



Mencap Playcare After School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139939
Inspection date	12 November 2005
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	8 Stanley Park Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 0EU
Telephone number	020 8647 8600
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Registered person	Sutton Mencap Charity Company
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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?

Sutton Mencap Playcare has been registered since 1996. It operates from a purpose-designed, detached property in Wallington, Surrey. The building has been adapted to meet the needs of children, young people and adults with disabilities. The club provides specialist out-of-school services for children and young people with learning disabilities.

The after school club runs on Monday and Tuesday, during term time only, from 15.30 to 17.45. The Saturday Club opens for 37 Saturdays during the year, from 10:00 to 15.30, term-time only. Holiday playschemes operate during most school

holidays. Children are grouped according to their age and individual needs.

The club is registered to provide care for a total of 26 children aged from five to under eight years. At present, there are 23 children aged from five to eight years on roll. The setting supports children up to the age of 18 years.

Each session is led by a co-ordinator who is supported by play leaders, play assistants and volunteers. The majority of staff hold relevant child care qualifications, with additional experience of caring for children with special needs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health and welfare needs are met extremely well. Staff have a thorough understanding of each child's health and medical needs and stringent procedures are in place to ensure that these are appropriately met. Children with high dependency care needs are fully supported by specially trained staff. There are comprehensive procedures in place to ensure all children's health needs are regularly reviewed and agreed with parents. This enables each child's differing needs to be fully understood and addressed at all times.

Children's personal needs are fully met. Staff encourage children to become independent in managing their personal care routines. They act as good role models and teach children the importance of regular hand washing before all meals and after toileting routines.

Children are very well protected from illness. Staff provide a scrupulously clean and very well-maintained environment to prevent the spread of infection. There is a comprehensive, and fully understood policy for the care of sick children, ensuring that any child suffering from an infectious illness is excluded from the setting. This is a preventative measure for all children and helps to maintain a healthy environment.

Children have extensive opportunities to undertake physical exercise, both inside and outside. They enjoy vigorous play in the soft play room where all children can roll, climb and move in a variety of ways to develop their muscle control. Children benefit from the large outside area where they can play in the fresh air and use equipment such as wheeled toys to develop their physical skills. They kick balls and play with skittles to enhance their co-ordination.

Children's dietary needs are consistently met. Children enjoy a healthy range of freshly-cooked, home-made meals in the after-school club. This enables children to benefit from nutritious and well-balanced meals. During school holidays and the Saturday club, children bring packed lunches. Staff are vigilant in ensuring these are stored appropriately, in accordance with environmental health regulations, to ensure all food is safe for children. Staff regard meal times as extremely sociable occasions. Children develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating as a result of the relaxed and homely atmosphere. Staff sit with the children creating a very sociable and

positive environment. Staff are attentive to children's dietary and feeding requirements enabling them to support all children appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are extremely child-orientated and very well-designed. All play rooms and activity areas are fully accessible to all children, including those with mobility difficulties or physical disabilities.

Children's safety and security is regarded as a high priority. Safety precautions are taken throughout the premises as staff are vigilant in identifying potential hazards. This creates a very safe and secure environment. Access to the premises is closely monitored and effective staff deployment ensures close supervision of children at all times. A team of volunteers provide additional support and assist with supervision. This ensures that all areas of the premises are fully staffed to ensure the safety of all children.

There is a very good selection of high quality toys, resources and equipment. All play materials are stored at low level, encouraging children to select their own resources safely and independently.

Children begin to learn about safety. They learn that they must not run inside as they may hurt themselves. Children enjoy visits from the fire service where they begin to learn about fire safety and how to protect themselves.

Children are protected from emergency situations. They regularly practice evacuations and staff have identified specific places of safety to ensure children's welfare in the event of an emergency. There are comprehensive procedures in place for staff to follow in some safety situations. However, the written policy for staff to follow in the event of a child becoming lost is not easily accessible to all staff. This restricts some staff and volunteers from clearly understanding and confidently implementing the relevant procedures.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection. Staff undertake appropriate training and are familiar with the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures. This enables them to follow the relevant procedures should they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have extensive opportunities to play and learn within a highly imaginative, fun and happy environment. Staff clearly understand children's differing needs and levels of understanding, enabling them to stimulate and challenge each child appropriately. There is excellent interaction between all staff and children. Staff are highly attentive to each child's needs and provide for them accordingly.

There are extensive opportunities for children to experiment, explore and investigate. They use 'cause and effect' resources and delight in watching lights flash and music play, as a result of their actions. They develop their senses in the sensory playroom where they listen to sounds and music and observe lights and images. Children explore textures as they handle a range of materials and media. They play enthusiastically with pasta, they blow bubbles and enjoy playing with sand, paint and water.

Staff plan an excellent range of play and learning opportunities. They enable children to participate in initiatives such as the 'Come and Play Project' where specialist staff develop children's learning and cognitive development through carefully planned musical activities. Children enjoy nature activities at Morden Park and undertake a range of outings to places of interest, such as Legoland. This encourages children to broaden their experiences and develop their understanding of the wider world.

Children are extremely happy and very settled within the setting. They enjoy a wealth of fun and practical activities, enabling them to play and socialise with other children. Staff and children enjoy very close relationships. Children play happily with staff and engage in games and activities with them. This encourages children to develop their social skills within a very happy and relaxed environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are highly respected and valued by staff. Each child is totally regarded as an individual and staff are dedicated to ensuring they remain fully aware of each child's differing and changing needs. Staff are extremely aware of each child's developmental abilities, enabling them to provide suitable and realistic challenges. Staff are extremely attentive to children and listen to them well. This enables children to feel valued and acknowledged as individuals.

Children develop high self-esteem. They are clearly very happy within the setting and enjoy interacting with the staff. They greet staff enthusiastically and some children request their favourite activities and games. Staff are very aware of each child's personal likes and dislikes, enabling them to respond to each child's needs. Children enjoy looking at photographs of themselves, their friends and the staff. This encourages children to feel comfortable within the setting and develops their self-confidence.

Children's personal care needs are fully addressed and supported by staff. The group is a specialist group for children with special needs and staff have an extensive understanding and knowledge of special needs care. All staff work in partnership with external agencies, parents and carers to meet children's differing needs appropriately. This ensures that all children are fully supported and their care routines are consistently followed.

Children's behaviour is managed very well. Staff are particularly attentive to each child's differing needs and use appropriate strategies to encourage a positive and stimulating environment. Children receive high levels of individual attention and

engage in suitably challenging and stimulating activities to engage their interests and concentration. Children receive plenty of praise and positive encouragement. Their achievements are recognised, valued and celebrated by staff creating a very positive and happy atmosphere for children.

There are excellent partnerships in place between staff and parents. Staff are totally dedicated to supporting parents in the care and development of their children. Parents are welcomed into the setting at all times and exchange information with staff on a daily basis, regarding children's care needs. Staff allow sufficient time for each parent to discuss any relevant issues which are important for staff to follow in the care of their children. This contributes to, and strengthens, the partnership between staff and parents and encourages consistency for children between their home and the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Staff work together as an extremely professional, dedicated, supportive and highly motivated team. Many staff have worked together for some years, creating a very stable and committed team. Staff have extensive experience in supporting children with special educational needs. There is excellent staff deployment appropriate to each child's personal needs. Adult:child ratios are consistently high with many children receiving individual attention and close supervision. Staff development is seen as a priority, enabling all staff to access further training to enhance their skills and improve the quality and standards of care offered to children.

There are effective recruitment procedures in place. This ensures that staff are suitably qualified and experienced and cleared to work with children. A comprehensive induction programme ensures that new staff and volunteers are familiar with the setting's policies and procedures and volunteers fully understand their responsibilities.

The daily routine is organised extremely well around the differing needs of the children. There are many opportunities for children to participate in an excellent range of activities, with ample time set aside for children's personal care needs, outings and meal times. The premises are purpose-designed to enable staff to organise different activity areas, within a safe and secure environment.

All regulatory documentation is maintained in full. Children's records are stored confidentially and are regularly reviewed and updated.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Ofsted inspection, three recommendations were raised. These related to documentation. Staff have now addressed these. The attendance record now clearly reflects children's times of attendance and a policy has been devised for staff to

follow, should a child not be collected. This ensures that staff are familiar with the procedures to implement to safeguard children, should the situation occur. A new parents' brochure has been produced. This includes policy statements and contact details for Ofsted. As a result of this, parents are better informed of the setting's operational policies and procedures and the partnership for children between their parents and the staff is strengthened.

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

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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 written 'missing child' policy is accessible to all staff

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