



Elm Cottage Out of School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Shirley Leigh Monks-Meagher
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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?

Elm Cottage Out of School Club was registered in 2005 and is situated within Hursthead Infant School, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire. The club is owned and operated by the Elm Cottage group of day care facilities, which includes both day nurseries and out of school clubs. Care is provided in the main hall of the school with further access to a base room in a pre-fabricated building. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area and access to a large playing field.

There are currently 84 children on roll aged from 4 to 11 years who attend for a variety of sessions. The club is open Monday to Friday throughout the year. Sessions

during term time are 07.45 to 09.00 and 15.00 to 18.00. During school holidays the club is open from 08.00 until 18.00, starting Easter 2006.

There are ten staff working with the children; seven are full-time. Over 50% of staff hold relevant early years qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 2 or 3. The club receives support from Stockport Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children follow simple health and hygiene practices, such as washing their hands after the bathroom and before eating. Staff follow good procedures to promote children's health and reduce the risk of illness. Suitable procedures are in place to keep children safe in the event of an accident. Staff record comprehensive details, although they do not always show them to parents and ask them to sign in acknowledgement. Staff have up-to-date first aid training to ensure children receive appropriate care and attention.

Children enjoy regular opportunities for vigorous play. They choose freely to play outdoors. For example, balancing on planks, chasing each other on space hoppers and ball games. Three evenings per week children are able to participate in workshops where they learn soccer skills, dance and hip-hop. Children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise with many describing outdoor activity as their favourite.

Children are kept safe from the spread of infection because staff follow procedures, such as effective sickness and exclusion policies and hygienic preparation and serving of snacks. Snack time is a social, unhurried occasion where children choose from a broad range of healthy foods that are agreed with parents in advance. Individual dietary requirements are recorded on file. However, not all staff working with the children are aware of these. This poses a risk to children's health. Children drink water to keep themselves refreshed and hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging in an environment where staff greet them warmly. They have access to a pre-fabricated base room in the playground, the main hall, playground and playing field. The rooms and resources are suitably organised and children can select activities and resources of their choice with ease. Children can play comfortably and move freely and safely between activities indoors and out. A broad range of toys and play equipment is clean, safe and well-maintained helping to protect children's well-being.

Staff minimise hazards to children through daily risk assessments of the environment. Children are kept safe because staff are generally well deployed and vigilant.

However, older children who are grouped in the hall use the toilet in the school's first aid room. Children are meant to inform staff who will then escort them, but do not always do so. This poses a risk to their safety. Children are suitably protected regarding child protection because staff are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy attending the out of school club. They participate enthusiastically in a broad range of activities that are planned for them and by them. For example, they role-play at post-office, design and paint wallpaper and bedroom signs, enjoy board games, such as chess and racing snails and chase each other on space hoppers.

They have time for lively activities, such as soccer skills and hip-hop dance, as well as quieter activities, such as sewing and reading.

Their independence and initiative is well fostered by staff who support the children very well in their chosen activities, helping to extend their learning and acquisition of skills. Children move around freely making choices about their activities, expressing their ideas and creativity, leading and extending their own play.

Children are developing positive relationships with the staff, who give them lots of attention. Staff sit with children, chat about the day's events, their interests and what they are doing. Children are keen to explain their actions and show completed pieces of work to staff. Children are developing a sense of pride. Children play well together in the calm, relaxed atmosphere. They negotiate who will be the 'goalie', share the resources at the model making table and take turns fairly at racing snails.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally well behaved and considerate towards each other and the environment. They are learning to be responsible, helping to tidy away toys, sharing resources and taking turns fairly. They settle some differences through negotiation. For example, how long someone is in goals before they change places. Staff act as good role models and treat the children with respect. However, staff do not always explain why something is unacceptable or why a rule is necessary. As a result, children do not always understand what is expected of them and why. Staff effectively use positive praise to boost children's self-esteem and confidence.

Children are learning about the wider world in a variety of ways. They celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year, dress-up and read stories. As a result, children are developing a positive attitude towards others. Staff challenge stereotypes and encourage children to follow their interests and join in all activities and experiences on offer. Children are developing a positive self-image.

Effective working relationships are being formed between staff and parents. Staff

provide parents with a handbook which informs them about the operation, policies and procedures. Good settling procedures help children and parents to become familiar with the club. Parents are warmly welcomed into the club and share information about their children both verbally and more formally. Children enjoy continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff provide a secure place for children to play where they are happy and relaxed. Staffing ratios are maintained by an experienced and qualified staff team who are generally clear about their roles and responsibilities. Children benefit from well deployed staff who consistently and skilfully interact with them and give effective support and encouragement. As a result, children feel secure, are confident and making progress in their learning.

Suitable recruitment and selection procedures ensure the suitability of staff. A satisfactory induction programme helps staff understand the philosophy and aims of the group and effectively implement routines to give children a wide range of experiences. Well organised play areas and accessible toys and equipment foster children's independence and initiative. However, toileting arrangements for older children limits their independence.

Most documentation contributing to children's safety and welfare is in place, well-organised and stored securely. Staff are aware of the recent changes to regulations relating to complaints. A complaints procedure is shared with parents, but staff have not yet set up a system to log complaints.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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.
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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):

- ensure all adults working with children are fully aware of children's individual dietary requirements
- ensure accident records are consistently shared with parents and acknowledged by their signature
- conduct and implement a risk assessment relating to the supervision and use of the first aid room toilet by children
- improve the consistency of staffs approach to managing children's behaviour
- set-up a system to record complaints, action taken and the outcome of any investigation and make it available to parents upon request.

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