



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127120

DfES Number: 524496

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 01/03/2005
Inspector Name Claire, Alexandra Parnell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Cobtree Playschool For Special Children
Setting Address Cobtree Hall, Mote Park,
Willington Street
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 8EB

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Maidstone Mencap

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Maidstone Mencap
Address Cobtree Hall
Willington Street
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 8EB

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

Cobtree Playschool for Special children opened in 1968.

It is run by a charity, 'Maidstone Mencap', and operates in a building owned by 'Maidstone Mencap', situated on the edge of a large park, in Maidstone. The group uses two downstairs rooms for the main activities with access to an office and the kitchen, and two upstairs rooms for children to have one to one sessions or small group work with therapists.

There are currently 17 children aged from 18 months to 5 years on roll. This includes three funded four year olds and seven funded three year olds. Children usually attend on both days. The setting operates for children with special needs. There are no children attending at present with English as an additional language, although some children use signing as their first form of communication.

The group opens Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 to 14:00, term time only.

Nine paid staff work at the group, which comprises of qualified Early Years practitioners and specialised therapist. All other adults are volunteers providing one to one care for the children.

The group gains support through the Area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and 'Maidstone Mencap'.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The Cobtree Playschool For Special Children is an acceptable provision and is of high quality. The children are making very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. The staff plan for the children's individual special educational needs. This is either implemented through small group work or individually with the child's one to one support volunteer. Specialist support is also available to enhance the children's learning further, particularly in areas of Personal, Social and Emotional development, Language and Communication skills and Physical development. There are effective systems in place to develop children's additional languages through signing. However, the children's development records do not have links to the stepping stones.

The children have opportunities to spend quality time with specialist and individually planned activities and resources. The one to one support enables children to progress at their own rate with subtle and effective challenges offered to enhance the child's all round ability.

The leadership and management is very good. All staff have opportunities to input into the children's development plans. The strengths and weaknesses of the educational programme are regularly reviewed and assessed. Necessary changes are made appropriately. Access is offered to all staff and volunteers to training and development, particularly if specialist training is required.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents have daily opportunities to discuss informally, their child's progress and future targets, with either their key worker or one to one volunteer. The parents are encouraged to feedback to staff regarding developments at home or out of the setting to ensure continuity. Parents receive regular information on how to contribute to their child's learning out of the setting.

What is being done well?

- The group has established successful systems in planning, working relationships and support, partnerships with parents and decision making. All of these systems enable the group to focus on the child as a whole and not purely reflecting on the child's disability.
- The children are confident and happy to express their feelings and emotions openly through a wide range of communication skills.
- The children are encouraged to make their own decisions from a wide range of activities, particularly planned for the children as individuals and within small groups of similar ability.

- The children have access to specialist and one to one support throughout the session, allowing them subtle challenges to extend their learning as well as the opportunities to develop to their own potential.

What needs to be improved?

- the links between the observations of children's achievements and the stepping stones within the Foundation Stage.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The improvements since the last inspection are very good.

At the last inspection the group were given two points to consider.

The first was to widen children's experiences of different cultures. The children celebrate one festival fully each year. This ensures the children gain a true understanding of the culture. A good range of positive images are portrayed throughout the regularly planned sessions.

The second was to assess children's learning to incorporate the Early Learning Goals. A fully comprehensive record system is in place for all children with observations made regularly towards areas of learning. Targets are set according to the child's level of ability. However, the group needs to consider making further links to incorporate the aspects of learning and particular stepping stones to show a true assessment of the children's development.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children can make choices for themselves, from a range of structured resources or free play. Some children are independent in self help skills such as eating and toileting, although all are enthusiastically encouraged to develop these skills and independence in their learning. Most are aware of others in their play, co-operating the use of resources and building relationships with peers and adults. They show interest in the activities offered and demonstrate pleasure in their participation.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children make marks using a variety of materials, demonstrating the basic movements and marks. They communicate using a variety of skills, either vocal, signing, use of pictures or visual contact. They use these skills to answer staff's instructions or requests. Some children use descriptive words to explain feelings when experiencing new situations. Most children listen intently to stories, turning pages respectfully and partaking in the story telling by predicting the familiar storyline.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Some children count independently, others with support, during structured activities. Some children recognise written numerals to associate with amounts, others understand lower values by using resources and songs. They have the opportunity to use some basic positional language and understand high, low, top and bottom. They can compare shapes, matching them in supported activities. Some show a basic understanding of one more than when counting on from one object to another.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a sense of routine by following a structured programme. Some predict what is going to happen next. They explore texture and different materials, showing delight of their findings. Some use more than tactile senses to investigate properties. They show intrigue and investigate resources further to extend their own learning. They demonstrate their understanding of familiar places by the use of routine activities. Some show an understanding and ability to change the use of technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Individual children have opportunities to understand that particular exercises are introduced for their own development and well being. They all use large and small equipment appropriately, as part of free, structured and individual planned activities, to enable mobility. Some demonstrate confident use of small tools, using them effectively. After discussion they show an extended use of the same equipment. All children use the space around them effectively, communicating where they want to go.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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All children participate and demonstrate pleasure from music and singing. Some children sing familiar songs independently, others sign songs and use movements to represent words. Some children explore with colour, mixing the colours independently and watching the change. They all freely represent with a range of materials and media. They are given a choice of support or individual creativity. Some children act out familiar roles using props and equipment accessible to them.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- ensure children's observations and development records are linked to the aspects of learning and relevant stepping stone, to provide a clear assessment of the children's development.

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.