



Kidsunlimited Nurseries

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY317215
Inspection date 18 July 2006
Inspector Samantha Smith

Setting Address St. Margarets Hospital, The Plain, Epping, Essex, CM16 6TN

Telephone number

E-mail

Registered person Kidsunlimited Nurseries

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kidsunlimited is one of 50 nurseries run by Kidsunlimited, it opened in 2006 in the grounds of St Margaret's hospital in Epping. It serves the local area community and staff working in the hospital.

A maximum of 93 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The day nursery is open each weekday for 51 weeks of the year from 07.30 to 18.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 60 children aged from birth up to five years on roll of these five receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 21 staff who work with the children in the day nursery. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualification and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from the risks of cross-infection by the effective and consistent implementation of good hygiene procedures. For example, staff use appropriate protective clothing when changing nappies and serving food. Staff are good role-models for children as they frequently wash their hands and encourage them to understand the importance of keeping their hands clean.

Children have their nutritional needs met as they enjoy a wide range of healthy meals and snacks of good quality. All meals are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises each day and staff are sensitive to children's individual dietary requirements. Drinking water is freely available to children at all times. Meals and snacks are seen as social times where children sit in small groups with a member of staff.

Young children are developing their independence physically and emotionally. They are active and are becoming increasingly independent acquiring control over their bodies and new physical skills. The setting has sound understanding of the needs of younger children and provides appropriate activities and resources to support the children's physical and emotional development. They freely enjoy the benefits of baby massage and yoga used to promote their multi-sensory skills.

Children have regular opportunities for physical play. They enjoy a wide range of well-organised activities in the nursery garden, including wheeled toys, climbing and balancing apparatus and small equipment such as balls. Children are given plenty of time to explore and develop their skills, promoting their independence and confidence. They enjoy mark-making activities, threading beads and construction toys which develop their control and co-ordination. Effective use of sand and water play and a variety of malleable materials such as play dough and paper mache also refine these skills.

Children are encouraged to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and the things that contribute to this, such as personal hygiene routines, eating healthy food and having sufficient rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe in welcoming and stimulating purpose built facilities, where they are able to freely move around the learning environment throughout the session. Staff are vigilant about children's safety, both indoors and outside and ensure this by the effective implementation of thorough daily risk assessments.

Furniture and equipment is in very good condition. Children have free and safe access to play equipment and resources allowing them to be independent in their selection. A variety of toys are stored in low-level storage boxes, of which are clearly labelled and others are see-through making their contents easily identifiable for younger children.

There are clear, written safety procedures in place and staff continue to develop their understanding in all procedures. Registers show the arrival and departure times of all children and staff, ensuring an accurate record of people on the premises at any one time. Children's safety is further protected through effective security procedures that are in place to ensure that access to the setting is restricted. For example, there is a door entry system and an accurate visitors log is maintained. Children are able to play safely in the enclosed outside area which has a safety-surface and grassed area.

Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the issues relating to child protection, they are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they had concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from access to a balanced range of activities and play opportunities that support their emotional, social, physical and intellectual development.

Younger children enjoy a broad selection of activities that follow the 'Birth to three matters' framework and they are well settled and confident. They are very comfortable within their environment and receive good levels of support from the staff. Staff interact well with children during planned and free-play activities. The warm and comfortable relationships developed by staff encourage children to feel secure and develop their self-esteem.

Children have opportunities for independent exploration. They show great enthusiasm as they interact with activities that encourage them to learn through their senses. The use of treasure baskets and Heuristic play resources allow children to explore texture, shape, weight, sound and smell as well as support their increasing imaginative skills.

Staff encourage language development in young children. They listen carefully to babies' chatter and they talk and listen to their responses. Younger children are encouraged to communicate their needs from an early age for example, they are introduced to baby sign where they learn simple hand gestures for everyday words

such as milk, drink, more, please and thank you.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. However, there are some inconsistencies in staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how young children learn. Although the staff team is newly formed, they are working together to set up interesting and meaningful activities for the children. The planning sufficiently covers the six areas of learning but it does not show how the activities are adapted to suit children who learn at different rates or who have particular needs.

Staff use observations to assess children's development and show how they are making progress through the stepping stones. However, these are not always completed on a regular basis and have not been developed enough to be effective when planning the next steps in the children's learning. Therefore, the older and more able children are not being sufficiently challenged.

Children show good levels of confidence and are eager to take part in the activities provided. They have access to a wide range of resources which they can access independently. Staff organise the sessions well to include both active and quiet times. They interact effectively to support children's learning and some staff are skilled at using open-ended questions when they sit alongside the children to develop their understanding and learning.

Children are encouraged to be polite and to consider each others' needs as they share their toys and take turns. Staff explain why all the children have to be served their lunch to make sure there is enough for them all before they can have 'seconds' at lunch time. However, there are some missed opportunities for children to be independent at lunch times, for example to set the table, serve the food, pour the drinks and clear away.

Children are confident speakers, using language to talk about real and imaginary events as they play and work. They are extending their vocabulary and able to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings, asking for help when needed. Children are able to look at the many and varied books around the room and they enjoy listening to stories, especially the book of the week. Children are beginning to learn letter sounds through the letter of the week. However, this is not always extended sufficiently to become meaningful for the older and more able children.

Children are able to use numbers in their daily routines and they are encouraged to name, recognise and order numerals. They are introduced to early calculation by singing favourite and familiar number songs and rhymes and by counting the slices of toast to see if there are enough at snack time.

Children have many opportunities to express themselves and learn through their senses. They explore a range of materials, for example, in collage work and different painting activities. They enjoy acting out stories, using the puppets and the role play

areas.

Children have some opportunities to develop information technology skills; a computer is available and staff use a variety of programmes as they work with the children. Children are keen to design and build using construction kits. They enjoy the activities planned at the gardening club, such as planting seeds and watching them grow. However, there are limited opportunities and planned activities to extend children's awareness of the wider society and of different cultures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and are warmly welcomed into the setting. They are given excellent support as they settle at the nursery and they separate well from their parents and carers. Children are able to access some books and resources the show people from varying backgrounds. Although these are not sufficient to support a number of children attending from different backgrounds.

Staff manage children's behaviour well. Children understand what is required of them in terms of acceptable behaviour and positive strategies are effective in the group, allowing children to take responsibility for their actions. Children work well together in both small and large groups where they learn to take turns and share.

Children are warmly greeted by staff on arrival and they each have an identified space for their belongings. Babies and young children enjoy cuddles from practitioners and are self assured, developing high levels of independence and a sense of security and belonging. Children's photographs are displayed around nursery highlighting the many and varied experiences they can take part in, such as sensory activities touching and discovery textures using custard and shredded paper. Though there is a lack of children's own work products displayed around the rooms.

Partnership with parents is carers is good.

There are very effective settling-in procedures to ease the transition from home to the setting. Parents are kept informed of their children's care and learning by way of the notice boards and posters displayed around the nursery. They are regularly invited to a 'how's it going?' meeting with the staff as well as the daily 'day in the life of' record sheets when they are given information on each child's day, their activities, food eaten and any other relevant information.

Staff provide parents of funded children relevant information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and their progress towards the early learning goals. Informal chats between parents and staff allow for the exchange of information to further develop children's progress and development. Records are available on request and parents are happy with the care and education their children receive at the nursery.

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

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is attractive and very well-organised to provide maximum play opportunities for the children. Staff working at the nursery provide good levels of care and education to enhance children's experience and well-being.

Systems exist for the recruitment, vetting, induction and appraisals. The staff team work well together to create and maintain a caring environment for children in all areas of the nursery. Staff are sufficiently deployed and most demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of children's developmental needs and staff training is ongoing to meet individual needs as well as the needs of the group, to maintain and improve the provision.

All required documentation, policies and procedures are in place and are supported by a comprehensive operational plan which underpins working practices very effectively.

The leadership and management is good.

Children benefit from a team who work well together. Although there are a number of new and unqualified staff working at the nursery, there is a real commitment to staff development and training. The nursery has experienced an initial period of instability, but it is now developing a stable staff team who are working together to create and maintain a caring environment for children in all areas of the nursery. The senior management team have been recently appointed and they are enthusiastic and forward thinking. The setting's strengths and areas for development have already been identified and plans put in place that will further develop the care and education for the children who attend.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not Applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints log may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- further develop resources that display positive images and promote diversity to allow the children to gain a full appreciation of the wider world
- provide opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of child development.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how young children learn
- review and extend children's assessment records to link with the planning so that all children are sufficiently challenged and the next steps in their learning clearly identified
- provide further opportunities for the older and more able children to link sounds to letters and use this knowledge to write simple words such as labels and captions around the room.

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