

Robertsbridge Children's Services

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY349730
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Inspector	Liz Margaret Caluori
Setting Address	Robertsbridge Children's Services, George Hill, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5AP
Telephone number	01580 752 397
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Registered person	Robertsbridge Children's Services
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Robertsbridge Children's Services has been registered at its present site since 2007, having previously been registered at a nearby location since 1989. It operates from premises within the grounds of Robertsbridge Youth Club, adjacent to Salehurst Primary School and serves families in the village of Robertsbridge and the surrounding area. It is registered as a charity and is managed by a Board of Trustees.

The group is registered to care for a maximum of 54 children under eight years. The setting consists of full day care for children under five years and out of school care, including holiday provision, for older children. There are currently 75 children on roll including 16 who receive funding for their nursery education. The out of school provision also accepts children who are over eight. The group is open between 08:00 and 18:00 weekdays for 50 weeks of year, closing over the Christmas holidays. There are nine staff members working with the children. Of these six hold recognised childcare qualifications and a further two are working towards obtaining a qualification. There are close links between the group and the local primary school and the setting receives support from East Sussex Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The premises are thoroughly cleaned before children arrive and staff work hard to ensure that a high standard of cleanliness is maintained throughout the day. They follow very effective hygiene practices including the use of different mops and cleaning materials for different tasks. The hygiene arrangements in the baby unit are particularly robust. Most toys are washed on a weekly basis; individual items, particularly those that children put in their mouths, being washed more frequently. Nappy changing procedures are well thought out to minimise the risk of cross infection. Whilst there are changing facilities in the group room, these are only used for wet nappies. Soiled nappies are changed on a unit in the disabled toilet. They also take part in activities which look at specific issues such as the importance of good dental hygiene.

Children are developing an excellent understanding of their bodies and issues which effect their health and wellbeing. They understand that they get 'hot and sweaty' after physical exercise. Children confidently discuss which foods are good for them and which should only be eaten occasionally as they contain a lot of sugar. They are extremely well supported to develop an awareness of the importance of good nutrition. They enthusiastically take part in the preparation and serving of fruit snacks and are offered a good level of choice. Those staying for lunch bring in packed lunches from home. Parents and carers are given written information outlining the settings commitment to promoting healthy eating and suggesting items to include. Children are offered a choice of milk or water when eating and have constant access to a cold water dispenser at all other times. Snack and meal times are very sociable occasions as children chat happily with their friends and with the staff.

There are extremely comprehensive procedures in place regarding the care of sick children and the administration of medication. Similarly, the arrangements for dealing with accidents are very effective. There are staff with first aid training present at all times. Clear and detailed records are maintained of any accidents and the treatment given. These are counter-signed by parents and carers, and as an extra precaution to alert parents, any child involved in an accident is given a sticker.

Children's physical development is given very high priority within the setting. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area for those attending the day care provision and this includes a separate area for the children who are under two years old. Children attending the after school club have a large outdoor play space and also have regular access to the grounds of Salehurst Primary School which is directly adjacent to the setting.

Children in the baby unit are taken outside very regularly when weather permits. Young babies enjoy the fresh air as they sit on large cushions and play outside in the shade. Those who are crawling and beginning to walk have access to a wide range of equipment to meet their individual needs and develop their mobility. The pre-school children, aged two to five years, are given long periods of the day when they are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. This allows them to explore their environment and gain the confidence to practise and develop their physical skills. They play with a wide range of resources including ride-on toys, tunnels, balls and climbing equipment. In addition the outdoor area is also well used to provide a wider choice of activities including role play and arts and crafts. Whilst the setting has plans to make improvements to the outdoor areas, these are currently very attractive and appealing to the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the exceptional commitment of the management and staff team to providing and maintaining a safe environment. A member of staff has the additional role of health and safety officer. She undertakes written risk assessments of the premises, equipment and activities. In addition, daily health and safety inspections take place and written records are maintained. Any issues arising from these inspections are dealt with promptly. All staff are informed if this results in any changes to their normal practice or if they need to be extra vigilant in their supervision. The precautions which are routinely in place to protect children include a buzzer entry system to ensure good security and the use of covers in all unused sockets.

The very thoughtful organisation of the environment allows children to move freely and safely. This includes storing toys and resources at a low level to enable children to easily select items for themselves. This is very effective at supporting children to develop a good level of independence.

Children are further protected by clear and appropriate fire safety procedures. Evacuation routes are clearly identified and are free from obstruction. There is a specially designed evacuation cot to transport the babies. Smoke detectors are tested weekly and fire fighting equipment is checked regularly. There are good arrangements in place to practise evacuation drills and maintain written records.

Children are very well supported to learn how to keep themselves safe. In addition to the on-going advice and support of staff, they enjoy meeting a range of 'people who help us' from the local community. These include the school's 'lollipop' person and representatives from the fire service and the police.

The procedures relating to child protection are clear and well thought out. All staff have attended basic child protection training organised by the local authority and one member of staff has completed the advanced course. There are good systems in place to maintain written records and the setting holds all the relevant contact details in order to make a referral if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in a warm, positive and extremely friendly environment. Staff give excellent consideration to identifying and meeting children's individual needs. All children make tremendous progress as a result of the commitment of the highly skilled staff; all of whom demonstrate a very good understanding of early years guidance such as Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum. The setting has been extremely pro-active in considering the new Early Years Foundation Stage, to be introduced in 2008. This is reflected in the planning throughout the daycare element of the provision.

Children who are under two years are cared for in the baby unit which is referred to within the setting as the nursery. This consists of a single room with dividers used to form a separate sleep area. Children in the nursery are very settled and happy, despite the fact that most have only been attending for a very short time. They respond extremely well to the cuddles, smiles and all round supportive contact they receive from staff. The routines of the day are dictated by the sleep and feeding patterns of the children attending. Weekly planning sheets are produced

and these cover all areas of children's development. However, these are very flexibly implemented. Tracker books are used to record and monitor children's individual progress. This information is used to ensure that they are provided with opportunities which offer an appropriate level of challenge. In addition parents and carers are given daily reports for their child which includes information such as sleep patterns, nappy changes and food intake. Activities which are routinely available to this younger group of children include treasure baskets, small world play, role play, cause and effect toys, books, puzzles and a range of art and craft activities. In addition, they are beginning to explore the world of information and communication technology through a range of electronic toys.

The provision for children attending the out of school element of the provision is of a similarly high quality. There are two collections of children from Salehurst Primary School; one at the end of the school day and one approximately an hour later to pick up children who have stayed at school for clubs. The out of school club supervisor has a very good understanding of the wide and differing developmental needs of primary school age children. There is a total commitment to offering children free choice. They are provided with an extremely broad selection of resources and activities. This ensures that they are always able to select an activity that appeals to them and suits their mood and energy level; particularly if they have had a tiring day at school. Staff also offer the children the opportunity to join in planned focus activities each session. These include a wide range of art and craft projects, sports activities and a range of visitors such as animal handlers. There are also currently firm plans for a visit from a circus skills group. Activities which are routinely available to the children include karaoke, role play, computer games, arts and crafts, board games, snooker and indoor climbing equipment. There is also a small sofa which provides a very relaxing area for children to either chat with their friends or read one of the many interesting books on offer.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The staff working with the pre-school children all demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage. They have excellent systems in place to support them in assessing and monitoring children's progress. There is a very effective key worker system in place, although all staff demonstrate a good awareness of the individual personalities and needs of each child in the group. Planning is extraordinarily well thought out and effective. It shows clear differentiation for each child, ensuring that they are supported to develop at their own pace.

Children are superbly supported to progress in all areas of learning. Staff make learning a thoroughly enjoyable experience and are extremely skilled at motivating children to explore and investigate for themselves. There is a marvellously child-centred atmosphere in the group with staff working tirelessly to inspire, encourage and facilitate. As a result children are becoming extremely independent learners.

Children are making excellent progress in their communication, language and literacy. They are provided with a quiet room which contains a wide selection of books and comfortable seating. This is available to them for most of the day and many choose to sit and look at books. They also enjoy listening to the stories read by staff. Children also make very good use of the wonderful resources provided to encourage them to practise writing. These include the provision of an attractive and inviting literacy area, well stocked with paper and a range of pens and pencils, which they can access freely. Writing materials are also set out in the role play area and children use these to practise skills such as creating pretend shopping lists. Many children are able to recognise and write a range of letters and are able to sound these out. Children are

developing extremely broad vocabularies. They instigate and join in very complex and interesting conversations both with their peers and with staff.

Children are also making extraordinarily good progress in their mathematical development. Again, they are provided with an appealing and well resourced maths area. They enthusiastically take part in a very wide range of activities which encourage them to develop an understanding of numbers and concepts such as size, shape, addition, subtraction and comparison. Staff very competently re-enforce their understanding by encouraging counting in their play and using resources such as number fans to support children to recognise written numerals.

A range of very interesting and imaginative activities are planned to support children to develop their general knowledge. They eagerly and appropriately use resources such as cameras and binoculars to explore and investigate. They enjoy looking at different topics such as the sea and use wonderful language as they discuss subjects such as ship wrecks and interesting creatures including the sea turtle. They have use of a laptop and funding has recently been obtained for a personal computer.

Creatively children are also flourishing. They create fantastic and complex games and have access to a wide selection of role play toys and dressing up clothes. In addition they produce very expressive and individual paintings and art work, buoyed by the praise and encouragement of staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is exceptionally good. They are caring, considerate and extremely sociable. Staff act as perfect role models at all times. They are extremely calm, patient and good humoured when dealing with the children and this helps children to relax and feel at ease when they play. Children's individual personalities and developmental needs are very thoroughly understood and respected within the setting. This ensures that they are developing very good self-esteem. In addition, they are provided with a good range of images, resources and activities that promote positive images of people from throughout the community and the wider world.

The staff team has a very positive attitude towards meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. One member of staff has responsibility for acting as the inclusion co-ordinator and has very clear and effective systems to work with other agencies to identify and address children's individual needs. The staff team are also learning Makaton sign language and this is widely used throughout the setting. This is also valuable in supporting children who speak English as an additional language.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Those whose children receive funding for their nursery education are given extremely good support to understand the Foundation Stage. They are given written information which outlines the six areas of learning and the displayed plans also indicate the intended learning outcome for each activity. Parents are regularly informed on their child's progress and encouraged to contribute to the setting of future targets for their child. The parents of younger children also attend meetings to discuss their child's progress. All parents receive regular written reports. Parents are greeted warmly by staff and are familiar with the procedures and routines of the setting. They receive a good deal of verbal information and, in addition, have access to the written policies and procedures. Children benefit from these very positive relationships as they provide a strong link between the nursery and their home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children thrive as a result of the careful organisation to meet their care, learning and play needs. The chair of the board of trustees, the manager and staff work extremely effectively as a team to create a positive and caring environment.

There are rigorous recruitment procedures in place and a thorough induction programme to ensure that staff are familiar with all policies and procedures. Highly effective communication systems ensure that all staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities, and are following consistent practice.

In all rooms there are clearly defined, invitingly presented, areas allowing a very wide selection of activities to take place. This arrangement makes it easy for staff to supervise effectively and encourages children to move around freely. Time is also extremely well managed to offer children a good mix of stimulating and more relaxing activities throughout the day. Routines are clear but flexible and are very well understood by the children.

The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. The provider and manager are wholly committed to continually monitoring and improving the service to children and have very good systems in place to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. Despite the extraordinarily high standards of care throughout the setting, they have very clear plans of improvements that they intend to make.

There is a comprehensive range of clear and detailed written policies in place. These reflect recent changes in legislation and include the procedures to be followed should a parent wish to make a complaint. All required documentation and records are appropriately maintained; this contributes to the extremely effective management of the setting.

The setting meets the needs of the range of 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.

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The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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