

Barracudas Activity Camp

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY152900
Inspection date 21/08/2009
Inspector Patricia Mary Champion

Setting address Bishops Stortford College, Maze Green Road, Bishops
Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2PJ
Telephone number 0845 1235299
Email info@barracudas.co.uk
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Barracudas Activity Camp at Bishops Stortford is one of 26 holiday schemes run by Young World Leisure Group. It opened in 2002 and operates from the sports hall, art and craft room, dining hall, swimming pool and dance and drama hall in Bishops Stortford College. The holiday scheme also has the use of nine classrooms as base rooms. All children share access to tennis and squash courts, playgrounds and playing fields for outdoor play. A maximum of 150 children aged under eight years may attend the camp at any one time. The camp opens five days a week during school summer holidays. Operating times are from 8am until 6pm.

There are currently 132 children aged from four to 14 years on roll. Of these 24 children are in the early years age group. Children attend for full day care. The camp serves local and wider communities. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The camp employs 24 staff, of whom two, including the manager, hold appropriate qualifications. These two staff hold Qualified Teacher Status. There are eight staff currently working towards a recognised teaching qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and 4Children.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The staff create a stimulating environment in which children have fun, enjoy and learn, in safe surroundings. Policies and procedures are used effectively and children's welfare and safety are high priorities. Staff work together as a generally effective team, particularly in making sure that children are included in everything that the setting offers. The staff's approach to self-evaluation gives them a clear picture of the strengths and areas to develop. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further the two-way flow of information with parents by gathering more information regarding children's capabilities, enthusiasms and interests right from the start.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that all supervisors hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification and half of all other staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification (as defined by the Children's Workforce and Development Council)

31/12/2009

(Suitable People).

The leadership and management of the early years provision

There are very good procedures in place to ensure the children's safety, as staff undertake frequent and thorough risk assessments. Security of the site is well maintained and the checks of equipment, the buildings and outside areas ensure that they are always safe for the children to use. There are robust recruitment procedures to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children. Any minor accidents are appropriately dealt with by staff who hold current first aid training certificates. Children are further protected because staff are fully aware of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they have concerns about any of the children. Although staff attend induction training prior to the camp opening to gain the essential core childcare skills and many of the adults are working towards teaching qualifications, the early years coordinators do not currently hold childcare or teaching qualifications. Consequently, the specific welfare requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) regarding qualification levels is not met.

The acting manager capably ensures that events run smoothly. The camp management have reviewed and updated the self-evaluation originally written by the organisation's good practice manager, so that it accurately reflects the strengths of the camp and how improvements are made during the weeks of operation. The staff working with the youngest children evaluate activities and record the next steps they take to improve experiences for the groups they work with. Questionnaires are offered to parents and children so that they can make useful contributions to the evaluation process. This setting has been accredited by 4Children under the 'Aiming High' quality assurance scheme.

Partnerships with parents are good. A wealth of information is displayed on notice boards and well-presented literature provides valuable details about how the camp operates. Parents exchange information with staff verbally at the beginning of sessions and at the end of each week development records and certificates are shared with positive comments about children's achievements. Parents also become involved in children's learning by attending the weekly talent shows.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children benefit from a welcoming and well-maintained environment and have access to a very good range of equipment. The timetable is well paced and children are invited to make choices at the start of each day. The staff have devised daily time lines so that children understand what they will be doing next. They are flexible and allow for spontaneity and unexpected events, for example, they quickly move an activity indoors in very windy conditions. Many of the activities are outdoor based and help children to develop and extend their physical skills and agility extremely well. For example, children thoroughly enjoy team games and develop ball skills playing hockey, cricket and tennis. Specialist instructors are employed to provide intensive sporting or swimming lessons.

Children explore a range of movements as they enthusiastically play parachute games or dance expressively during music and drama sessions.

Children enjoy and involve themselves fully in art and craft activities. They concentrate for long periods and become engrossed in producing highly individual pieces of work using materials such as paints, pens, glitter or clay. The staff demonstrate how much they value their work by creating displays in the art room and the children's home bases. Each child within the EYFS is given a developmental profile with positive observations broadly linked to each area of learning. Staff also identify the things that children do particularly well and what their priorities for the next time they come to camp are.

Systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and staff ensure that all children feel included and their views and ideas are valued. Any necessary adjustments are made to ensure that activities are appropriate to children's needs. Staff find out from parents about the most important information relating to children's medical or additional needs and discuss with children their likes and dislikes. However, the information gathered about all the youngest children's capabilities, interests and enthusiasms before they start the camp is more limited.

Children generally behave well throughout the day. The staff provide good role models and the atmosphere at the camp is very friendly and relaxed. Children understand the rules and boundaries. Staff sensitively monitor and deal with situations to ensure that all children remain confident and they give plenty of praise and encouragement to boost self-esteem. Staff clearly and regularly explain the safety rules to the children and close supervision minimises risks and maximises safety. Prior to every swimming session, children receive a talk about the rules around the pool and there are always two lifeguards present. Staff consistently ensure that children are protected from the sun in hot weather and drinking water is always available so that children do not become thirsty or dehydrated. Children are praised when they eat healthily, for example, by remembering to pack five items of fruit or vegetables in their lunch box. Mealtimes for the younger children sometimes become special events such as a teddy bears picnic.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| How well does the provision promote inclusive practice? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement. | 2 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|---|---|
| How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed? | 3 |
| How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement? | 2 |
| How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others? | 2 |
| How well are children safeguarded? | 2 |

Quality and standards

| | |
|---|---|
| How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted? | 2 |
| How well are children helped to stay safe? | 2 |
| How well are children helped to be healthy? | 2 |
| How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve? | 2 |
| How well are children helped to make a positive contribution? | 2 |
| How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 2 |

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- ensure that half of all persons caring for children have successfully completed a qualification at a minimum of level 2 in a relevant area of work (Qualifications and training).

31/12/2009