



Mohair Centre Holiday Workshops & After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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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?

Mohair Centre Holiday Workshops and After School Club opened in 1996. It operates from a working farm in Chiddingly. Children have the use of two converted farm buildings. A maximum of 30 children aged from five years to under eight years may attend at any one time. Older children also attend the provision. The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08.30 until 18.00 in school holidays, and 15.30 until 18.00 in school terms. All children share access to a number of outdoor areas.

There are currently 400 children from 5 to under 13 years on roll. Children come from

a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The setting employs six staff. The owner, manager and three other staff hold appropriate qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children quickly learn the importance of good personal hygiene in a farm environment. Important hygiene messages are reinforced very effectively by visual reminders and by excellent staff interaction. Most children automatically wash their hands after touching the animals, particularly before they eat, without needing such prompts. They also remember not to put fingers in their mouths. These practices help children stay healthy. The use of disposable towels contributes to the prevention of the spread of infection.

A sick child policy and sufficient first aid trained staff ensures that children are cared for appropriately should they become ill or have an accident. There are good arrangements in place to ensure that all staff have the necessary information about individual children's health and allergies. All children are also made aware, with parents agreement, of serious health concerns about a child so that they too can respect any particular needs. This helps to ensure that each child's health is promoted.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating through planned topic activities such as making fruit kebabs and smoothies. They cook fresh fish together, finding out about the taste. Children have daily opportunities to choose fresh fruit at snack and tea times. They enjoy freshly cooked homemade snack teas such as jacket potatoes and pizzas. Children can easily access their own drinks. There are regular breaks for drinks but staff do not always remember to make water readily available to the children throughout the day to prevent dehydration.

Children enjoy the fresh air and outdoor physical activities. They develop their gross motor skills as they play with a good range of small and large equipment such as footballs, swings, balancing beams and a parachute.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given high priority in the well-organised farm setting and staff have a good awareness of potential hazards. It is a high-risk area for children but staff carry out regular formal risk assessments to ensure they identify and take action

as necessary to make sure children play safely. Daily checks on the farm are also carried out to further ensure that children play free from harm. Staff deployment is effective in ensuring children are well supervised, particularly when moving around the outdoor areas. Children are grouped appropriately for each activity to ensure that staff can look after them easily. Staff allow children to take reasonable risks and try out new skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Children display a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Children play sensibly and responsibly, following the safety rules in the setting. At the start of the sessions, staff reinforce the safety rules in a fun way, for example, by getting children to mime a rule for the others to guess what it is. Children also clearly explain to the others what to do if there is a fire. Staff constantly emphasise safety messages and keep the children alert to possible dangers. Before starting an activity with a group of children a staff member explains to the children how to stay safe while still enjoying themselves. For example, before going for pony rides they talk together about the horse's feet and how children need to keep away from them. Children behave appropriately when they go fishing to the pond. This safety awareness adds to their enjoyment of the activities as they stay safe but have fun.

Children enjoy playing with a good range of toys and equipment that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The equipment is in good condition and interests the children. A lot of the storage allows children to have independence in choosing toys and equipment without adult help.

The provision has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure they safeguard and promote children's welfare. For example, staff have a good overall knowledge of child protection procedures and know how to act if they have a concern about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enthusiastically arrive at the setting, greeting friends and staff. New children are made to feel welcome as they are introduced to the other children and staff. Older children show them around the farm to help them become familiar with the environment. Staff create an extremely caring, relaxed, friendly and informal atmosphere where children soon feel confident and secure. They actively encourage the children to develop their independence and take part in the decision making and tasks. Children are keen to help staff with various jobs such as making a list of children's choices of activity on the whiteboard.

Children relate exceptionally well to staff and to each other. Children confidently approach staff for support showing that they build good strong, trusting relationships. Staff value and listen to children's contributions and ideas. Staff know the children well, support individuals and promote their well-being. Less confident children are sensitively encouraged and supported by staff. Despite the wide age range, the children play very well together and are all engaged and occupied. They work happily together at tasks such as grooming the horses and caring for the small animals.

Children eagerly choose from an extensive range of interesting, stimulating and fun activities. They make dens in the woods, go on mini-beast safaris and create fashion shows. They thoroughly enjoy the fishing activities. All the children happily sit quietly on the bank of the pond with their fishing lines attempting to catch fish. They become absorbed in the activity and patiently wait for a bite. Others enjoy taking part in a wide variety of unusual crafts, including making hobbyhorses and clay fish. Children are well motivated, concentrating on self-chosen activities. Staff encourage children to take part in group activities but give children the freedom to opt out if they wish to do something else.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff value children as individuals, acknowledging and respecting differences. Children have access to some resources that represent the wider community. These resources and some planned topic activities help children develop a positive attitude to others and learn about the world around them.

Staff are strongly committed to inclusion and, where practically possible, readily accept children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff ensure that the setting will be suitable for individual children by carrying out a risk assessment to ensure they can care for a child safely and appropriately. Individual care plans are created for each child so that their needs can be met. They work closely with parents and carers to help support the child. The children integrate well into the setting, with very good support and encouragement from staff. The other children learn to respect and understand that some children behave differently or may need extra help.

Staff make sure that children are not bored, but busy and contented. Children behave very well and respond positively to staff. They listen well to instructions. Staff are good role models, helping children learn how to share and show concern for others. The effective use of the introductory session reminds children what it feels like to be new in the setting and encourages them to think about how they can help others. There is a sense of being in a family where children are encouraged to share any problems they might have with staff. Children benefit from a lot of praise and encouragement from staff, which builds their self-esteem. Children know what is expected and what the boundaries are as they discuss the rules together and make posters about issues such as bullying.

Relationships with parents and carers are informal and friendly. They work together to ensure that children are well cared for. Parents receive a useful introductory handbook that gives them a general outline of the provision and copies of some of the policies and procedures. They also receive a leaflet about the topics and activities that the children will be enjoying in the next play scheme.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff team organises the provision effectively for the children. They work together to plan and carry out activities with the children. Overall, the legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and well maintained. The owner is unclear about the recent amendments to the National Standards with regard to the complaints procedures. As a result, the information in the setting about making complaints is out of date.

There are satisfactory recruitment and induction procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. A few of the staff are currently attending training to extend their knowledge and keep up to date with current practices. Not all staff have renewed their first aid training but there are sufficient other workers who have a current certificate.

The staff handbook helps staff to know about their roles and responsibilities. The majority of the policies are readily available to staff and parents in their respective handbooks. However, the owner has not made the lost child policy so easily accessible to ensure that staff know how to act in such a situation. There are satisfactory arrangements in place for ensuring unvetted persons do not have unsupervised access to children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to keep a record of medication given to children and ensure it was signed by parents. This record is now being kept appropriately and helps prevent overdosing of children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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):

- develop knowledge of the current requirements in regulations with regard to the complaints process and implement the changes in the setting's procedures.

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