

The Alpha Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	29/06/2010
Inspector	Narinder Dohel

Setting address	Montbelle School, Milverton Way, LONDON, SE9 3EY
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

The Alpha Club opened in 2008 and is part of the Alpha Chains group of out of school provisions. It operates from Montbelle School in Eltham in the London borough of Greenwich. A maximum of 26 children aged from three years to under eight years may attend the club at any one time. The club is open each weekday from 3.15pm to 6.30pm, term time only. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. There are 22 children on roll, six of whom are within the early years age group. The club accepts children who attend the school. The club employs three members of staff, two of whom are suitably qualified and one volunteer is training for qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Childcare Service termly since it opened. It is registered on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The club meets the welfare needs of the children of the early years age range well, and their learning development needs satisfactorily. The quality of relationships ensures that all children enjoy and are engaged in the activities provided. The staff review their work at the end of sessions and have satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- be clear about the strengths and areas of development and have a plan in place to focus on improvement areas
- ensure that the planning and children's records clearly show progress in learning over time against the six areas of learning
- ensure that all children have resources and opportunities to experience and explore a wider range of cultures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The Alpha Club is friendly and welcoming and provides a secure and enjoyable environment for all children. Procedures for safeguarding are good. Staff take great care in ensuring that all children in the setting are safe both inside and outside the building and carry out risk assessments. They have developed a range of policies including anti bullying, equal opportunities, special educational needs and/or disabilities and complaints. Staff and children are clear about medical and dietary needs of all/other children.

Staff ensure that they get to know the children well. They record progress in line

with the early learning goals in the Early Years Foundations Stage Framework. Information is shared verbally and in a communication book with staff in the school and on some occasions this has led to further support for children. Children's records show that there is a focus on the range of activities they engage in and how much they enjoy them. Older children include the younger ones in their activities which contributes positively to the learning experience for younger children. Staff meet for a review at the end of sessions and agree what needs to be planned for future sessions depending on what the children have enjoyed.

The manager has started working with the local authority childcare services in writing a self-evaluation on the work of the play club. At present this describes some of the work of the club and identifies some areas for improvement such as the development of multicultural resources and experiences, and better communication with partners. It also shows a number of some strengths such as communication with parents, awareness of healthy eating, enjoyment and seeking children's views. The manager and staff are motivated to seek further improvement and are becoming increasingly aware in how they could be more effective in focusing the setting's efforts on priorities as well as recognising their strengths. Consequently, the capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

Relationships between children, staff and parents are positive and a clear strength of the club. A communication book is available for parents should they wish to record or leave any messages, this shows that parents trust and appreciate the care that their children receive. The club takes into account the views of parents and children, even the youngest children have a written record of their likes, dislikes, views and ideas for improvement, as well as discussion groups. The parents newsletter provides clear and relevant information about what is going on at the club and invites their views.

Leaders and managers have good and regular communication with partners such as the school and the local authority early years service in improving care and provision for all children. This is particularly effective in addressing any concerns about children.

The accommodation is good and resources are adequate and fit for purpose. The outdoor space is spacious and provides a range of areas including a covered space, activity and climbing areas, playground markings and grassed areas.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The provision for children is satisfactory in all respects and good in some. Staff have a growing understanding and knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Observations and documentation show that children clearly enjoy attending The Alpha Club, take part in activities and enjoy being with each other. The youngest children were observed making their own choices about what they wanted to engage in, from cooking food in the role play area to making play dough with an adult, using a laptop for computer games and using a children's keyboard to compose tunes. Planning is organised under the six areas of learning and

planned for over time. Planning does not always include the purpose of activities and it is not clear how the observation notes relate to the areas of learning. While there are summaries of children's capabilities against the areas of learning these are not dated thus making it difficult to assess progress over time.

There are many opportunities for speaking and listening both with adults, and through interactive resources such as the home corner, Wii, musical instruments and computers. There were also opportunities for reading and writing, although book and resource provision was limited in helping children to understand and experience a range of cultures and the wider world. Photographs show children engaging in building, shapes and counting. Provision for developing skills for the future is satisfactory.

Children feel safe and are very aware of safety. Their good behaviour and social skills lends to the safety of the environment. Children help and know about each other. This was demonstrated during 'teatime' when children were keen to talk about their friendships, siblings and eating habits. Teatime also demonstrated children's understanding and good choices about healthy eating. They knew to wash their hands and were keen to eat a range of fruit and vegetables along with their freshly prepared slice of pizza. They also helped themselves to water throughout their time at the club.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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