

# High Oaks Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY339782
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 August 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kim Wailing
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

High Oaks Play Scheme is one of eight Special Needs Activities and Play (SNAP) Hertfordshire Ltd Play Schemes, a registered charity managed by a board of trustees. It registered in 2007 and operates from two rooms plus the hall in Wheatfields Infant School in St Albans, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 16 children under eight may attend the play scheme at any one time, although it is open to children and adults up to age of 19 years. The play scheme is open each weekday for four weeks in the summer holidays from 10.00 to 15.00. There is access to enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 57 children and adults on roll, of which 17 are under eight years. Most come from a wide catchments area. The play scheme supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

High Oaks Play Scheme employs 12 members of staff. Of these six hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health is very well fostered. Staff pay good attention to children's development of personal care skills, such as encouraging thorough hand washing and, when appropriate, the application of sun cream. Relevant documentation, such as recording of children's health concerns and allergies, is in place which means that children's individual health needs are known. Six staff members hold appropriate first aid qualifications and there are two fully stocked first aids kits in the setting, including one which is taken on outings. All accidents and administration of medicines are recorded and parents are asked to sign entries. This means that children's health is effectively safeguarded.

Children's dietary needs are sufficiently met as drinks and snack foods, including fresh fruit, that children enjoy are available. However, younger children cannot freely access drinking water which means that their immediate thirst cannot be quenched. Parents and carers are encouraged to provide their children with healthy packed lunches, which are stored appropriately. Children and staff eat lunch together. Children with specific feeding needs are given time and careful attention so all enjoy lunchtime and are well nourished. In addition, children take part in activities such as cookery sessions which increases their awareness of nutrition.

Children play daily in the fresh air and enjoy physical activity. This contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Children are offered organised games, such as playing basketball as well as enjoying exploring the adjoining playground areas. These areas offer a range of fixed climbing equipment which promotes balancing and climbing skills. In addition, the play scheme offers a programme of optional activities. For example, swimming and visits to a nearby enclosed playground that involves children in vigorous exercise. Children's need for rest is acknowledged by staff. There is an area set aside for children to play quietly or relax.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's health and safety when using the designated rooms in the school premises is well fostered as the play scheme takes good measures. For example, toilets are kept clean and are well stocked with toilet paper, soap and hot air hand dryers. However, the two areas used for nappy changing, although having suitable equipment such as hoists and changing mats, are insufficiently ventilated which impacts on children's comfort. All furniture and toys used by the play scheme are clean and age-appropriate which aids children's overall development.

Children's safety is further enhanced as procedures, such as emergency evacuation, are practised weekly so that children are aware and confident of what to do. In addition, staff members reinforce 'ground rules' such as not spilling water on the floor, which children understand and follow. Staff members prepare activities such as cookery sessions carefully and use appropriate equipment, such as small rolling pins and plastic pastry cutters, so that children are able to enjoy taking part safely.

Good procedures are followed when children are taken on outings. For example, identifying a safe route to take to the local park. In addition, staff follow a checklist when preparing for an outing, which includes essential items such as a mobile phone, a first aid kit and children's medications. Children's safety when involved in planned activities, such as swimming which

carries a degree of risk is adequately protected as the play scheme follows satisfactory guidelines. Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded as the play scheme has in place a comprehensive child protection policy which is discussed and made available to all staff. The policy and accompanying leaflet is sufficiently detailed to fully inform new members of staff of what steps to take if they become concerned about the actions of another adult working with the children.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enthusiastically join in with the activities that the play scheme has to offer. There is a wide programme of events and activities, such as outings to a local children's farm, participation in an African drumming session and organised sports activities that are challenging and motivating. Alongside these, children make good use of the outdoor areas of the play scheme. These are well-maintained, spacious and offer the children opportunities to be involved in group games as well as create their own games which are interesting and enjoyable to them. The sandpit, in particular, is very popular with children who play contentedly enjoying the texture of the sand.

Children play cooperatively with each other and form new friendships. Children have a friendly and relaxed relationship with staff members. Staff announce when group activities, such as cookery, begin which enables children to make decisions about whether to join in or continue with their play. Planned activities, such as creating collage pictures of buckets and spades, are skilfully organised and supports children's learning in an enjoyable way. On the day of the inspection visit, high levels of staff interaction with children were observed throughout the day. As a result, children are actively engaged and busy. Overall, children attending the play scheme have fun and are offered a good balance of activities and experiences which are age-appropriate, meeting the needs of the different ages and abilities of children attending.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued. Their needs are discussed with parents and carers at the outset. For example, parents and carers are asked to complete a registration form that provides an opportunity to highlight particular issues. Strategies are agreed which support children so that they can place a full and active part in the setting. Publicity leaflets and a registration pack are readily available which satisfactorily develops partnership with parents and carers. However, information contained in updated policies and procedures is not always effectively shared with parents. For example, changes in the way complaints made against National Standards are managed and information about how to contact Ofsted directly. As a result, parents are not fully informed of factors that potentially impact on the children's well-being.

Children feel a sense of belonging as they confidently use all available areas. Children are appropriately supported so that they gain full advantage of attending the scheme. They respond to the attentiveness of staff members who take positive steps to include children successfully in activities. All children are treated with respect and choices are given to enable children to make decisions and follow interests. For example, favourite toys are made available alongside newly introduced resources such as an inflatable boat. There is a range of resources that promote children's awareness of the wider community which is also enhanced by visits to nearby parks and leisure centres. During supervised group activities staff skilfully stand back to allow children to find their own answers before intervening. This enables children to find their own solutions.

However, when staff see inappropriate behaviour this is challenged and dealt with through appropriate strategies, such as talking through with children the consequences of their actions. Overall, children quickly form good relationships with each other and staff.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's needs, both as individuals and as a group, are well met. Organisational features such as a staff/child ratio that exceeds minimum care standard requirements underpin this. As a result, children are appropriately supported in activities which means that their involvement and enjoyment is increased. This is enhanced by the presence of volunteers and individual children's carers, who are not included in the staff ratio, but who do contribute significantly to children's care. Children enjoy the company and friendship of the staff, who work well as a team. This team spirit is reinforced as many former volunteers become paid staff and all staff attending induction and training sessions before the scheme opens.

All records and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the play scheme and most policies that promote the welfare, care and learning of children are in place. Good contact with the area manager means that any problems are quickly resolved so that children's needs on an everyday level are met. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 good. 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):

- ensure that drinking water is made available at all times
- take steps to ensure that that nappy changing areas are adequately ventilated

- improve systems to share information with parents, with reference to the procedure for making complaints and the process for resolving them, including how to approach Ofsted directly.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)