



Doddington Activity Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123076
Inspection date	03 August 2005
Inspector	Tracy Maria Clarke
Setting Address	Ground Floor, Arthur Court, Charlotte Despard Avenue, Battersea, SW11 5JE
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Registered person	Wandsworth Borough Council Play Services
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?

Doddington Activity Centre Play Centre is situated on the Doddington Estate in Battersea. It is within walking distance of Battersea Park train station, and local shops and amenities. The centre is a self contained building on one level, based on the ground floor of a large block of flats. The building consists of a large room, a smaller play area, an office, a kitchen, toilet facilities, and two enclosed playgrounds.

The centre are registered to care for a maximum of 60 children from 4 to under 8 years during term times; when it operates as an open access site, and 40 children from 4 years to under 8 years during the school holidays; when it operates as a play

scheme. Children aged from 8 to 14 also attend. The group runs during term times from 15:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday, and during the school holidays from 09:00 to 17:15, Monday to Friday. A wrap around service is also provided from 8:00 to 9:00 and 17:15 to 18:00, offering breakfast and an afternoon snack, during some school holidays.

On the day of the inspection there were 24 children on the register. Twenty two children were present, of whom 12 were aged under 8 years. One child currently has special needs. No children speak English as an additional language.

There are 4 members of staff working directly with the children, of whom 3 hold a relevant play work or childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned daily routines. They wash their hands after messy activities and before eating any food, and understand why they are doing so. A small group of children cook pancakes, and they learn about the importance of good hygiene within the kitchen environment. Two members of staff have undertaken food hygiene training, and they ensure that they follow appropriate procedures when preparing fruit for children, and during cooking activities. Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment, and staff undertake an hourly check of the children's toilets to ensure they remain pleasant for children to use. Staff complete accident and medication records as necessary, sharing information with parents and obtaining necessary consents. However, written parental consent for emergency medical treatment has only been obtained for those children who have attended outings. Two staff hold first aid certificates and are able to administer first aid treatment to children who may require it.

Children are encouraged to learn about healthy eating through planned activities. On the day of the inspection, they designed posters of healthy foods and cooked pancakes using fresh fruit. Staff encourage this further by providing fruit at snack time, and offering children water throughout the day. Parents provide children's lunch, and are given guidance on suggested foods and storage, as the facility are not able to refrigerate packed lunches. Although parents are asked to provide information in relation to their children's allergies and dietary needs on the booking form, there is insufficient follow up from staff to check the information provided, and ensure all staff are aware. For example, one child's egg allergy related to raw eggs only, but the manager had not shared this information with her staff team. Another child's listed dietary need had not been included on the central chart in the kitchen.

Children enjoy taking part in a range of physical play activities. The outside play area provides space for them to play football and basketball, to run, climb and chase. Staff also organise team games, such as 'Bench Ball', which encourage children to exercise, to follow rules and to play as part of a team. A small range of outside play

equipment is provided, including balls and hoops, but the limited range prevents children from extending their physical play fully. At the adventure playground children climb and balance on large structures, swing on large tyre swings and jump on the bouncy castle. Inside the centre, children use the table tennis and table football equipment well, and extend their hand and eye co-ordination when playing with the giant 'Jenga'. They also have great fun twisting and balancing their bodies when playing 'Twister'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to identify risks and reduce them. As a result, children's risk of accidental injury is minimised. The premises are very well maintained with well signposted fire exits and fire fighting equipment. Children and staff practise the fire drill every week. Children are cared for in a secure and safe environment due to effective systems and security precautions. For example, there is an intercom on the gate, and a member of staff sits at the front door at the beginning and end of the day, signing children in and out. During outings, children are made aware of safe practices. For example, staff talk to them about how they should stay together, where they should meet up, and what they should do if they become lost. Children are aware of stranger danger and are given clear guidelines as to what they should do if they become separated from the group. Regular head counts during the outing also ensures children's safety.

Children play with toys and equipment which are well made, safe and age appropriate. They are reminded, when necessary, of how to play with them safely. For example, one child leaves the large 'Jenga' blocks all over the floor and goes into the garden. Staff call him back and explain why he should pick up the items, so that other children and staff do not fall and hurt themselves. This helps children to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe.

All staff have undertaken training in child protection, and as a result they are able to protect children and ensure their well being is maintained. The manager understands her responsibilities and is aware of how to refer concerns she may have about a child. The centre's own child protection policy is based on the local guidelines, but does not include the action to be taken should a member of staff be accused of abusing a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children link up well to play with one another in small and large groups, and are able to initiate their own games. In the garden they enjoy playing football and basketball, whilst a group of children organise a team game of 'skittle ball', where they have to knock over one another's targets with a ball. Inside the centre children draw pictures using the pencils and paper provided, play with the games, such as 'Twister', and

climb in and out of a wooden climbing frame. They play one another at table tennis and table football, and there is a small range of board games provided. Planned activities for the week include adult led craft activities, such as sun hats, collage, potato printing and badges. A talent competition is also planned for the end of the play scheme. As well as the planned activities, staff have organised regular outings to Battersea Park, the adventure playground, a River Thames boat trip and Littlehampton.

Children enjoy their day at the adventure playground, as they undertake a cooking activity, play on the large climbing apparatus and draw pictures. However, not all children are able to go on the planned outing. Every day staff and children get into small key work groups and children are able to say what they have enjoyed doing, and make suggestions for future activities. Staff take account of some of these comments when organising the next days events. Staff generally interact well with children, offering them the right level of support and opportunity to initiate their own play. However, the limited range of resources and toys provided at the centre, does lead to some children feeling bored at times. For example, some of the planned activities can not be delivered fully, because staff do not have all the necessary equipment to do so. The range of craft resources is limited to paper, paint, glitter and glue, and not all equipment is freely available to children throughout the day, which prevents them from being able to design and create on a small and large scale. A wooden home corner is provided, but there are no resources to use with it, such as play food, tea set, dolls and dressing up clothes. Staff do their best to keep children occupied by planning activities which require few resources, such as team games, but it is clear that the lack of available resources does impact upon children's all round play and development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very well behaved and are fully aware of the expectations of the setting. Staff give children the opportunity to make up their own rules for the play scheme. Children write them out and they are added to a 'Do's and Don'ts' list on the wall. As a result, children take responsibility for their own behaviour and are keen to follow their own rules. Staff use good explanation with children so that they are able to understand why their behaviour may be undesirable or unkind. For example, an older child retaliates when a younger child calls him a name. Staff explain that this is not acceptable, remind him of the child's young age, and that he should speak to staff in such circumstances and not take matters into his own hands.

Parents are provided with an information booklet about the centre, which includes the aims of the group and relevant policies and procedures. The activity plan is also displayed for their convenience. Generally, children benefit from the working relationship between staff and parents, as their individual needs are discussed, and parents are kept informed of what their children have been doing, and any issues which may have occurred. Parents are made aware of planned outings and give their permission for their child to attend. However, the current policy of 'first come, first served', means that not all children are able to take part in outings, because parents

are not always given sufficient time to return the consent form.

Children with special needs are welcomed into the centre, and if necessary they are provided with an additional member of staff. The inclusive environment encourages children to develop an awareness of others. During the year they undertake meaningful activities to further enhance their understanding. However, there are few resources which promote equality and diversity.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The majority of staff are qualified and all have relevant experience of caring for this age group of children. All staff undergo a three day induction, which ensures they are aware of policies and procedures, are able to organise age appropriate activities and have an understanding of their responsibilities in relation to health and safety and child protection.

Staff interact well with children, providing them with support when necessary, but also allowing children freedom to initiate their own ideas and games. Generally, staffing ratios are met throughout the day. However, there are occasions when staff do not deploy themselves where it is most effective, to ensure appropriate supervision of children.

Policies and procedures are held centrally and available for staff and parents to read. Children's records are well maintained and comments made by parents are highlighted on the child's record. However, staff have not always taken time to speak to parents in greater detail about their children's individual dietary needs, and undertake a risk assessment of them. The manager has also not ensured that all staff are kept informed of relevant information.

The activity planning is undertaken by senior staff and given to the centre as a guide. Whilst there are varied activities contained within the planning, staff have not always been provided with appropriate or sufficient resources to carry out the activities on the plan. As a result, children do not experience a wide enough range of play opportunities during the day, and are given limited choice.

The organisation has a thorough recruitment procedure, which keeps children safe, as all staff have undergone vetting to determine their suitability to work with children. However, Ofsted have not been kept informed of staff changes, and have not been sent confirmation of all staff's CRB disclosures. Overall however, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides a service.

Improvements since the last inspection

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 that staff follow through information received from parents regarding dietary needs, undertake an assessment of risk, and then communicate effectively with all staff
- ensure that written parental consent is obtained for emergency medical treatment and readily available to staff
- revise the child protection procedure to include the action to be taken should a member of staff be accused of abusing a child
- ensure there are sufficient resources available to carry through planned activities, and increase the overall range of toys and equipment so that children have greater choice and are extended in their physical, creative and imaginative play
- consider reviewing the current outings policy, to ensure that all children get the opportunity to take part and parents have sufficient notice to return consent forms
- ensure Ofsted are kept notified of staff changes and that confirmation of CRB disclosures are provided for all staff
- review staff deployment throughout the day to ensure that there are sufficient staff to supervise children effectively

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk