



# Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	139114
<b>Inspection date</b>	03 August 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Christine Bonnett
<b>Setting Address</b>	Moorcroft Complex, Harlington Road, Hillingdon, Middlesex, UB8 3HD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 271211
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS)
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS) playscheme is a registered charity managed by a board of trustees.

It opened in 2000 and operates from Hillingdon Manor Lower and Middle School, Hillingdon in the London Borough of Hillingdon. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playscheme at any one time. It is open for a maximum of 25 days a year, during the February half term, Easter and summer holidays. It is open from 09:30 to 15:00. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 17 children aged from four years to under eight years on roll.

The scheme is open to children diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), whose parents or carers are members of HACS. Children attend from the local and wider area.

The scheme employs 10 staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from an environment that is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. Good personal hygiene skills are encouraged as children are reminded to wash their hands at appropriate times, and are beginning to understand why this is important. The visual sequence of pictures displayed above the sinks shows children how to wash, and the well-equipped cloakrooms facilitate the process.

Children make good use of the secure outdoor play areas for physical exercise. They enjoy running around in fresh air as well as climbing and riding bikes. Regular organised trips also ensure that children benefit from fresh air activities.

Parents provide children's packed lunches. Extensive project work has raised awareness of the importance of including healthy options. Guidance has not been sought from the environmental health department to ensure correct procedures are followed in relation to re-heating food. The scheme provides snacks, and staff encourage children to adapt their tastes to enjoy a more nutritious and balanced diet, which incorporates fresh fruit and plenty of fluids.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The school is light, bright and welcoming for children. The scheme uses much of the school equipment, and so provides a suitable environment for the children. Good use is made of the sensory room to interest and calm children. All equipment and furniture is clean and in good condition.

Children's safety and security is given paramount importance. Effective systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children, and to ensure they cannot leave the premises unobserved. Thorough risk assessments are carried out on the transportation of children and on all venues before any trip is undertaken. Staff and children wear the same uniform to present an easily identifiable group and procedures are well rehearsed to manage the situation should a child become lost.

Children benefit from a spacious environment that is free from obvious safety hazards. Any potential dangers are identified and quickly reduced. Effective reporting systems are in place to facilitate this.

Children's welfare is also safeguarded by the staff's in-depth knowledge of child protection matters. They understand the signs and symptoms a child may exhibit that could indicate they were being harmed and are familiar with the procedure to follow to report such concerns.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating and fun experiences, such as trips to Whipsnade Zoo and Mr Marvell's Magic show. Activities are planned and evaluated to ensure they provide a positive experience for children. Cooking, access to the internet and collage work is routinely available to make sure each individual child has the opportunity to engage in something that interests them. Although they have freedom of choice in their play, the day is strongly structured to provide the security of routine and boundaries that the children need.

Children benefit from a relaxation session after lunch each day. The restful music, low light level and peaceful atmosphere enables children to experience calmness and become rested, in preparation for the afternoon's activities. However, if a child becomes upset and unable to cope with relaxing, they are offered other quiet alternatives, such as reading books.

The key-worker system used by the scheme ensures staff know the individual needs of the children in their care very well. They anticipate which situations may cause a child anxiety or distress, and find alternatives to minimise the impact. For example, allowing a child to eat the sweet items in his lunch box before the savoury ones. The consequence being that the child is able to manage the meal himself, but still benefit from, and enjoy, a balanced diet.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and are given appropriate praise and encouragement to enhance self-esteem and develop a good self-image. Time is given to children to enable them to gain a sense of achievement, such as completing a chosen activity at their own pace.

Children have access to a good range of resources that enable them to develop a positive view of diversity within society and an understanding of others. In addition, they have the opportunity to learn about festivals and traditions celebrated in the local and wider community, such as Diwali and Chinese New year.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the friendly interaction between practitioners and parents, which is enhanced by the key-worker system. Staff visit children in their home prior to admission to the scheme to ensure it is suitable for them and will meet their needs. A wealth of valuable information is gathered from parents about the child to enable appropriate care to be given.

Detailed information about the scheme and the service it provides is available for parents. This includes all policies and procedures and a regular newsletter. The complaints procedure for parents lacks the necessary detail.

Children benefit from the staff's adherence to the schemes "Promoting Good Behaviour" policy. Positive strategies are used to lower children's anxiety levels and prevent challenging behaviour. In extreme circumstances, to protect the child, and others, physical intervention may be used. Staff are trained in safe holding techniques, and parents are informed should an incident occur. The "no blame" culture is applied throughout all activities of the day, to ensure a focus on praising good behaviour. For example, staff regularly say, "good talking" and "good eating" or, "can you show me good walking?"

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Staff are deployed appropriately throughout the rooms and garden. They monitor the children effectively when using equipment to ensure they do not endanger themselves or others. Children benefit from having a key worker assigned to give individual support and make sure their best interests are maintained at all times.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because robust recruitment procedures are in place to make sure staff are suitable to work with children. The high ratio of appropriately qualified staff ensures the well-being of the children. Their complex needs are understood by staff who have the required knowledge, skills and understanding to give children a positive experience.

In addition, the playscheme maintains all required documentation and records. The written policies and procedures practiced by staff also help ensure children's wellbeing and protection.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the provider of the scheme was required to ensure that medical references are obtained for all staff members. This has been implemented to ensure their suitability to care for children.

The scheme was also required to ensure parents signed the medication record. This is done when parents collect their child from the setting. A detailed and robust procedure is in place to ensure parents are informed when children are transported home by community transport.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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):

- ensure the procedure for re-heating food complies with local environmental health department guidance and regulations
- amend the complaints procedure to ensure parents are aware that concerns may be referred to Ofsted, and include contact information.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)