

Elmridge Activities Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY360640
Inspection date	16 April 2008
Inspector	Sheila Iwaskow
Setting Address	Elmridge Primary School, Wilton Drive, Hale Barns, ALTRINCHAM, Cheshire, WA15 0JF
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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?

Elmridge Activity Centre opened in 2007 and is privately owned. The club runs from Elmridge Primary School in Hale Barnes and children from the school attend.

Children have access to two classrooms and the occasional use of the school hall. There is a large playing field available for outdoor play. The setting is open each weekday from 08.00 until 09.00 and from 15.00 until 18.00. Care is also provided during school holidays from 08.00 until 17.00, as and when required. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are currently 50 children on roll. The setting employs five staff; of these three hold an appropriate early years qualification. Another member of staff is currently working towards a recognised award. Support is given to the club from Sure Start in Trafford.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted because effective procedures are in place to keep them healthy. The premises are spotlessly clean, surfaces are wiped down during the day and food is prepared by staff with food hygiene training. Children adopt good hygiene practices as part of the daily routine, such as washing hands before eating and after toileting. Posters are displayed in the bathroom area to raise children's awareness of germs and the use of paper towels to dry hands prevents the risk of cross-infection. There is always a member of staff on duty who has training in first aid, ensuring that any minor accidents or illness are dealt with appropriately. An effective sick child policy is securely in place.

Healthy eating is actively promoted within the club. Snacks are available throughout the session and children are free to eat when they wish. Menus are clearly displayed allowing parents to appreciate the quality of the food enjoyed by their children. Children very much enjoy sitting together at snack time, which helps their social and language skills to flourish. The use of brightly coloured cups and plates makes eating a more pleasurable experience for children. Exploring topics relating to healthy foods further reinforces children's awareness of the importance of a balanced diet to a healthy life style. Drinks are readily available to allow children to quench their thirst.

Staff pay particular attention to children's safety when they play outdoors. Cones are set out at the beginning of the session, which clearly define the area of the large playing field to be used by the children. Children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend outdoors. They love running around in the fresh air and playing interactive games, such as tennis and football. Other resources including balls, scooters and stilts are also available for children to enjoy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children experience a welcoming environment in premises which have been recently decorated and carpeted throughout. Vibrant displays of children's art work and photographs of them at play are beautifully displayed throughout the setting, giving children a strong sense of belonging. Comfortable furnishings are available to allow children to rest and a quiet area is provided should children want to do their homework. Staff ensure that a wide range of activities are set out before children arrive, enabling children to have fun as soon as they enter the club. Children access a broad range of resources which are safe, in good condition and meet the needs of all who attend. Play materials are easily accessible, giving children the freedom of choice.

Close attention is paid to safety. Risk assessments are carried out on a daily basis and a buzzer system is in place, which effectively monitors access to the building. Children are well supervised and move confidently and safely around the play areas enjoying their sense of freedom. Fire evacuation procedures are clearly displayed and fire drills are practised regularly. This ensures that children are confident of what to do and where to go should the need arise. A password system is used in the event of anyone not known to staff picking up the children. Written procedures are in place, should a child remain uncollected at the end of the day. However, a minor safety issue has been identified, which poses a risk to children's safety; two drains in the outdoor play areas are not fully covered and are accessible to the children.

Discussions with staff indicate that they have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. However, their knowledge of who to contact if they have a professional concern about a child is not yet fully developed. A comprehensive safeguarding children policy is in place and includes procedures to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children relish the time they spend at the club. All staff within the setting share wonderful relationships with the children, ensuring that they are cared for in a harmonious environment in which they thrive. This increases children's self confidence and helps them to develop a strong sense of self-esteem. Children are highly involved in the day to day running of the club. They contribute significantly to the planning of activities and take over some of the daily routines, such as taking the register at the beginning of the session. When starting at the club children complete a profile entitled 'all about me', which gives staff an in-depth knowledge of children's likes, dislikes and preferences. Detailed observations are kept of children's progress and parents receive written reports on a regular basis.

Day to day activities provided at the club are inspiring and challenging. Children become engrossed as they take part in karaoke sessions and make detailed models using play dough. Computers are available for children to explore new challenges and practice their technology skills. Children have many opportunities to engage in meaningful role play as they play with small world toys, make a meal in the home corner or dress up in the wide range of costumes which are available. There is a clearly defined area with a wide selection of reading materials to help foster children's love of books. A good selection of board and table top games helps children to achieve better levels of concentration and encourages them to take turns.

Creative opportunities are innovative and well thought out. Children have painted wonderful murals on many of the windows within the setting of which they are very proud. They thoroughly enjoy designing models using paper mache and making spiders and bats using a variety of different media. All art resources are made readily available to the children along with books with lots of interesting creative ideas and suggestions for them to try.

Themed days are planned on a regular basis to further engage children and keep them highly stimulated. Outside providers are at times involved and on these days children take part in a varied range of activities including circuit training and cookery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Cultural diversity is exceptionally well promoted within the setting. There is an superb range of toys, resources and activities in place that reflect equality of opportunity. The staff work with the children to help them learn about a wide range of different cultures and provide opportunities for them to taste food eaten in different countries. Maps, flags and a variety of signs in many different languages are prominently displayed within the setting. Highly skilled staff work with the children to raise their awareness of environmental influences, such as recycling. Staff appreciate the uniqueness of each child and work well together to make sure that their needs are exceptionally well met.

High levels of care are afforded to children with learning difficulties and disabilities, Staff work in close liaison with the school and outside agencies to ensure that the very best possible care is offered.

Children are delightful and extremely well behaved. Club rules, devised by the children are clearly displayed and reinforced by staff at the beginning of the session. Children are mature and are able to resolve minor disputes amongst themselves. Handling play materials carefully and putting coats and bags tidily away at the beginning of the session show that children value and respect the environment in which they play. Children respond positively to the reward system that the club has in place. Staff promote children's self-esteem and confidence as they praise their efforts and value their contributions.

Since opening the setting has worked very hard to develop excellent relationships with parents and the school where the club is based. This significantly contributes to children's well-being. Good quality information is given to parents before the children start at the club. This includes details about opening times, routines and policies and procedures to ensure that parents are as fully informed as possible. Photographs of staff, training and qualification certificates are also displayed as a source of information for parents. Information on topics, which may be of interest to parents, such as dental hygiene and communicable diseases are also available. Many positive comments about all aspects of the club are included in a book in the entrance hall from both parents and the children. Parents are encouraged to become involved with the setting and are issued regularly with newsletters. The complaints procedure is clearly displayed and the complaints log is readily available for parents to inspect if they so wish.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The manager is committed to continuing to develop the quality of care the club provides for children. She has a good understanding of the National Standards and continuously monitors and evaluates her practice. Staff are dedicated, consistent and attend regular training to ensure that good quality child care is provided. A named deputy is in place to take charge in the absence of the manager. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and work very well as a team. Space is maximised to its full potential to ensure that children benefit from wide range of worthwhile experiences which cover all areas of their learning.

Good procedures are in place for the recruitment, selection and induction of staff. Contingency arrangements are in place to cover staff shortages or illness. Registers detailing staff and children's hours of attendance are maintained.

All the required documentation is in place and of a high standard. However, confidentiality is not respected with regard to children health and dietary needs. The registration certificate is clearly displayed, keeping parents fully aware of the conditions under which the setting operates.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the 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):

- make sure that staff are aware of who to contact if they have a professional concern about a child; ensure the drains in the outdoor play area do not pose a risk to children's safety
- ensure that confidentiality is respected with regard to children's health and dietary needs.

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