



Arena Leisure Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School care, Crèche

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.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Arena Leisure Centre holiday playscheme and crèche is run by a private leisure management group. It operates from the leisure centre premises which are situated in the centre of Camberley, Surrey.

The holiday playscheme operates during all school holidays and is registered for a maximum of 60 children from 4 to under 8 years of age. It accepts children from the age of 4 to 12 years of age provided they are in full time state education. The number of children on roll varies. Opening times are from 8.30 to 17.30 and children may attend for a full or part day. Children have a base room within the centre and they

make use of the centre's facilities, including the swimming pool. Food is provided, with a choice of menu offered.

The crèche operates Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 15.00. It is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children under 8 years of age, of whom not more than 12 can be under 2. Children may attend for a maximum of 4 hours. Priority is given to leisure centre users but parents do not have to remain on site. The number of children on roll varies. A snack of a biscuit and a drink is provided. Parents supply baby milk and all other food items they wish their children to have.

A total of 5 regular members of staff work within the crèche, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications to Level 2 or 3. The playscheme supervisor is currently working towards a Level 3 qualification in playwork. Other staff working on the scheme do not have playwork qualifications.

The setting receives support from the Early Years and Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, well-maintained environment and have access to clean play provision. Their health is promoted generally well as staff follow some appropriate procedures. For example, they act in the best interests of everyone by asking parents to collect children who are unwell. As a result, they minimise the potential for the spread of infection. They share information with parents about any accidents that take place involving their children and keep appropriate medication records. Children develop some understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene practices as staff remind them about the need to wash their hands after using the toilet. Younger children in the crèche receive appropriate support as they develop independence in their self-care skills. Children attending the playscheme wash their hands before eating. However, in the crèche staff do not encourage this and on some occasions place food directly on the table. These actions may result in children receiving mixed messages and impact adversely on their overall good health.

Young children sleep in the peace and quiet of the crèche sleep room. Sleeping babies are checked regularly to ensure they are safe. Staff recognise when they are feeling tired and they help children to settle, for example, by rocking them to sleep. Older children have regular drinks breaks between activities and a period of relaxation after lunch. Children on the playscheme take part in a varied range of planned activities that allow them to be active and develop their physical skills. They enjoy basketball, roller skating, team games and jumping on the bouncy castle. Children attending the crèche have sufficient space to move around freely. Use of wheeled toys and exploration of the soft play equipment allows them to be physically active.

Meals and snacks are provided for children on the playscheme. The lunchtime menu

comprises of fast food items plus some other options that are healthier. Parents are aware of what their children choose to eat because staff complete the food order when parents sign them in. Snacks generally take the form of sweets or biscuits, although children can opt for fruit if they so wish. The existing menu and snack provision does not help children to develop positive attitudes or gain a good awareness of the importance of nutrition and healthy eating as part of a healthy life style. However, plans are in place to review the lunchtime menu. Children recognise when they are thirsty and ask for drinks which staff provide upon request. Parents supply drinks and food items, including baby milk, for children attending the crèche. Staff will provide a drink and biscuit if parents do not bring anything but there are no other healthier options available. Staff seek relevant information from parents to ensure that they are aware of children's individual dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, children's safety throughout the setting receives generally good attention. There are daily safety checks and a risk assessment is in place for the premises and for particular activities that children may participate in. The suite of rooms used by the crèche is comfortable and welcoming. Displays of cartoon characters that children may be familiar with, as well as pictures of their own artwork, helps to create a child-friendly environment. Staff supervise children well. They have the option of taking babies into an adjacent playroom if there are large numbers of mobile children present to further ensure their safety. Children attending the playscheme have a specific base room that they return to throughout the day. They stay safe as playscheme staff supervise them carefully as they move around the leisure centre to participate in activities and when they are in areas accessible by members of the public.

Good security arrangements contribute positively to children's safety. Staff control access to the crèche and staff challenge people if they inadvertently stray into areas designated for sole use of children attending the playscheme. A password system is in place. Staff use situations that arise to help children understand how to avoid accidental injury. For instance, they explain why children should not run indoors and that it is not acceptable to throw toys because someone will get hurt. Playscheme staff talk to children about fire safety and the rules they need to follow for their own safety at the beginning of the week. However, they do not always make a point of doing this on subsequent days. Thus, children who join the scheme later in the week are not fully aware of some very important information. Children use and play with a safe range of appropriate equipment and play materials.

Children are protected by staff who have a satisfactory awareness of child protection issues. There is always at least one qualified first aider on site, within the centre, who is available to deal with any accidents or emergencies. However, those staff working directly with the children do not hold first aid qualifications.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are content and at ease in the relaxed atmosphere of the crèche. Staff are welcoming and help them to settle quickly on arrival. Many children attend the crèche on a regular basis and they are looked after by adults who get to know them well. Children benefit from continuity of care because the staff team is well established. This helps children to feel confident and secure as they are greeted by a familiar face. Relationships between staff and children are warm and friendly and staff have a kind and caring approach. Babies and toddlers are cuddled and talked to. Staff sit on the floor with children and play alongside them. Children enjoy stories and younger children delight in watching favourite videos.

Many play materials are arranged to be easily accessible by the children themselves which helps them become independent and make their own decisions about what they do. These are sufficient to interest and engage younger children, although they do not include everyday or natural resources to allow them to explore using their senses. Staff are unaware of the Birth to three matters framework of good practice as a means of enhancing the existing range of activities and experiences they offer babies and young children. Older children, who are present because it is half-term, are not so well-occupied because staff do not ensure that they have access to a variety of activities or can help themselves to a range of play materials more suited to their ages and stages of development.

Children attending the playscheme participate in a selection of pre-planned activities. These include sports, swimming, arts and crafts and cooking. Parents and children know in advance what activities are on offer each day and can therefore, if they wish, tailor attendance to specific days to match any particular interests children may have. There is a lively atmosphere at the playscheme and children have fun. They separate easily from their parents and settle quickly to the routine of the day. Children are enthusiastic about the activities on offer and are able to learn new skills or practice existing ones, such as curling or roller skating. Every day there is a quiet time for the under 8's where they explore a varied range of construction toys and board games. They look at books and play imaginatively with puppets. Staff readily join in with children's play and everyone remains well-occupied and has a good time. Playscheme staff are enthusiastic and well briefed. They clearly enjoy what they are doing and the company of the children they are caring for. Relationships between staff and children are good and children get on well with one another.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern. Staff are sensitive to the way children are feeling. For instance, they offer support and reassurance when children become upset or want to know when their parents will be returning. Staff plan some art and craft activities to link in with the seasons of the year or different events, such as Valentine's Day, Easter or Christmas. However, they do not include other celebrations to broaden children's knowledge. There is a limited range of

resources throughout the provision that reflect different aspects of social diversity or positive images to help children gain awareness of the wider world in which we live.

Children behave well. They learn to take turns and share with the encouragement of staff and children on the playscheme work together in teams as they participate in some activities. Staff's good use of praise fosters children's sense of achievement and contributes positively to their confidence and self-esteem.

Children benefit from the warm and friendly relationships that exist between their parents and the staff who look after them. There is a good informal daily exchange of information as staff and parents talk about children. This means that staff are well-informed of everything they need to know to meet children's individual needs on a day to day basis and that they have regard for parents' wishes. Parents complete booking forms which supply some relevant information about children. However, crèche staff do not regularly review children's information forms and rely solely on parents to update them about any changes. Parents have access to some written policies about the provision and others are available upon request. They are provided with the contact number for Ofsted should they wish to raise any concerns or complaints. However, the setting's complaints procedure is not easily available and does not contain information about the way concerns will be dealt with to reflect the recent revisions to the National Standards.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff working at the setting are aware of their roles and responsibilities and they work together as a team to support the children attending. All regular members of staff working in the crèche hold appropriate childcare qualifications and the playscheme supervisor is currently studying for a level 3 in Playwork. However, no other member of staff working at the scheme has a Playwork qualification. Therefore, the setting currently does not meet Ofsted's requirement that at least half of all staff hold a level 2 qualification as set out in the criterion of the National Standards. There are suitable recruitment and vetting procedures in place.

The crèche and holiday playscheme operate independently of each other. Currently, internal arrangements for sharing information concerning registration and inspection issues are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that both parts of the provision are equally aware of any changes and the additional responsibilities placed upon them. At the time of inspection the registration certificate was not displayed in either the crèche or the playscheme. This is a breach of regulations as settings are required to display this at all times when children are present.

Required documentation and other records that promote the health, safety and welfare of children are mostly in place, although some aspects of this are not fully accurate.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting was required to develop an action plan to identify how staff training and qualification requirements will be met. The supervisor of the playscheme is currently studying for a Level 3 in playwork which shows that the setting has a positive attitude to meeting this criterion. However, there is no action plan in place to show how the setting intends to meet qualification requirements with regard to other staff and in what timescale.

Measures to enhance some aspects of children's safety within the setting were also identified as areas for attention. A fire drill is conducted at least once during every playscheme and records of these are kept. Playscheme staff talk to children about what they need to do in the event of a fire, although this is not always done every day. The crèche participates in whole centre fire drills. These are conducted in accordance with fire safety officer recommendations. Staff abide by required adult:child ratios as identified in the National Standards during swimming activities. Children under 8 use the learner pool under the supervision of a qualified swimming teacher and lifeguard. Parents are consulted as to whether their children require water aids. A record is kept of all existing injuries and staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues has been developed.

The provider was also asked to provide opportunities for children attending the playscheme to play outside. Procedures are in place for this and staff include opportunities for outdoor play on some occasions, depending on the weather and ground conditions.

The improvements made contribute in positive ways to children's continued safety and wellbeing within the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person. Concerns were raised with regard to the care of a child. Ofsted asked the provider to conduct an internal investigation and report back. Ofsted was happy with the findings and the action taken by the provider. The provider remains 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 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):

- investigate ways of helping children develop positive attitudes to healthy eating and an awareness of the importance of good nutrition as part of a healthy life style (playscheme and crèche). Improve existing arrangements for ensuring good hygiene at all times by ensuring greater consistency with regard to hand washing and the serving of food items (crèche)
- ensure there is at least one member of staff working in both the creche and playscheme who has completed an appropriate first aid course that includes training in first aid for infants and young children. Improve arrangements for informing children of the rules for their own safety to ensure greater consistency on a day to day basis (playscheme)
- enhance further the range of experiences available to babies and children under three, for example by making use of the Birth to three framework of good practice and expand the range of activities and play materials available for older children (creche)
- expand the range of available resources that reflect different aspects of social diversity and positive images to help children gain awareness of the wider world in which we live. Ensure that parents have easy access to the setting's complaints procedure and that this reflects the recent changes to the National Standards (crèche and playscheme)
- display the certificate of registration at all times when children are present
- improve systems for communication between the crèche and playscheme to ensure that there is a joint sharing of all relevant information relating to registration. Review documentation to ensure that this is up to date and reflects accurate information
- devise and implement an action plan to identify how the criteria for qualifications will be met and in what time-scale. Forward this to Ofsted.

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