

Welwyn and Hatfield Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY339773
Inspection date	08 August 2007
Inspector	Tina Kelly
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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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Welwyn and Hatfield Playscheme 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 the large hall and two classrooms in Lakeside School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The scheme opens each weekday for four weeks in the summer holidays from 10:00 to 13:00 and for limited days during the Christmas and Easter holidays. The scheme has access to secure play grounds, adventure play structures and school fields.

A maximum of 20 children under eight may attend the play scheme, a sister scheme also runs on this site that caters for children and young adults up to the age of 19 years. There are currently 24 children on roll. The scheme caters for children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities.

Appropriate staff to child ratios are met, the scheme is also supported by volunteers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children's health is well supported by staff and volunteers who are fully aware of their individual care needs. All staff involved with the children follow effective and well practiced routines. These promote the children's dignity and privacy when using the cloakrooms and ensure children develop their independence in their own personal care. Makaton hand signs and picture symbols are used to reinforce the understanding between staff and children throughout the session. Records are in place to keep parents informed about the children's personal care, cloakroom and changing routines, these are shared at the end of the day.

Lunchtime is a social and well managed time of the day. Parents provide packed lunches that are appropriate for their children, the scheme supplements these with fresh drinking water. Children from the sister scheme, running in adjoining rooms in the school which caters for children over the age of eight, are brought in to join the junior group. They use the main hall, where tables and chairs are set out, taking into account children who use wheelchairs. There is great discussion around the contents of the various lunchboxes, children talk about their likes and dislikes with staff who sit and have their lunch alongside the children.

Children have many opportunities to play outside and enjoy the fresh air. They have free access to the playground areas and adventure play apparatus in the school grounds, where they can use swings, climbing frames, ramps and a specially designed roundabout that is accessible to children in wheel chairs. Children are encouraged to extend and practise their skills, they are confident as they negotiate their way around the outside play areas on ride on toys. When inside they are asked what activities they would like to take part in, they express themselves clearly and explain how they like to climb and balance on large soft play blocks in the main hall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and stimulating environment. The school premises provides a large main hall for physical play, with additional classrooms for planned activities. The extensive grounds include an impact absorbent sports court, adventure play apparatus and open play areas. The different areas are consistently monitored to ensure appropriate support for the children's differing needs. Staff are proactive in making decisions as to how they are deployed, they discuss activities and move around the setting, which means that the children's play and individual needs are well managed. Children have free access to a wide range of toys and resources that are developmentally appropriate.

The setting continually reviews policies and documents to ensure the children's safety and well-being. Risk assessments are carried out, staff are vigilant with regards to the children's safety. Well practiced routines are followed when the children are taken out to the local playground. Volunteers provide additional support so children are kept safe, with appropriate ratios maintained at all times. Parents are informed in advance about the outings planned for the scheme, if they feel their child is not going to enjoy the experience they can make informed judgments about whether they will attend that day. Staff hold relevant first aid certificates and records of accidents and incidents are in place. However, several accident records have not

been signed by parents, this means they are not fully aware of the events around the accident and may not take relevant action to monitor the children's health when they are taken home.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by comprehensive child protection policies and procedures. The designated child protection staff member has attended second level training relevant to group settings. All staff are aware of how to recognise and deal with concerns as this is covered on the induction. The register of children, staff and for visitors ensures the manager is aware of who is on site and can monitor the safety of the children attending. Leaflets and information in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board are readily available to ensure appropriate action is taken in the case of concerns being raised about a child attending the scheme.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy within the setting, they settle quickly to a wide range of activities and play opportunities. Staff spend time with the children as they come into the scheme, they talk about what is planned for the day and what they would like to do. There is a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, children benefit from high levels of interaction and support from all staff and volunteers. Children are able to make independent choices about their play. They ask staff to move resources or to get toys that are out of their reach. Strong relationships have developed between the staff and the children.

Children attending the scheme are provided with a very flexible routine that enables them to move freely between activities both inside and outside. Games develop spontaneously, space is made available for the children to develop and extend their own play ideas. Plans are in place to enable staff to prepare and have resources available throughout the week. The theme of 'The World' provided children with opportunities to try different foods, make flags and take part in African drumming sessions. Outings are an important aspect of the scheme. Children enjoy trips to local children's farms and activity centres.

Children enjoy one to one interaction with staff and strong bonds have developed. For example, the children sit with staff quietly around the ball pool. Staff prompt conversations around the quantity of balls and the different colours. Children respond enthusiastically, making up enormous numbers, laughing and joking in a comfortable and relaxed manner.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the group each morning by staff who are aware of issues that are important to each individual child. The different aspects of the day ahead are discussed, children express their opinions on the activities that have been planned for them. Children are keen to come into the scheme, they are familiar with the options available to them. Parents complete comprehensive registration and child profile forms that are frequently used by staff to ensure the children's individual needs are recognised and met in all aspects of their care.

Information on the day to day routines are on display as parents come into the scheme. A parent handbook outlines policies and procedures that have immediate impact on the care of the children. A questionnaire is completed at the end of the scheme to evaluate the activities and service provided, the feedback is used to review practice and offer new ideas for the next scheme. The registration certificate is displayed alongside the insurance cover but parents are

not fully informed about the scheme's registration with Ofsted, the inspection process and the report that is available to them that outlines the quality of care their children receive.

Children develop awareness of the local community and the wider world through outings and visitors to the scheme. Books and play resources that reflect diversity are readily available. The children have a growing understanding of acceptable behaviour which is well supported by the staff. They learn to share and to take turns. They are also learning that sometimes they have to wait until later in the day to take part in particular activities. Staff are clear about being fair when children come to join in group games. Staff take time to explain how their actions have an impact on others playing nearby.

When children find it difficult to express themselves, staff are patient and give them time and space to relax away from the main group activity. Staff refer to the information given by parents about their children's behaviour and care needs. They work with strategies used at home, which provides children with a consistent approach to their behaviour. Positive behaviour is consistently praised, achievements are recognised and children's sense of self-esteem is promoted at all times.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and well-being is promoted at all times by staff who are committed to providing an exciting and stimulating environment for all. The effective management of the scheme ensures a robust recruitment process, all staff undergo a thorough vetting process to ensure they are suitable to work with the children. All staff take part in a thorough induction process which includes health and safety and child protection. Many of the staff team have worked at the scheme on previous years, they bring a wealth of different experiences to the setting.

Children thrive in the friendly environment created by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. The high adult to child ratios ensure children are well supported and have fun. The various areas of the school building are well utilised, providing areas for the children to take part in a wide range of activities and experiences.

All records and documents which are required for the efficient and safe management of the scheme are in place. The play scheme supervisor is well supported by an area manager, any issues can be discussed and quickly resolved. There are procedures in place to ensure documentation is reviewed on a regular basis to monitor and maintain the safety and well-being of the children who attend. 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 accident reports are signed by parents
- ensure parents are fully informed about the registration with Ofsted, the inspection process and that inspection reports are available.

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