

Welwyn and Hatfield Playscheme at Southfield School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY381147
Inspection date	20/08/2010
Inspector	Richard Blackmore

Setting address	Southfield School, Travellers Lane, HATFIELD, Hertfordshire, AL10 8TJ
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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

Welwyn and Hatfield Playscheme is one of eight Special Needs Activities and Play (SNAP) Hertfordshire Limited Playschemes, a registered charity managed by a board of trustees. It has been registered since 2008. The playscheme operates from a number of rooms and outside areas within Southfield School in Hatfield, Hertfordshire. The scheme opens each weekday for four weeks in the summer holidays from 10.00am to 3.00pm and for limited days during the Christmas and Easter holidays.

A maximum of 20 children under eight years may attend the playscheme. Three adults work with the children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The scheme caters for children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities. There are currently three children attending from the early years age group.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

In this happy and safe out of school club children are provided with a good selection of age-appropriate resources and play opportunities which meet their needs and interests well. Children thoroughly enjoy themselves at this inclusive setting. They are confident and share good relationships with the staff and their peers. Staff implement effective procedures to ensure they gather information about children's individual needs and interests. The setting has made good progress since the last inspection and there is good capacity for further improvement and a clear commitment to this because the management of the setting consults parents and their children informally, which, together with their own evaluations, gives them a clear picture of what needs to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve resources in the outside area to enhance outdoor learning
- develop further the provision for developing language skills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are adhered to, ensuring the suitability of all staff. Children are kept safe and secure as they play in the designated rooms and outdoor play area. Staff carry out regular safety checks of the outdoor area

and appropriate staff deployment ensures that ratios are well maintained and children are suitably cared for at all times. The manager and all adults have a good understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure children's well-being is given highest priority, having a secure knowledge of how to follow the comprehensive safeguarding procedure should they have a cause for concern about a child.

Children and their parents appreciate the variety of experiences on offer at the club. One parent said, 'my children love coming, they can't wait to come'. During the school holidays they participate in numerous cooking activities and also access equipment like the large parachute over a number of days in the summer. All of the resources, toys and games are of good quality and they stimulate the children's interests. For example, the parachute ensures children's physical development is well catered for.

Record-keeping is well organised and an extensive range of policies and procedures are shared with parents and underpin the safe care and management of the children and the provision. As a result parents hold this setting in very high regard, this is evidenced by their positive comments to the inspector about the eagerness of their children to frequently attend. The club is beginning to develop good links with other providers, who are involved in children's learning, however, these links are not yet fully secure to further enhance children's progression in their development, such as their language development.

Self-evaluation is shared by all adults and staff meetings are held to discuss how improvements can be made to the available provision for the enjoyment of the children. Staff update their skills and knowledge by attending training on subjects such as safeguarding children and first aid. However, monitoring of the effectiveness of specific resources to develop language skills and the impact on children's development needs further refinement.

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

Children settle quickly and happily at the holiday club because they know its routines and expectations well and staff reinforce these through the visual gentle reminders on the walls. Children say they enjoy coming to the club, they feel safe and that adults will help them if a problem arises. The positive, relaxed atmosphere contributes strongly towards children feeling secure and totally at ease in their surroundings. Furthermore the very good relationships children have with each other and staff is clearly evident from the way that children of different ages play together and spend time together at break times harmoniously. Staff plan a good range of activities that complement all areas of learning and children benefit from a good range of resources. Consequently, the club makes a positive contribution to children's learning and personal development.

Staff have good levels of personal skill and are well prepared. They direct activities in a way that reinforces children's creative development and results in finished products that children can be proud of. For example, children were very proud,

and rightly so, of their t-shirt designs, which were sensitively celebrated by the staff. Managers have begun to introduce a key worker scheme, although this is at an early stage of development. This involves staff in observing children at work and play and recording points of interest, either for use in future sessions or to report to parents and for planning activities that systematically build on children's prior learning. Children have fun as they enjoy an interesting variety of play experiences and activities, both indoors and outdoors, although the outdoor resources are primarily focused on physical development and a richer range of stimuli is needed to fully extend development in other areas of learning.

The staff are knowledgeable about children's particular needs and what particularly interests them, for example, providing a range of wheeled toys outside that the children enjoy. This knowledge also ensures staff are able to support and extend their learning, for example, developing their creativity by providing paper and crayons to allow children to draw their favourite things.

The staff ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and freely-chosen or child-initiated activities and staff keenly join in activities and interact well with children to support them as they tackle activities. This successfully promotes children's learning and they make good progress in their overall development. Children are well supported in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding of the world around them and have the opportunity through independent play and group games to solve problems and develop social skills. Children learn about numbers through practical activities, they make interesting models from shaped bricks and can talk about them enthusiastically. Children's understanding of language is supported as words are used as labels in a variety of contexts and pictorial symbols are displayed throughout the setting. However, the range and variety of resources to promote language development are limited and as a result children's development in this area is less significant. There are designated times for cookery, and art and crafts are a daily feature. These make the provision more interesting and develop children's understanding across a wide range of topics. Children can initiate their own activities, choose resources and have access to both quiet activities and more vigorous play, both inside and outside. These positive activities result in confident children, who feel good about themselves and are able to play cooperatively with others.

Good systems are in place to promote hygiene and safety. All children wash their hands before they have their midday meal and staff ensure that all areas of the premises are clean at all times, but especially before and after meals and at the end of the session. Children learn to make healthy choices and how to keep themselves safe. Staff are very capable at helping children really understand these issues. For example, children know why it is unsafe to run indoors and respond well to any necessary correction.

Children are confident, knowledgeable and skilful. For instance, they act sensibly and safely, taking responsibility for their own safety and that of others. They know many of the group's rules and generally respond positively towards direction from staff. For example, when cooking they listen and observe hygiene routines to keep themselves protected against infection.

Children are keen to become involved in their local community and the club is aware of this and has already planned and implemented increased opportunities. For example, they have had a visit from the police dog handlers to develop their awareness of safety. They have also visited and enjoyed an adventure play activity centre.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
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	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