

Midland Mencap Saturday Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

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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).

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

Midland Mencap Saturday Playscheme opened in 1993. It operates from recently renovated premises, in Weoley Castle, Birmingham. A maximum of 25 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open each Saturday from 10am to 3.30pm and is available 40 weekend sessions per year, plus 12 holiday sessions which are spread over the school holidays.

There are currently 20 children on roll whilst a number of other children are currently attending taster sessions. Children from age five until their 14th birthday may attend. Children come from across the city and attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs 30 practitioners, including three coordinators, the majority of whom hold full and relevant qualifications to level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Highly effective arrangements exist to ensure children's safety and health. Children are provided with exceptional levels of care, expertly matched to their individual and holistic needs. Practitioners offer a fully inclusive and welcoming service, and share a commitment to working in partnership with others to secure the best possible opportunities for children. The management team provides resolute and knowledgeable leadership and embraces the process of self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhancing opportunities for children who use alternative communication systems by displaying routines, sequences and events.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Practitioners demonstrate excellent awareness of safeguarding issues at all levels. Comprehensive policies and procedures are implemented consistently and robustly, and extensive vetting and recruitment procedures are in place to protect children's well-being. Collaborative working with other key agencies is exemplary. Children's health and safety is awarded top priority and practitioners are wholly aware of the risks pertaining to individual children, for example, those who abscond, those who

defy boundaries, and those who are likely to approach strangers. Person-Centred Risk Assessments and Positive Handling Plans focus on each child's significant issues and enable practitioners to offer vital, tailor-made support. These very high standards are embedded across all areas of practice.

The provision is dynamic, with a fully inclusive ethos. Practitioners are dedicated to promoting the welfare of all children, and skilfully open up opportunities for them to shine. Children with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities thoroughly enjoy their time at the provision, and the atmosphere is warm and accepting of everyone. The learning environment and resources are easily accessible, and practitioners share a common vision to offer all children safe and enjoyable recreational and leisure opportunities. Practitioners show particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children learning English as an additional language and those who use alternative forms of communication. The diversity of individuals is wholeheartedly valued.

The recently renovated premises are of high quality, secure and wholly fit for purpose. Space is used very creatively and all children, including those who use wheelchairs, move easily around the provision. A motivated and passionate management team galvanise the enthusiasm of practitioners and, as a result, staff morale is excellent. Children benefit from superior levels of adult attention, and outcomes are clearly attributed to highly effective deployment of staff. Those in charge have high aspirations for quality, and all practitioners are committed to securing improvement. Actions taken by the provision are implemented with precision, and parents, practitioners and children alike are involved in shaping future services. The needs of all children are exceptionally well met.

Well-established channels of communication between all partners involved with individual children successfully promote their learning, development and welfare. Strong links with schools, speech therapists, nurses, paediatricians, physiotherapists and respite services help to promote optimum continuity of care. Practitioners recognise the strengths of professional relationships in creating an approach that best meets the needs of individual children. Parents are effusive in their praise for the provision, and comments such as 'We absolutely love Mencap' and 'My child thoroughly enjoys coming to the provision' reflect the majority of their views. Ongoing consultation with children and their families enables everybody to play a full, active and meaningful role in the life of the setting.

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

Close teamwork between practitioners gives all children the best opportunities to achieve as well as they can. Individual progress is meticulously documented and children make small, stepped gains in their learning, often excellent in relation to their starting points and capabilities. 'All about Me' assessments, One Page Profiles and Session Feedback Forms mean that practitioners remain fully informed about each child and plan for purposeful and progressive learning. A simple routine adds invaluable pattern to children's daily lives, and schedules and routines flow beautifully with their needs. To enhance this, practitioners intend to create a

display of daily events and sequences for children who use alternative communication systems. This will boost personalised learning and aid communication.

Children have access to an extensive range of stimulating resources and activities. 'Sensory Weekends' provide children with interesting opportunities to explore their senses. They sample fruits and vegetables such as lemons, oranges and peppers, and compare the textures of pear and carrot. Children handle cornflour mixed with water, custard, tinned tomatoes, jelly and ice-cubes. They listen to music and experiment with a variety of musical instruments including African drums. Optical illusions challenge children's visual perceptions. Children with sensory impairment are supported through the use of supplementary experiences such as the captivating Sensory Room, complete with lights, bubbles, soft surfaces and textured materials.

All children, including those with physical disabilities or motor impairments, have innovative opportunities to engage in an extensive range of physical activities, both indoors and outdoors. Children adore visiting places of local interest where they explore castles, trek through woods, spot wildlife, complete treasure hunts and use large-scale play apparatus. Children excitedly participate in dance, storytelling and music sessions, and they use the snooker table, games console and outside play area. Children eat packed lunches supplied by parents, and learn about healthy lifestyles through cooking activities, fruit-picking and food-tasting sessions. The environment is safe and clean, and children benefit from excellent levels of healthcare, mental stimulation and loving relationships.

The high quality adult interaction and exemplary organisation of routines help children to gain an exceptionally strong sense of security. Outings provide ample opportunities for children to learn about road safety, and the group makes full use of public transport such as buses and trains to broaden children's experiences. Practitioners are highly attentive and vigilant; they act as positive role models and are advocates for the children. Information in children's files such as 'I like to hide; I'll be there one minute and gone the next' and 'If I need to use the toilets whilst on outings please keep an eye on me, as I do lock the door and sometimes refuse to come out' are typical examples of the challenges that practitioners tackle. Children receive warm, responsive and individualised care.

Practitioners are skilled at supporting the development of independence skills for children who are highly dependent upon adult support for personal care. Children learn social skills and practise everyday tasks as they visit shops, use lifts and elevators, perform litter picks or simply order a hot chocolate from popular fast food chain. Members of the community are invited to the provision to share their expertise, and children develop an understanding of the wider world through an abundance of outings. Children become active and inquisitive learners as they explore their surroundings with curiosity and interest. The interesting and extremely well-equipped environment successfully reflects children's backgrounds, interests and personal needs. Outcomes for children are outstanding.

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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