



Southampton Mencap Junior Gateway Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131657
Inspection date	20 November 2006
Inspector	Clare Moore
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Registered person	Southampton Mencap Junior Gateway Club
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day 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?

Southampton Mencap Junior Gateway Club opened in 1997 and amalgamated with the Junior Club which ran at Ridgeway Special School in 1996. It operates from a purpose-built centre, with children accessing 3 rooms and an enclosed garden. The club is specifically for children with learning difficulties. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. The setting accepts children from 5 up to 16 years of age. There are currently 15 children from 5 to 16 years on roll. The club opens on Saturday mornings during term time 10:00 until 12:00 and the Junior Club for two weeks in the summer holidays from 10:00 - 15:00.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. All the children have learning difficulties and physical disabilities. Many of these have a high level of dependency and the group is able to accommodate children who require specialist care.

There are 7 staff who work with children, together with a bank of volunteer workers. The setting operates with a high adult to child ratio. There are 2 staff who hold an appropriate early years qualifications and 2 are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children health is promoted very well as they are cared for in a comfortable clean environment. They are supported in the need for good personal hygiene, washing their hands before meals and snacks and after using the toilet. Children's toys and equipment are clean and well maintained. Environmental and hygiene guidelines and procedures are promoted and there are thorough and effective care plans and also systems for administering medication, though the more general permissions are omitted regarding seeking emergency medical treatment or advice. This together with a clear sickness policy helps to keep children well and prevent the spread of illness and cross infection.

Children are well nourished as snacks are provided that encourage healthy eating. Children are served a generous variety of fresh fruit and biscuits. Drinking water is available at all times for children when they wish and at snack time they are also offered fruit flavoured squash. During the holidays parents provide packed lunches and perishables are refrigerated. Specific requirements of children such as allergies and sensitivities are carefully recorded so that their needs are met.

Children enjoy fresh air and exercise in the enclosed outside area. Many take part in a variety of activities such as football which gives them opportunities to throw kick and catch balls, run and use the playground fixture to climb on and bounce. Others enjoy playing in the sand box or with balloons outside. This helps children to develop physical skills and to keep fit and active. The door to the main room is left open when the weather is suitable to allow children to make choices to play outside. Children keep safe in the summer sun by wearing sun hats, creams and keeping to the shade.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Risks to children are minimised because the setting promotes children's safety. The setting is secure during sessions as doors and garden exits are locked. Safety checks are carried out on the premises and equipment before and during sessions both indoors and outside and cleaning materials are stored safely. Children know about fire safety and evacuation procedures as practices are carried out at regular intervals. The first aid kit is well maintained and is easily accessible from the kitchen so that action can be taken to treat children in the event of an emergency. At the beginning of each session the first aiders are named so that all staff know who is responsible.

Children are closely supervised during the time they spend in the care of the group. More able children are aware of safety issues such as keeping away from the cooker and hot trays during

cooking sessions and sitting correctly on chairs at snack time which helps to prevent injury to themselves and others. At collection time children are safe because staff ensure that children are released only to an authorised person.

Staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues. They work together with the local authority and there are clear written procedures which helps to ensure that children's needs are met.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed to the group. They demonstrate a sense of belonging as they arrive, respond to warm greetings from the staff and select an activity of their choice.

Children enjoy their activities and are always occupied. They become very involved taking part in painting, sticking and cutting, music with instruments and karaoke, puzzles, dressing up, balloons, sensory lights and sand tray. They enjoy cooking and showing pride and pleasure in sharing and sampling the tasty results. Other activities include bingo, exploring pasta and also construction with interlocking plastic parts to make figures. Children are often free to choose to play in the hall or outside on the hard surfaced and grassed play areas. There is a sensory garden where children are able to work the soil and experience the scent and texture of different plants. However other sensory opportunities are less well developed. A selection of books is set out for children to read and explore if they wish, and a rail of dressing up clothes for imaginative play.

Children are supported with a high ratio of staff enabling some of them to have one to one attention for the whole time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave very well. They relate well to each other and to staff and they enjoy playing together. They help to work out the rules with the staff which have a positive emphasis on respecting each other, the adults and safety. They are supported by staff who remind them politely to sit down at snack time and to be respectful to others for which they are warmly praised. They are encouraged to help each other and to be independent, for example taking turns at offering food at snack times. This helps them to include each other and to work together where appropriate. Children develop a positive attitude to difference as they interact with each other and their differing abilities and also explore different cultures. They find out about festivals such as Diwali and Ramadam with a visitor from the library and try tasting different foods.

Children are highly valued as individuals. They make free choices within the space available to them. They are supported effectively as many staff have specialist knowledge, experience and training. The setting is committed to equal opportunities, is part of the Mencap group and has established links with other agencies for support.

Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting when they drop off and collect the children and also at the monthly carers lunch meetings. Information is freely exchanged with parents at these times. Parents complete a comprehensive personal details form and go through the details with the leader to ensure staff know all the specific needs of each individual child. Policies are clearly set out and are accessible to all. There is clear information readily available about how to make a complaint.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff arrive in good time to prepare the activities and this is organised so that all the children can participate. The setting is attractive with displays of children's work and tables and activities are set out so that there is choice and plenty of space to move around and take part.

Policies and procedures are clearly set out, made available to parents and regularly reviewed. Most aspects are included apart from what would happen if there was an allegation against a member of staff. All the necessary documentation is in place and staff are clear about their responsibilities through contracts of employment, written job descriptions and effective support from management. The robust recruitment procedure ensures both volunteers and support workers are suitable to work with children. There are monthly staff meetings to exchange information and update knowledge and also planning sessions every half term. This helps staff to evaluate activities and enables them to be involved and contribute ideas. The club works with and is supported by Southampton Early Years and Development Partnership Play Services and also the wider organisation of National Mencap. The provider meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to develop knowledge of child protection and to improve aspects of hygiene and safety. Staff have now attended further training in child protection, children are excluded from the kitchen unless supervised and they are reminded or helped to wash their hands as appropriate. As a result children are better protected and cared for.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 01 April 2004 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.

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):

- continue to develop resources and planning to increase the play and sensory opportunities for children
- develop the policies to include what would happen in the event of an allegation against a member of staff
- request signed permissions from parents to seek emergency medical treatment or advice

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