

The Cottages Play Away

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

The Cottages Play Away Out Of School Club opened in 1998 and moved to its current premises in September 2002. It operates from the Kingsclere Primary School and serves the local community. The Out Of School Club has access to the Resource area and limited use of the hall for physical activities and library for quieter activities and homework. The club is registered to take no more than 26 children from 4 years to under 8 years at any one time. There are currently 30 children aged 4 to 11 years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions with an option for parents to book out of school places on a casual basis. There are no children attending who speak English as an additional language. The Out Of School Club opens five afternoons a week during school term times. Sessions last from 3.15pm to 6.00pm. Two part time staff work with the children. One member of staff holds an NVQ 3 in play work and the other is undertaking an NVQ 3 play work course. The Cottages is closely supported by the Cottages Day Nursery.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The Cottages Play Away after school club is a good setting and provides a secure and enjoyable experience for children of all ages and abilities. The children are well looked after and have fun during their time in the club. Safeguarding arrangements are good and the setting takes care to make sure off-site activities are well planned with robust risk assessments. The club generally works effectively in partnership with the host school. The staff are well trained and look to develop their skills further to provide enhanced provision and support for children of all abilities. The senior staff demonstrate good capacity to improve the club further with a reflective approach, although formal self-evaluation is not yet fully developed.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop more formal systems for self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement and to enhance outcomes for children
- regularly share information about children's learning and progress with the host school to support the development of children's knowledge and skills

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding. All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are currently subject to review. The staff running the

club are appropriately qualified and have the required level of first aid training. Risk assessments for activities and off-site visits are robust. Minor injuries are recorded and parents informed. Procedures and systems are in place to ensure collection by adults is secure. As a result Cottages Play Away ensures that children are safe and well looked after. Recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed; however some of the relevant paperwork is held off-site at the partner nursery. The setting leaders are aware of the need to alter this arrangement. The leader has a strong commitment to improving her own skills and is currently undertaking Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator training in order to enhance the provision and outcomes for the children in the club. The strong ethos of equality and inclusivity enables children from diverse backgrounds to feel welcome and helps to create a harmonious atmosphere. Relationships within the club are good. The children of all ages and backgrounds play well together and get on with each other and with the adults working with them. The children enjoy playing board games and doing craft activities with the adults. They select from a good range of activities and resources on offer which engage and interest all of the youngsters. Staff ensure all of the children have good opportunities to be involved with all the activities. The activities are well planned and reviewed weekly. A more systematic longer term review is still at the developmental stage and is not formally recorded. The club links well with the host school on operational matters and the welfare needs of the children. The leaders are looking to extend this further as currently links do not extend to the discussion of the children's learning and progress. Links with parents are good and parents express that they feel their children are well looked after and that they enjoy their time at Cottages. Newsletters give parents a wide range of information about what is happening at the club and staff communicate well with parents informally about their children's welfare and progress at the end of each day.

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

Children come happily into the setting and they are soon actively involved in activities. The activities planned range from creative and purposeful to simply fun and engaging. Children have opportunities to choose between adult-led activities or more independent play. This independence is encouraged by the adults around them. Staff instinctively know when to join in children's activities and when to stand back and let children play freely. Children play well indoors or outside the resource area on the sports field. During the summer long periods are spent outside each day, playing sports or with larger equipment. Outdoor play is enjoyed by all of the youngsters. The children, though able to do so, tend not to go outdoors in very cold weather. The staff observe the children's play and achievements and have adopted a system to note which area of learning is being covered. They identify what steps children need to take next so these can inform their planning. In addition, children make a positive contribution to the running of the setting. The staff include them in planning by asking which resources and activities they want to use and take part in over the next couple of weeks. This results in the children engaging in all the activities on offer. They offer opinions on what they have done and this is used in the review process by staff and

contributes to planning for future events and activities. Visits to local places of interest are a good feature of the activities programme. The behaviour of the children is good and they are friendly to each other and the adults in the setting. The children say they feel very safe and are polite and say 'please' and 'thank you' when requesting items. They learn to negotiate and cooperate when taking turns on the games and enjoy chatting together while constructing models with bricks. The children share toys well and are willing to play with those older and younger than themselves. The children play competitive games well together; winning and losing are done sportingly. The adults in the setting reinforce good manners and fair play with praise. Although there is little space to display their finished work or activities the children enjoy creative tasks. They have produced their own portable display board on which to present items to their parents. The children learn about the wider world through topics such as Chinese New Year and develop skills such as baking. Cooking cakes for the class teachers was very popular. The adults work well with the children and support them in the activities they choose by encouraging them and discussing ideas with them. At the club the children develop good skills for the future. They listen carefully when in conversation with staff. Their social skills are nurtured and developed through the dialogue with their friends and the adults around them. As a result the children, even the youngest, are confident speakers and make visitors feel welcome. They display high levels of involvement in activities and persist for extended periods of time at an activity of their choosing, for example, building models with toy bricks. The models they make form key components in imaginative games. This creativity extends to knowing exactly how fast the model will travel compared with other vehicles and demonstrates a secure knowledge of what is faster and slower. Children are given the opportunity to have a healthy snack during the session. This includes fruit and milk or water to drink. The children are aware of personal hygiene and wash their hands before they eat. They prepare their snacks at the table independently of the adults and spend time spreading butter onto bread. In addition the children take an active part in serving food and at the end of snack time they spend time clearing the table. The children at Cottages Play Away are well looked after and enjoy coming to the club.

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	3
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

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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