

Acorns Club (Cascades)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	126961
Inspection date	24/02/2011
Inspector	Sarah Morfett
Setting address	Thong Lane, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4LG
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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

Acorns Club (Cascades) Holiday Playscheme opened in 1984 and operates from a variety of areas in a leisure centre. It is situated in the town of Gravesend, Kent. A maximum of 60 children under eight years may attend the playscheme at any one time. The playscheme is open each weekday from 8.30am to 6.00pm for 12 weeks of the year during school holiday periods. Children may attend mornings or afternoon sessions and can stay all day if parents wish. All children use a variety of outdoor areas, which can be shared with the public.

There are currently 11 children aged from five years to under eight years on roll. Three of whom are in the early years age group. The playscheme is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children come from a local catchment area. The playscheme currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

The playscheme employs up to fifteen staff. Seven of them are the core staff who work for most of the holiday periods. All of them, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's learning and development are promoted well overall, through a range of mostly sport based activities. The staff work closely with parents to develop a good knowledge of children's individual needs. This means they are supported effectively and their needs are complemented within the activities. Although there are no clearly identified systems in place for self-evaluation the playscheme's capacity for maintaining ongoing improvement is good. They have successfully addressed the recommendations from the last inspection, showing their desire to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure parents are provided with details for contacting Ofsted and an explanation that they can make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 10/03/2011

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

- strengthen the use of reflective practice and self-evaluation to identify strengths and priorities for development that will continuously improve the quality of the provision for all children

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare is promoted through an effective range of policies and procedures. Staff have a good understanding of the local safeguarding board procedures and what to do should they have a concern about a child in the playscheme. There is a comprehensive safeguarding policy in place which backs up their knowledge and includes details of where to refer their concerns to. This also includes clear details about the procedure to follow if an allegation were made against member of staff. All areas of the setting are fully risk assessed on a regular basis. Separate risk assessments on all the activities the children attending the playscheme take part in are carried out. Children are supervised at all times as they move around between activities. For example, all children are escorted to the toilet. High importance is given to stay for children attending the playscheme.

Staff deploy themselves effectively throughout the session to give children good support whilst they relax and have fun during the school holidays. Children are split into groups according to age so that all activities and resources are appropriate for them and support them effectively to take part in the activities safely. For example, the younger children go swimming at the beginning of the session before the general public are allowed in, this means they can move around freely and safely using age appropriate equipment. All the facilities are utilised for children's benefit, for example they enjoy golf sessions on the driving range, take part in karate classes, use trampolines and express themselves through dance classes. They spend afternoons mostly room based taking part in freely chosen art and craft activities. This means they have a good balance of adult-led and child initiated play.

Equality and diversity is incorporated into all elements of practice. Staff have a good knowledge of each child's backgrounds and needs. Activities are adapted to meet the needs of the all children taking part including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example, the younger children use small child sized golf clubs and there are a range of floats and swimming aids available for children to use during swimming sessions. The staff team work well together. They discuss the aims for the holiday playscheme at the beginning of the holidays deciding on activities and experience which will provide children with fun as well as support their development. They are not implementing any clear systems for self-evaluation as yet. However, they seek parents and children's views on the playscheme to help continually drive improvements in the playscheme.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff ensure that all relevant information about children's needs is collected before they attend the playscheme. The setting's policies and procedures are available for parents on request and include a procedure for them to follow should they have a complaint about the playscheme.

However, they are not provided with details for contacting Ofsted or an explanation that they can make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish. This is a breach of the requirements. The parents are able to provide their views and suggestions regarding the playscheme through the parents questionnaire. These are adapted for the children to use including pictures of happy or sad faces so that even the youngest child can express their feelings about what they like through pictures as well as words. Staff act on suggestion from children by including games and activities which they suggest. All children attending are at various schools in the local area. Although there are no direct links with the schools due to nature of playscheme all information regarding children learning and development is shared via the parents.

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

Children are happy at the playscheme and are eager to attend each day. They are welcomed warmly on arrival and settle quickly. Staff have good relationships with the children and chat to them about what they are interested in. This helps children to feel valued. Children thoroughly enjoy taking part in the range of activities, although if a child is not keen to join in they are still made to feel a part of the session by being given responsibilities such as, handing out equipment and making sure everyone has a drink. This makes children feel important individuals. Staff offer support and guidance within the activities. Each one has a speciality and is able to instruct children in that sort. For example, by showing how best to stand when they hit a golf ball. Children use their problem solving skills as they learn to place the golf ball on the mat in the best position so as they swing the golf club they do not hit the sides and the address the ball well so that it goes a long way. They learn work out distances as they estimate how far they have hit the ball. This means children are developing their understanding of maths concepts well.

Children develop good listening skills as they know what the rules of each activity are. For example, when they are swimming the children listen to the staff as they reinforce the rules of no running around the edge of the pool and no dunking each other. While taking part in karate, the instructor asks them why they must ensure they have ample space to work in. Children reply that they must not be able to touch the person next to them for safety reasons. Therefore, children show that they have listened to instruction and remembered the rules. Children's physical skills are challenged extremely well. Staff devise games such as obstacle courses, for instance climbing over the floats in the pool. This means children learn to use their bodies and develop very good muscle control.

Staff ask parents what children's abilities are in each of the activities and sports they take part in when they first start attending the playscheme. This means that staff know what stage children are at, for example, are they a beginner, intermediate or confident swimmer. This information is used to assess what level of input and support the children will need in each activity. Staff are observant, watching children and making mental notes of how they are developing in the activities. Details of their achievements are then shared with parents at the end of

the session to ensure they are fully involved in children's learning and development. This means that within the context of the setting children's learning and development is promoted to a good standard.

Children demonstrate a good sense of belonging within the club. This is evident through the warm relationships they share with staff. Children show they know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are seen to remind each other to 'sit behind the line' whilst waiting for their turn at golf so the golf clubs can not reach them. All playscheme children wear wrist bands so they are quickly and easily identified within the setting. This means that their safety is given high priority at all times.

Children behave very well within the club because they are provided with activities which are based on their interests and provide them with fun. Staff are good role models and teach children to be kind and polite to one another, therefore they start to learn right from wrong. Children have good opportunities to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, drinks are readily available during all activities. Children mostly bring packed lunch although some children are able to choose from the café menu. Staff provide guidelines for lunches, for example, no fizzy drinks and sweets and chocolate are kept to a minimum. This means children begin to learn about what foods are healthy and good for them.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
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	2

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