

Watford Mencap Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

130646

Inspection date

20/01/2012

Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Watford Mencap Children's Centre was registered in 1998 and is located at the Le Marie Centre in Watford. The setting provides social opportunities for disabled children and respite for the families through the after school club, Saturday club, play schemes and youth clubs. The service provides support for 150 children and young people currently on roll. The clubs and play scheme have use of two playrooms, a sensory room, soft play area and an enclosed outside play area. Access is DDA (Disability Discrimination Access) compliant to all areas and there are two specialised toilets. There are staff facilities and a kitchen.

The after school club operates five days a week during term times. On Monday, Tuesday and Friday it is open from 3.30pm to 6.30pm, and Wednesday and Thursday from 3.30pm to 7pm. The Saturday club runs from 9.30am to 1.30pm and the holiday play schemes from 9.30am to 3.30pm. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 15 children in the early years age range. Children attend from the age of four years. The inspection was carried out during an after school club session.

The staff is made up of six core workers, regular bank workers and a team of volunteers. The manager has National Vocational Qualification Level 3, a level 6 education degree and Qualified Teacher Status. All core staff are trained to a minimum of level 2 and have mandatory training.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are safe and are making excellent progress as a result of the staff's active commitment to driving improvement. Staff know the children extremely well and plan activities that take each child to the next stage of their learning, which assists them in making excellent progress. Staff keep parents regularly informed about their children's achievements. All paperwork required for the effective care of the children is regularly updated and used for their daily care. The setting has an effective self-evaluation process to review their practice, however, this does not reflect planning for the future. Staff work extremely well together and there is an active commitment to improvement which is evident in the quality of provision and children's outcomes. The setting has effectively addressed the points for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing further the evaluation process to show the current priorities for

improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are effectively safeguarded because of rigorous systems which ensure their safety and well-being. A clear and detailed safeguarding policy is implemented well in the day-to-day care of the children. Staff have undertaken the relevant safeguarding training and are fully aware of their responsibilities to refer any concerns they have about the children's welfare to the relevant authority. Children are further protected with an effective and robust recruitment and background checks for the staff team. All adults and volunteers who work with the children have Criminal Records Bureau checks, with a thorough induction process to ensure they are aware of the good practice that is in place to provide a safe environment for all children. Staff hold first aid certificates and have additional training in some of the procedures needed for the well-being of the children in their care. The setting works with the Mencap protocol for giving medication.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment. A risk assessment is carried out for each child so their individual abilities are catered for and their physical needs met to an exceptionally high standard. This process identifies the many different aspects of the children's individual needs and highlights when children need additional resources, one-to-one support for specific tasks or equipment to access the activities in the setting and on outings. A thorough risk assessment has been carried out on all parts of the property, and regular safety checks are conducted to ensure that the environment remains safe for the children. Regular fire drills are conducted, which develops staff's secure knowledge of evacuation procedures and promotes children's safety in the event of an emergency. Staff's excellent supervision of the children during indoor and outdoor activities ensures the children's safety at all times. The resources and activities are extremely well maintained and used effectively for promoting the care and the learning of the children. For example, age-appropriate and accessible toys and resources enable all the children to independently explore and learn from their environment.

Parents hold the work of the setting in high regard. They share valuable background information on their children when they start and a process is in place for parents to ensure the children's changing needs are shared with the setting. Emails are used to share information about the activities and events, and there is a newsletter and online information for parents. Strong links with support agencies and schools contribute to the children's developing skills and individual care. Staff are frequently part of meetings with a multi-disciplinary team, which enables them to provide appropriate support to the children and families in their care. The setting is also involved in local authority meetings. Staff visit most of the children's schools and so are extremely well informed about the other environments where the children feel safe, and share in good practice. The setting has established the use of a pictorial system in all communications with children, which is also used in the schools where children attend. The positive partnership with the local children's centre gives parents a wealth of information on local services. Volunteers form an

invaluable part of the settings service. The links with the grammar school and volunteers through an award scheme bring young adults to the setting who are excellent role models for the children.

Self-evaluation is very comprehensive. The setting uses the Ofsted online process and has prioritised meeting the recommendations made at the last inspection, which has led to great improvements in the quality of the provision and outcomes for children. However, the evaluation process does not clearly show the current priorities for improvement, and although they have been identified within the staff team, they are not included in the current action plans. The manager and senior staff are highly committed to driving improvement and promoting outcomes for all children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The ethos of the setting is that children of all abilities learn through play. Staff take positive action to ensure that activities are effectively adapted to include all children, ensuring the active promotion of equality of opportunity and inclusion. Children are highly valued and are actively encouraged to develop mutual respect for each other. Children are happy and flourish as a result of the high levels of care and the provision of rich and meaningful activities. Children enjoy and enthusiastically undertake the full range of activities provided.

The daily routines and activities are based on the children's individual interests and needs. Their individual skills are promoted with consistent support from staff and volunteers. The playrooms are set up to provide a wide range of experiences. The setting uses the pictorial exchange communication system throughout the playrooms and garden. Children choose an activity from the pictures that are set out and exchange the laminated picture card with staff, who help the children to access the activity. Children are also able to request to be taken out in the garden, to the sensory room or soft play area. This is a very effective communication system which is used in many early years settings and schools, and so builds on the children's existing skills and experiences. Children's views are sought with the use of pictorial questionnaires. They have been able to influence the purchase of new resources and help in planning future outings and community events.

Photographs and displays around the setting show children take part in an extremely wide range of events throughout the year. Children have enjoyed taking part in circus skills, science projects, drama and sporting workshops. Outings are planned into the activities, such as trips to local restaurants. Children's beaming smiles are evidence of real enjoyment while taking part in everyday activities. The sensory area enables children to experience a calm, quiet time with lights and music, which enhances their creative experiences. Adults are excellent role models and help the children to build positive relationships with others. They position themselves alongside the children, supporting and engaging them as needed in order to extend their skills according to their individual abilities. Children are keen to take part in the activities, are beginning to take responsibility for putting resources away and are gradually becoming aware of the needs of others playing

nearby, with gentle reminders from the staff.

The setting has a strong commitment to extending children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. They have many opportunities to extend and develop their individual physical skills. They are well supported in the outside play areas on bikes and ride-on toys. The large soft play room promotes their developing skills in a well-managed and safe environment with excellent support from staff and volunteers. The setting strives to extend the children's eating and food experiences through a cooked tea for the after school club. There is great emphasis on healthy eating and providing new food experiences. The fruit platter which is served with every meal has the basics of apple, banana and citrus, and also includes 'new' fruit like melon, pineapple and kiwi. The setting has established the children's right to choose what they eat through pictorial option sheets. They are supported in giving out the picture cards to decide on the seating for tea time at the after school club. They are beginning to take responsibility for setting the tables for the cooked tea and returning their used plates to the kitchen, and help in moving their chairs at circle time.

Children thrive in this extremely well-managed setting. The children's very best interests are the basis for the care and play experiences which are at the heart of the planning and provision. Children's individual needs are recognised and met to a very high standard, they receive a very positive experience and make excellent developments in their play, learning and development.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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