



## **Alton Children's Centre**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123055
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 August 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Close
<b>Setting Address</b>	Ellisfield Drive, Roehampton, London, SW15 4DR
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<b>Registered person</b>	Wandsworth Borough Council Play Services
<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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Alton Children's Centre has been registered since 1996. It is based in self contained, purpose built premises, which are situated in Roehampton on the Alton Housing Estate. The local authority is the London Borough of Wandsworth. The Alton Children's Centre operates as an Open Access facility during term times, and as a Holiday Play Centre during school holidays. The holiday play centre is open from 09:00 to 17:15 every weekday during the month of August when schools are closed.

The indoor space is arranged as a main playroom, a sensory room, a kitchen, an

office and toilets. There is also an enclosed outdoor play area with an impact absorbing surface and large fixed equipment for climbing, balancing and imaginative play. The Open Access facility accommodates up to 60 children in total, aged from five upwards. Whilst the Holiday Play Centre provides care for a maximum of 33 children in total, aged from 3 to 4 years.

There are sufficient staff on duty to meet child:staff ratios, with additional staffing provision made when there are children with special needs who require additional support. The manager and her deputy both hold level 3 qualifications and the two other staff present at this inspection have suitable experience but are unqualified. On the day of the inspection a small number of children with special needs attended the group together with a small number of children who are learning English as an additional language. Twelve children in total were present at the time of this inspection. The registration does not include overnight care.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is inadequate.

Children have free access to wheeled toys and a varied range of good quality climbing equipment in the outdoor area and they make good use of it. They run about energetically in the fresh air with their friends and the staff play games with them to further encourage healthy physical play. Children have drinks of water, milk or fruit juice at mid-morning snack time and again in the afternoon. They can have water to drink at any time and additional drinks at lunchtime.

The children know and follow good routines for hygiene. They know they must wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and staff check to make sure this has been done. Children learn about healthy eating. They enjoy snacks based on fruit or vegetables such as carrot sticks or slices of cucumber. Children learn about the benefits of eating savoury food before sweet treats because the staff talk with them about this at lunchtime. Children also experience tasting a range of new foods such as sweet potato and cous cous in 'Healthy Eating' activities.

Staff are aware if children have an allergic reaction to some foods such as nuts. However, information is not reliably gained from parents about the care or medication that children need if they have an allergic reaction and become unwell which is a potential risk to their health. Children's health and wellbeing is further compromised because there are no staff present who have had up to date first aid training.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are kept secure in the building and the outside area. This is because the whole setting is enclosed by a tall, sturdy fence and the gate is locked between arrival and departure times. Staff are particularly vigilant when the gate is unlocked to admit parents at the beginning and end of the day. Children have no stairs to climb

indoors and their rooms have smooth floor surfaces with no trip hazards which ensures they are not in danger of falling. High and low handles on the office door ensure they cannot access this room. Children play safely in the extensive area for outdoor play as there is a soft surface covering the whole area. Children rest out of the sun in the shade of mature trees growing in the enclosure or come indoors for a relaxing story time in the sensory room.

Children have easy access to toys, furniture and resources that are in generally good condition and there is sufficient choice. Children can use the toilet facilities in comfort as the staff check for cleanliness hourly and take appropriate steps to maintain good standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

Children's welfare in relation to child protection issues is considered. The policy and the procedure are well known to the staff. They know what may indicate abuse or neglect and they know what steps they should take if they are concerned. A suitable procedure is in place for staff to follow if parents do not collect their child at the end of the day. However, the staff have no procedure to follow if a child should be lost while in their care which compromises children's safety.

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

The provision is good.

The children play happily together. They enjoy having the freedom to choose to play either indoors or outside for the greater part of the day. They have ample space in which to play in the playroom with easy access to a good selection of toys. Staff plan and provide an interesting range of activities for the children. These include cooking, tasting food, and varied art and craft activities. Children benefit from quiet story times and singing sessions in the sensory room. They have the opportunity to relax and rest each day after lunch although none of them need an afternoon sleep.

The children take part in games with enthusiasm. They talk to staff confidently and they express their likes and dislikes clearly. Children gain confidence and a sense of security because the staff manage them with kindness. Children benefit from the company of the adults who spend all of their time talking and playing with them. Outings to local venues have been planned and advertised.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children know what is expected of them which helps them to feel confident. They understand that they must share and take turns with favourite things such as scooters and sit and ride toys. They respond well to firm guidance and gentle distraction and the staff are good role models. Children also respond well to praise given when they are helpful. They are lively but their behaviour is generally good. Children see pictures, books, resources and posters that reflect a good cross-section of our society. All children are treated with respect and they know they are not permitted to dominate their friends in play or activities activities.

Children's individual needs are met in some respects although staff do not always have sufficient information from parents to inform their practice. Additional staff support can be provided if required and there are suitable facilities for attending to children's personal needs. Parents are invited to stay to settle their children in if they wish which helps the children to feel content and secure. Parents can discuss the day's activities at the beginning of the day and again when they collect their children. This contributes towards continuity for the children. Leaflets and posters describe what activities will take place to enable parents to choose days that suit their child best. However, the information given may not be accurate as the planned outings may not take place as advertised due to possible staffing issues.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

The local authority takes responsibility for ensuring that all members of staff are suitable to work with children. Children are supervised at all times in the indoor and outdoor areas, with particular care taken by staff during the period when the outer gate is unlocked. The manager ensures that the ratio of adults to children at the setting meets requirements through sensible forward planning. The manager has achieved a level 3 qualification in childcare and 50% of the staff have at least level 2 qualifications. However, no plans have been made to ensure that there is a trained first aider attending at every session.

The manager ensures that the indoor area is arranged to give children sufficient space for their play and activities. She also makes sure that there are suitable activities planned for the children. She plans ahead so that the necessary resources are available.

Records of children's attendance are kept correctly. Accident records are maintained according to regulation and a medication record is kept ready for use. However, other documents and files are not well kept and as a result documents are not easy to find and some could not be located. The full Ofsted certificate of registration is not displayed. There is no indication of the numbers of children who may attend the setting at any one time.

Staff do not have clear knowledge of what steps they should take if a child in their care is lost because they have no lost child policy or procedure to refer to. No written record or notes are available of how staff should care for a child who has allergies. No written permission for emergency medical treatment or advice has been gained from parents for the period when children are attending the setting. Staff have overlooked the potential impact of gaps in documentation on the children's safety and wellbeing. Overall the needs of the range of children for whom it provides are not met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Staff agreed to provide drinking water for the children to access throughout the day. A jug and cups are set out for children to see and they ask for a drink if they are

thirsty between meal and snack times. Staff were asked to store medication in a safe manner. No medication is currently stored but a safe place has been identified for medication storage if there is a need. Staff agreed to make parents aware of what their children have been doing each day. Staff are available to talk with parents at the beginning and end of each day.

Staff have raised their awareness of what action to take should a child arrive with an existing injury. They know they must make a written record of their observations, share this with parents and keep the record for future reference. Staff ask parents about children's need for sleep and know they must provide appropriate clean bed linen and equipment if required. None of the children currently attending the setting need a sleep during the day.

Staff agreed to re-organise the filing systems to ensure that documents can be easily retrieved. This matter has not been addressed and as a result some important information, including instructions about what to do if a child is lost, is not available to the staff. The accident record was previously inappropriate. New record sheets are now in use which preserve confidentiality. Staff agreed to revise the child protection procedure to include notifying Ofsted if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff. Information in the staff file mentions notifying Ofsted.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

## **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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that a qualified first aider is on the premises at all times
- ensure that staff know precisely what care they must provide for a child who has an allergy or a particular health issue
- ensure that parents are asked to give their written permission for emergency medical treatment or advice if necessary throughout the period when the children are at the setting

- ensure that staff have an appropriate policy to refer to that shows clearly what steps they must take if a child is lost

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)