

The Yard

Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 14 February 2017

Service provided by:
Scotland Yard Adventure Centre

Service provider number:
SP2003002793

Care service number:
CS2003011809

About the service

The Yard offers adventure play opportunities for children and young people with additional support needs and is provided by Scotland Yard Adventure Centre which has a Board of Directors.

The Yard provides a range of clubs and opportunities for children and young people to attend without their parents or carers. The Yard also provides a variety of clubs and drop in sessions for children and young people to attend with the families and carers. The indoor facilities include a large playroom with separate art, sensory/quiet rooms, a large dining kitchen area, offices, meeting rooms and toilet facilities. The play room is set up to allow different opportunities depending on the session which is taking place. There is an area which is set up for younger children to play safely. The outdoor space has been developed to allow children and young people to access adventurous play opportunities in all weathers and children choose to play in or outdoors. The outdoor space has climbing areas, swings, large sand and water play areas, dens, sensory areas, musical equipment, trikes and bikes for all ages with a track and traffic lights. A 'solar dome' is available for people to spend time outdoors without getting wet. There is a massage therapy room available in the garden area for children, young people and their carers.

The service have a well-developed set of aims which include:

"We offer disabled children and their siblings the chance to experience creative, adventurous indoor and outdoor play in a well-supported environment. Since we opened in 1986, our services have grown significantly, but we will always retain our holistic approach and ethos of a child-centred and child-led play service.

At The Yard, our role in the lives of children and families is an ambitious one. Our single purpose as an organisation is to provide care, support, and opportunities for fun and friendship for disabled children and young people. We also encourage families to let go, promoting challenge, personal growth and supported independence for their children.

We promote challenge and adventure for our children and young people. None of what we do at The Yard contains risk for its own sake, but we are there to promote physical development and social communication, and to give children a vibrant experience and sense of achievement. There are few places where children with visual impairments can experience building and lighting fires, and cooking their own food, or build dens, ropes bridges or simple spaces to enjoy their own time. Everyone who uses The Yard is safe to learn and explore through taking controlled risks.

The Yard is as much about emotional as practical support for families.

We promote inclusive play to help disabled children and young people develop their full potential, confidence, self-esteem and life skills.

Our vision is one of safe and adventurous play opportunities for all disabled children and young people, and so The Yard continues to grow."

What people told us

We spoke with children, young people and their families during our inspection and 15 families returned our questionnaires giving very positive feedback about the service. Some of the comments we gathered are recorded below:

"It's brilliant. My boy enjoys his time here and all the staff are lovely. He interacts well with others. The club has brought him on. Thumbs up!"

"Really positive communication, feedback and support always available. The service provides an opportunity for our son to be placed in an environment that is safe, secure and stimulating whilst providing time for us to spend time with our other children."

"Yard staff have also worked with our child's school to help transition. They have also worked with family social worker."

"All staff are always very pleasant and try to accommodate me with any request I may have."

"Our school have been using The Yard's facilities for over 15 years and are very happy with all the services. We have embraced all the changes over the years. The children and young people have positive and safe experiences."

"When my children come to The Yard they always have an enjoyable experience. They love the outdoor spaces. Staff are always friendly and welcoming."

"My son was interested in gardening so they catered activities that engaged his interests and allowed him to pick veg from the vegetable patch, which he enjoyed taking home and eating."

"Fantastic staff and environment. Great safe place to bring young people to interact and explore and play."

"The atmosphere is both relaxed yet controlled so the children behave really well."

"There are choices about what he wants to do and he wants to come here!"

"He has lots of friends here."

"Staff have worked with us to ensure he could continue to attend."

"My child has built friendships here and these have continued."

"It's a big part of our week and is an incentive to get him to go to school."

"It's almost impossible to get into trouble, it's really safe. They let them let off steam. There's an informal sibling support network too, they always look forward to coming."

"Loads of outdoor activities, it's a great place to spend time. He enjoys all the activities. The staff are helpful and nice."

"The only improvement I can think of is to get real football goals."

"I would like a bigger castle, one you can go under."

Self assessment

The self assessment was well completed giving clear examples of how the strengths would have positive outcomes for children and young people using the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	6 - Excellent

What the service does well

We saw that the staff were respectful of the children and young people as individuals and took time getting to know each of them and their families to provide them with the support they need to develop. The service plan for children and young people's individualised care to ensure that they are given opportunities for risky, creative and exploratory play to support them to develop new skills. The children, young people and their families told us they have opportunities to build friendships which help them to develop and grow in confidence.

The service are constantly reviewing the care and activities to ensure that these are meeting children and young people's needs. Physical and outdoor play opportunities are promoted and we saw that the children and young people have access to fresh air, freedom to explore and lead their own learning and express themselves physically which will help them to stay healthy.

The service offered complementary therapies, like massage, for children, young people and their carers to access to support their emotional wellbeing. Staff were skilled at exploring emotional issues with the children and young people and supporting them to feel empowered to address issues, for example at snack and meal times. Families told us that The Yard is the only place outside of their home where they can relax and feel 'at home'.

The service provided one to one support whenever children and young people needed it, helping them to fully access the resources available at The Yard. This meant that children and young people could take part in activities which they wouldn't usually be able to access, for example creative and adventurous play opportunities.

The organisation's values were evident in all of the work the staff team did with children, young people and their families. The management team was present in the service, knew the children and young people using the service and were available to families for a chat at drop off and collection times. This helped them to stay in touch with the needs of people using the service and ensure that it could meet their needs effectively.

The organisation consulted in a meaningful way with the children, young people and their families to gather their feedback through a variety of methods. We saw that they used this information to drive improvement in the service. Families told us that their views were valued and had helped to shape the care provided and changes in the organisation.

The staff team were encouraged to access training opportunities and to use their skills and expertise to develop new initiatives to continue to improve the service.

The service had a bespoke leadership programme developed for them which took account of their values and the work they did. It supported them to provide effective leadership opportunities for their staff team to help them be motivated and encouraged to develop in the organisation. Staff told us this helped them feel valued and motivated to drive improvements in the service.

What the service could do better

We spoke about how the service could continue to develop how they support children and young people to build a positive relationship with healthy foods.

The service could also continue to develop how they share young people's achievements in their care plans to show how they progress while attending the service.

The service could develop a guide for board members of the legislative requirements of running a care service, to ensure that any new members would be well informed and able to ensure the smooth running of the service.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
26 Feb 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
10 Dec 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	6 - Excellent
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	6 - Excellent
16 Jun 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
3 Aug 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
22 Jul 2008	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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