

Bardfield After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Martyn Richards

Setting address C/O Great Bardfield Primary School, Braintree Road, Great Bardfield, Braintree, Essex, CM7 4RN
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Email
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

Bardfield After School Club, Breakfast Club and Holiday Scheme opened in 1997. It is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children aged between three and eight years at any one time. Some older children also attend. At present there are three children in the early years age group, all of whom were present at the time of the inspection. The club operates from two rooms in a purpose-built unit shared with the pre-school and is situated in the grounds of Great Bardfield Primary School. The group serves the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 50 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five days a week during school term times from 7.30am until 8.45am before school, 3.00pm until 6.00pm Monday to Thursday, and 3.00pm until 5.30pm on Fridays. It also opens from 8.30am until 6.00pm during school holidays, dependent on demand. The club supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although at present there is no suitable wheelchair access to the premises.

Five members of the staff work with the children. Two hold early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 and 3 and one is a qualified teacher. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The club is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Bardfield After School Club is a vibrant and highly effective setting, fully meeting the needs of the children in the early years age group. This is because staff have an excellent understanding of the developmental requirements of children of this age, and plan imaginative and engaging activities to provide for them. Children are secure and happy in the club, whether resting quietly or playing energetically. The club is inclusive. It supports children with particular needs and has good links with parents and with Great Bardfield Primary School, enabling it sensitively to adjust its programme to suit individual children as necessary. It is a self-critical club, and has an outstanding capacity to continue improving in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- refining the self-evaluation process by involving parents and children in it, and by emphasising the impact the provision makes on outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding measures at the club are excellent. The suitability of applicants to work in the club is carefully checked. Visitors must be identified, and signed in and out, and the premises used are secure from intrusion, or from children slipping out unnoticed. Staff conduct regular checks of the site, accommodation and planned activities to make certain there are no hazards facing the children. Fire drills are held regularly, and recorded accurately. Fire exits are clearly marked, and kept free from obstruction. All staff are trained in child protection. Staff fully understand their responsibilities in this regard, and are alert to any indications of possible mistreatment, and aware of what steps to take if they have concerns. Staff are careful to record any minor bumps and bruises suffered by the children, and parents are kept properly informed. Although at present no child needs a regular administration of medicines, staff have had the training necessary should the need arise. There are clear and thorough procedures in place for circumstances in which a child might go missing, might not be collected at the usual time, or might be collected by an unauthorised person.

The leaders and staff have created a friendly, inviting and accepting setting for the children. An outstanding strength of the club is the extent to which it provides its youngest children with learning and play opportunities specially tailored for them. Every child is known personally, and made to feel at home. Staff ensure that they all have equal access to the activities planned, and that older children appreciate their responsibility towards the younger ones. A particularly imaginative link with a school in Kenya helps children to build an awareness of how people in other places live. An excellent key person scheme has been introduced for the three early years children, which ensures that for each child there is a named adult with a particular responsibility to ensure his or her welfare, to make certain the programme meets the child's needs, and to maintain good links with parents. The setting is planning an initiative for some of the older children to take on responsibilities as key persons, essentially to become special friends with one of the younger children, and to help care for them in the club.

Parents think very highly of the club. They typically comment, 'both my children come, and they love it - I'm so relieved' and, 'it's been brilliant for her - lovely people running the club and peace of mind for me!'. Staff maintain close links with children's parents and carers both informally, and through regular newsletters, and surveys. These, together with easy and frequent contacts with their teachers, help ensure a common understanding of the children's needs and interests.

The children enjoy excellent resources, both for indoor and outdoor play. Staff are highly trained, and several have a strong background of experience in early years education and childcare. They have extra qualifications in paediatric first aid, and in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although there are no children at present for whom English is an additional language, staff also have qualifications and experience in this area. Most have been working at the club for some years, and this has built up an ethos of teamwork, shared

responsibility, and excellent relationships and this has brought consistency and high quality to their interactions with the children.

The leader is dynamic and ambitious for the club, and has made important improvements in the club since it was last inspected. The programme of outdoor activity has been broadened. Statutory requirements governing provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been most thoroughly implemented, and training has been accelerated, especially in respect of safeguarding. The planning of activities for the children, and assessment of their achievements have also been markedly improved through more effective self-evaluation methods. Self-evaluation now focuses more clearly on the strengths of the setting, and the areas where further improvement could be sought, by involving parents and children in it, and by emphasising the impact the provision makes on outcomes for children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children love coming to the club, where they are made to feel welcome by staff, and settle very quickly to the activities set out for them. Some just want to rest on the comfortable sofa, watching a film until snack time arrives. Others have energy to spare, and make the most of the fine weather by playing outside on the hard play area, or the school field. The youngest children try to maintain balance on space hopper toys, or to hit balls accurately with tennis rackets. One child tires of this and settles down on a sofa to browse in a book. Staff have moved a sand play tray outside, and several children invent a cooking game, pressing visitors to try tarts, cakes and flapjacks. One of the early years children is engrossed for most of the afternoon in decorating a cardboard sword and a pair of fairy wings with sponge-printed patterns, using paint with a glitter additive. The child explains that these are for the annual pantomime and a regular event entirely planned and directed by the older children themselves. Although the child is not sure of the name of the pantomime, the child is confident that fairy wings and a sword will feature somewhere.

Staff planning is of a very high standard, which keeps an excellent balance between play activities the children choose for themselves, and new ideas introduced by adults - painting on glass being a recent, very popular addition. They also provide ample opportunity for vigorous outdoor play in the spacious grounds they have available. Most of the activities planned can be enjoyed by younger as well as older children. However, a particular strength of the club is that each of the youngest children have their own written individual version of the plans, adapted where necessary to suit the child's age or interest. All the children are welcome to diverge from planned activities if they do not want to do them, but this is rare. Staff make careful observations of each child's reactions to the programme, the new skills they demonstrate or interests they acquire. These notes help the staff adjust their plans where necessary, and provide a rounded picture of the progress children make in their time in the club. Each child has a 'day book' which is taken home regularly. It contains a note by staff of children's activities, what they particularly enjoyed, any important milestones in learning, or any concerns adults

might have noticed. Parents are invited to comment if they wish in the day book before returning it to the club. This high quality practice means parents have a clear insight into their children's programme, and can contribute to it at home.

The lively programme of activity for the children, with its sensitive balance of rest and play, contributes strongly to their learning and development. New vocabulary is learned as some children invent a hairdresser's salon, or a bakery. The time children spend relaxing with and browsing in books reinforces their learning about the links between pictures and words. They learn about the properties of different materials, such as, clay, glass, card, dry and wet sand and about how different materials need to be handled, and how more subtle colours can be made by mixing paint. They learn how different patterns can be made when printing with sponges, according to hand pressure and children know how important it is to wash their hands before eating or drinking. Indoors they practise manual skills in drawing, cutting and printing, while outdoors they improve their motor skills using rackets and balls, and learn how to maintain balance on an insecure surface. Children also make marked headway in their personal and social development. Their behaviour is excellent, are polite and helpful to visitors and to each other and are aware of the need to stay safe. They confidently make choices from the activities offered to them, and make suggestions about future plans. They take turns, share equipment with few quarrels and help tidy up with minimal reminders.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 1 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 1 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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|--|---|
| How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|--|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 1 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 1 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 1 |

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

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