



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 130646

DfES Number: 546235

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	07/02/2005
Inspector Name	Julie Whitelaw

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Out of School Day Care, Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Watford & District Mencap Childrens Centre
Setting Address	524 St. Albans Road Watford Hertfordshire WD24 7WF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Watford & District Mencap 2636705 1004431
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Watford & District Mencap
Address	23 Church Street Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 1DE

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

The Activities Club was formed in 1989 and was then affiliated to Scope, primarily offering a service to children with Cerebral Palsy. The club has now merged with Men cap and offers a range of services for families of children with special needs who live in the South West Herts area.

The Centre has use of the ground floor, the building is situated in north Watford next to the library. They have sole use of the Activities playroom, Rainbow room, a large soft play and ball pool room with appropriate cloakrooms, kitchen and office space. There is a secure garden which is easily accessible from all areas. There are other voluntary groups who access the first floor offices.

The Centre provides a pre-school Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoon from 12.00 until 15.00. There are currently 11 children on roll, of these four receive funding for nursery education. There is also an activities group, after school care, a Saturday Club and holiday play schemes.(out of school). Along side these services for the under eights there is a toddler group and youth groups catering for young adults up to the age of 18 years.

The centre opens 6 days a week all year round. the pre-school sessions are from 12.00 - 15.00. Out of school club runs from 15.30 to 19.00 with session times being managed for different ages. The Saturday Club and holiday schemes run from 09.30am to 15.30.

A team of 9 full and part time staff work with the children during the week, a small team of volunteers assists them to offer a high ratio of adult to children at all times. Additional staff are employed to work during the holiday playschemes. The Saturday Club has its own team of staff led by a manager and her deputy. All senior staff hold a level three qualification, in addition two other staff members hold either a level three or two early years qualification.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at the pre school held at The Watford and District Mencap Children's Centre is of good quality overall. It enables children to make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Children are making generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. The manager has a sound understanding of the early learning goals and how children learn. All staff need to extend their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to enable them to fully support children's development within the six areas of learning. A varied curriculum is planned that enables children to make progress. Staff are led by children's interests and use the daily routine well to reinforce their learning. They are skilled at using pictures and sign language to give children choices and encourage communication in those who are unable to do so verbally.

Staff complete educational plans for each child. They regularly observe all children and assess the progress they are making. Staff are now aware of the need to ensure that all areas of learning are covered and that planning is informed by assessment.

Leadership and management of the setting is generally good. Staff work well together as a team. The manager leads by example and has recently been trained to carry out staff appraisals. Methods to monitor and evaluate the nursery education should now be extended to ensure the environment is developed and that all areas of learning are covered.

Partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents spoke positively about the setting and felt staff were approachable and caring. They are encouraged to share what they know about their child. Staff involve parents in their child's learning when sharing individual educational plans. Written information for parents about the provision of nursery education and more detailed sharing of children's progress needs to be developed.

What is being done well?

- Children are making very good progress within their personal, social and emotional development. Staff use the daily routine well to promote children's independence and self care skills. Children independently select toys and then help tidy them away when asked. They have formed friendships with their peers and play happily together.
- Staff are particularly skilled at communicating with the children. They have worked hard to introduce methods such as sign language and picture cards, these encourage children to make choices as they indicate what they want to play with.

- Children's attention is held well during the music session. They are excited to play the instruments and show enjoyment as they sing songs.
- Staff ensure children have daily access to the soft play area. Children have fun as they confidently climb the stairs and jump into the ball pool safely. Their sense of balance is developing well as they walk around the top of a foam ring. Staff support children and provide challenges that ensure children are making very good progress within this area of learning.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's knowledge of the early learning goals,
- planning and assessment,
- written information for parents about the Foundation Stage and the sharing of children's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable. This is the group's first nursery education inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children settle happily on arrival. They confidently select toys and involve adults in their play. Children have formed good relationships with their peers and show concern when another child falls over. They are beginning to understand the need to share. Staff encourage children to develop self care skills. Many are able to independently wash their hands and feed themselves at lunch time. Children learn about festivals and beliefs through topic work and discussion.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are keen to communicate with others. Staff effectively use sign language and pictures to encourage interaction. Children are able to express their likes and dislikes. They enjoy rhyming and rhythmic activities at music time. Some independently select a book, hold it the correct way and turn pages appropriately. Several children are beginning to make marks and draw circles with pencils and chalk. The environment could be developed to promote this area of learning further.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Staff encourage children to count up to nine as they build a tower with bricks. Children learn about shapes through a variety of activities throughout the session. At lunch they recognise that a pancake and plate are round. Staff reinforce children's understanding of positional language through songs. Children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as numbers for counting and problem solving could be extended during the daily routine.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children show enjoyment and curiosity when sprinkling sand into water. They use their senses well when mixing paint with their hands. Children construct towers with magnetic shapes and large foam bricks. They appropriately use a phone and till in the home corner. Children learn about past and present events in their own lives and culture and beliefs through topic work. Staff could further develop the environment to ensure children have a wide range of opportunities to explore and investigate.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move confidently, imaginatively and safely around the room. They are developing their throwing and catching skills as they play with balls and soft toys. Children are enthusiastic to explore in the soft play area. They are able to balance when walking around a foam ring and confidently jump into the ball pool safely. Children show awareness of their own needs with regard to eating and hygiene. Hand eye co-ordination is developing well as children play instruments and build towers.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children say their paint has turned orange as they mix two colours together. They enthusiastically play instruments in time to the music and respond to songs with body movements. Children's imagination is developing well as they push trolleys and pretend to go shopping. They show enjoyment when they put on hats and shoes. Children are able to express their likes and dislikes during lunch. Planning should ensure children have daily access to resources that encourage free creative expression.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Develop all staff's knowledge of the early learning goals to enable them to provide a curriculum and stimulating environment that helps children make progress in all areas of learning.
- Ensure that staff have the skills to observe children and that assessments of children's progress informs planning.
- Develop written information about the Foundation Stage for parents and ways to keep parents informed of the progress their child is making towards the early learning goals.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.