

Barracudas Activity Camp

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY257417
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Inspector Sheila Harrison

Setting address Sherrardswood School, 3 Lockleys, Welwyn Garden City,
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Barracudas Activity Camp is one of 27 activity camps run by Young World Leisure Group Limited. It opened in 2003 and operates from eight base rooms, a gym, a drama studio, an art room and a range of outdoor areas and facilities within Sherrardswood school situated in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The setting is mostly accessible for those with mobility difficulties. The setting opens five days a week during some school holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm.

This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There are 200 places for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The club also offers places for children aged between eight and 14 years with a maximum of 250 children in total. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are 500 children on roll with 200 children in the early years group. Children have varying attendance patterns. The club supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

The camp employs 24 staff. Over half of the staff working with children under eight years, including the manager, hold appropriate qualifications or are working towards a qualification. Barracudas Activity Camp takes part in the 4 Children Aiming Higher quality assurance scheme and has currently achieved accreditation.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the setting is good. Children are enjoying their time in the setting and are actively engaged in their play. They make good progress in their learning and development. The setting promotes an inclusive environment where staff are well aware and mostly respond to the individual needs of the children. Children benefit from a worthwhile partnership with parents. Staff effectively reflect on their own practice and take an effective role in planning future improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure all practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with particular regard to staff's understanding of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff
- support children's understanding of good health and use additional adult help, as necessary, to support individuals to increase their independence in self-care.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well safeguarded. All the records required for safe and efficient management of the early years provision and to meet children's needs are maintained and effective. The suitability and qualifications of all adults looking after children are ensured with sound processes at head office. Staff have a suitable understanding of child protection issues and procedures. Regular training is offered to staff to ensure every child is protected although some of the less experienced staff are not fully aware what would happen in the event of an allegation being made against them. Children's safety is a high priority and they are helped to stay safe with the staff effectively assessing the risks to the premises and activities. Staff check the children's swimming abilities when they first go into the pool to ensure they are competent with or without armbands. Children are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures and walk the site each Monday morning to be aware of the safety practices and move confidently around the large site.

Staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They work well together to ensure that all groups of children have the opportunity to achieve as much as they can. Staff are clearly deployed to support children's learning and welfare. The available resources are skilfully used to achieve the planned goals in learning and development and the environment is conducive to learning. The company brings to the premises an above ground metal framed swimming pool to allow children to have the opportunity to play and practice their skills in the water if they wish. The setting's self-evaluation is mainly undertaken by the head office but the staff, parents and children are all asked to contribute through appropriate questionnaires. The company makes good use of their own monitoring systems and from other quality checks, such as a national accreditation scheme. This enables them to focus on promoting the children's welfare. However, some procedures to ensure staff are never left alone with children lead to young children not being fully supervised whilst changing after swimming and not being fully dry or appropriately clothed. The setting works well in partnership with parents to meet children's needs. There are suitable levels of engagement with each child and their family and parents are invited to give more information on their child's enrolment form. Parents are informed of the policies and working procedures of the setting with information on the website and a helpful notice board. Staff regularly supply information verbally when the children are collected. Children are proud of their achievement certificates, which gives parents some information on the activities their child has participated in. Staff have systems in place to identify a child's needs as early as possible and they work with the parents to ensure children get the support they need. Children are effectively supported to settle and become confident in new surroundings, a new child commented that she had 'really enjoyed her first day'.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make progress and achieve highly in their play. They experience great enjoyment and are developing positive attitudes towards learning as they have a

strong desire to participate with many worthwhile opportunities to make choices. For example, children have the choice of the bouncy castle, swimming or an introduction to the martial arts. Children enjoy making rockets in the 'lab rat's' and staff help the children demonstrate the effectiveness of their rockets with an air pump to see how high the rocket travelled.

Children have valuable opportunities to develop an understanding of danger and how to stay safe as they enjoyed visitors to the setting from an electric company to discuss the dangers of electricity. Children are excited and eager to learn during a fencing session. They learn to stand correctly, use the correct terminology and to use the equipment safely.

Children show a good awareness about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They adopt good personal hygiene routines and understand the importance of healthy eating. The tuck shop consists only of fresh fruit and children are encouraged to eat the fruit during snack times. Children engage in a wide range of physical activities both inside and outdoors increasing their understanding of the importance of regular exercise. Children are making friends, taking turns and show respect for others as they take part in favourite physical games, such as the bouncy castle, 'dodge ball' and parachute games. They begin to understand the rules in quieter guessing games, such as 'heads down thumbs up'.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met