; however, younger children are not always encouraged to do this by staff. This results in them not learning about the importance of regular fluid intake in hot weather. Adequate snacks which include fruit are provided in the afternoon and children are able to self select snacks from their own packed lunch boxes in the morning which ensures that children are nourished throughout the day and can eat when they feel hungry. Children join together at lunch-time to eat' however present arrangements for dining, such as sitting on the carpet are not suitable to enable children to learn about eating at a table and are not hygienic. It is also not helpful in promoting children's social skills such as table manners. Children's health and hygiene is generally promoted by staff and suitable hygiene routines are adopted to maintain children's health, however although children wash hands prior to eating their lunch and after going to the toilet, antibacterial cleaning products for both children's and adults hands and furniture are not always used, which exposes children to the risk of further cross infection. Children are cared for appropriately in the case of accidents and when medication needs to be administered. First aiders keep their first aid training up-to-date.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a primary school that is spacious and in an environment that is well organised. A colourful theme-led display board in the entrance room helps to make the setting inviting to children and parents. Children of different ages can use the premises with real flexibility as different parts of the school are used for different types of play such as creative art, large physical activities, role play and computers. They have access to a very good selection and range of toys and equipment that are in very good condition.

The setting identifies and minimises risks for children, for example the entrance door is locked during the times of opening whilst a key is easily accessible. Children are supervised well and additional access to radio communication equipment ensures that staff members can contact each other in different parts of the school when necessary. Risk assessments are now routinely conducted around the setting and, in particular, prior to planned outings. These procedures and practices maintain children's safety.

Children's welfare is suitably supported with regard to child protection. Staff have an

awareness of procedures to follow in the event of a child protection concern. The setting's child protection policy clearly indicates procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy and older children are confident in the setting. They have a warm and caring relationship with staff members who are experienced and have a genuine interest in children's activities. Children are listened to and are valued by staff. They talk freely with them and are given praise and encouragement for their efforts. Many children participate enthusiastically in a good range of varied activities. They enjoy craft work, playing table top games, traditional physical games such as dodge ball. They also have access to the school's library. A well resourced home corner allows children to actively use their imagination when playing with dolls and making pretend meals. Children have access to a computer room and keenly instruct staff members on how to use play station games.

Children are free to self-select and make their own choices of play activities with support from staff. Flexible plans are drawn up but not always followed as staff encourage children to develop activities for themselves. This generally works well, although in practise some children spend inappropriate long periods in the computer room. Overall, a good range of activities is offered.

Children are able to experience the wider community by attending planned outings that include visits to child-orientated adventure parks and a zoo. They also are able to participate in musical workshops from visiting guests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting and develop good relationships with each other and staff. Individual children's needs are met and sufficient information on children is recorded to allow individual care needs to be met. Children with disability needs are well catered for with access to a disabled lift to the upper level of the school. There are no children currently attending with recognised special needs. However the setting currently supports a student who has mobility considerations.

Children experience diversity when playing in the home corner and by participating in planned celebrations such as Divali and making Boon lanterns. Their awareness of diversity is promoted by having access to a good range of books that reflect cultural differences. Children behave well and make their own behaviour rules that are clearly displayed. They remind each other of these, for example, by reminding peers that they need to share computer games. Before lunch children help to tidy away, with encouragement from staff.

Good relationships are developed with parents. Both parents and children are

greeted warmly. Parents receive a termly newsletter that informs them of forthcoming events. A simple information booklet provides sufficient information to inform parents of the ethos of the setting and its policies.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children receive good adult attention and are familiar with the daily routine. However meal times are not organised effectively to promote good hygiene. They benefit from the staffs' commitment to providing a warm and caring environment which is relaxing. Staff make very good use of available space, however they do not always discourage children from spending too long in the computer room.

All required documentation is in place and completed satisfactorily. The person in charge has a satisfactory understanding of her responsibility and actively supports staff by ensuring that they have access to suitable out of school training such as play workshops. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the provider has been required to improve documentation; ensure that there is a clear procedure to deputise; devise a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities appropriate to different aged children; to devise a written statement on special needs and to ensure that the child protection statement includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

All relevant documentation is now completed and kept up-to-date. There is a clear procedure in place for deputising which ensures that children have sufficient adult support at all times. Adequate planning allows for children of all ages and stages of development to become involved in a wide range of play opportunities. For example a good range of table top activities including graded games are planned to enable all children to participate. They are all encouraged to join in team games which increases their confidence and self esteem.

The setting have devised a special needs policy which is adequate and available to parents. A clear child protection policy describes the settings procedure if an allegation against a member of staff is made. Both these improvements protect children and allow users of the provision to understand child protection procedures.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint relating to Standard 2: Organisation; Standard 3: Care Learning and Play and Standard 6: Safety relating to their arrangements for outings. Ofsted made an unannounced visit on 4 August 2004.

Following this a number of actions and recommendations were raised. In addition, further recommendations were made relating to staffing levels, available activities for different aged children and relevant policy statements to meet National Standards. All actions and recommendations have now been addressed and the provider continues to remain qualified for registration.

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 hygiene procedures, particularly, at meal times and ensure all children are encouraged to drink regularly
- improve the organisation of daily routines to ensure all children access a range of activities during each session.

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