



Kidsunlimited Nurseries - Oxford Business Park

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 134835 |
| Inspection date | 29 November 2006 |
| Inspector | Jill Milton |
| Setting Address | Garsington Road, Cowley, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX4 2JZ |
| Telephone number | 01865 711422 |
| 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 satisfactory. 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 Nurseries - Oxford Business Park is a day nursery which opened in 2000 on a new business park development in Cowley, Oxford. The nursery is one of a national chain of privately owned settings and children attend at this location from the surrounding area. The nursery operates from purpose built premises over a number of floors and there is access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery opens on weekdays, from 07.30 to 18.00, all year around apart from bank holidays. A maximum of 166 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 169 children on roll between the ages of three months and five years. Of these, 42 children receive nursery education funding. The nursery supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff also support children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 41 full and part-time staff. Over half of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications and 10 are currently attending training courses. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are taken care of appropriately if they have an accident or become ill. The staff monitor their health and check for raised temperatures if they have a concern. Staff inform parents of accidents so that children receive continuity in their care between the nursery and home. Staff attend first aid training and have access to medical supplies throughout the setting. Children are starting to learn about keeping themselves healthy as they wash their hands before eating or collect tissues to blow their noses. The staff are careful to use disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies, though the presence of bins without lids for disposal of waste is not very hygienic. Staff chat pleasantly to children when these care routines take place. They offer children praise when learning to use a potty, but do not always remind them to wash their hands before returning to play.

Children eat well at the nursery and they enjoy a varied menu of nutritious, freshly prepared meals. Children who require special diets, for health or family preferences, have their needs met since staff liaise appropriately with parents and kitchen staff. Babies receive feeds according to their own routines and staff hold them close during these times. Babies show excitement by moving their arms and legs when they spot their bottle arriving. Older children develop independence by fetching themselves drinking water as they need it during the day. Regular stops also take place for snacks with an emphasis on fresh fruit.

Older children enjoy time in the garden where they use a basic selection of equipment and play games with staff such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' They work as a group when they use the parachute and are able to develop some physical skills like stretching and using co-ordination. On some days the younger children attending the nursery do not spend any time out in the fresh air. Babies and toddlers have space within their rooms to develop their growing mobility in a satisfactory way. Children rest and sleep as they need to during the day. Staff sit with them and pat their backs gently to ease them to sleep.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in rooms that are quite spacious and they are able to move freely around the activities. Staff adjust the ventilation to ensure children play comfortably and blinds create softer light for sleep times. The nursery walls display some lovely examples of children's art work and the use of photographs help parents to see samples of activities. Children show interest when displays are within their reach. Children play with equipment that is suitable overall for their ages and they can access some resources from low units within their rooms. Older children have increasing amounts of independence freely selecting writing materials, for example, from a trolley in their room. Staff do have procedures in place to monitor the cleanliness

of the nursery though some lack of attention to detail results in items of furniture, carpets and equipment looking less than spotless.

Children play in a safe environment since staff have a number of policies and procedures in place to protect them. Children's attendance at the nursery is carefully recorded each day and staff use photographs or passwords to ensure that only authorised adults collect children at home time. Staff use sensible safety equipment around the nursery and apart from some socket covers not being in place these procedures appear to work well. Children learn about safety and the preschool children playing above ground level show sensible behaviour when coming up and down the stairs. The children all take part in fire evacuation practices on a regular basis and staff make use of special cots to move babies quickly out of the building.

Staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues. They ensure children do not have unsupervised contact with adults who have yet to complete checking procedures. Discussions with staff show that they understand what kinds of signs and symptoms are causes for concern and they are aware of what to do with this information. Recent training in child protection throughout the nursery ensures that staff knowledge of the area is up to date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle into routines in their rooms and the predictable pattern to the day helps them to settle when parents leave. Staff are making some use of the Birth to three matters framework in planning the daily activities and in recording the developmental progress of the children. This information is shared with parents so that the adults are all working together to meet the children's needs. Young children access a suitable variety of activities and they enjoy new experiences, such as playing with kitchen utensils made of different materials or watching soap bubbles in the air.

Children move into new rooms as they become older and they have visits during the day when this time is approaching to help them become familiar with fresh faces and surroundings. Staff encourage children who are already in the room to welcome the new comers and toddlers wave kindly when new friends return to their old rooms. Children of all ages explore natural materials like sand or water and displays of creative work reflect their experiences with paint and collage. Staff do not worry when young ones become engrossed in messy activities with flour and water but let the children investigate the textures.

At times children under three come together in quite large groups and this is not always appropriate. A large group singing time with toddlers does not catch their attention and too many trying to do a floor puzzle together is frustrating. Some activities require children to wait too long for a turn and not to be actively involved, for example cooking with two year olds. In contrast to this, small group activities are fun for the children and produce lots of laughter, for example when dressing up in furry animal costumes or playing at the table with dough and cutters.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children in the pre-school area of the nursery have their own set of rooms which provide different areas for play and learning through the day. This provides the children with variety and this older group also access outdoor play more frequently than the younger ones. The children cope well in the busy atmosphere and many group themselves together around activities. The children make their own decisions in free-flow play times and they are showing independent skills by collecting drinks or visiting the toilet as they need to. They converse quite happily with each other, developing some good social skills. The children behave appropriately overall and only become more disruptive when in large groups. These group activities with up to 30 children altogether do not work particularly well as children are not always engaged in what is happening or have a chance to contribute. Smaller groups are more effective and children's speaking and listening skills are developing more effectively.

Children frequently select writing materials and they make links with writing for a purpose as they take pretend registers or make notes in the hospital role play area. They use their imaginations in play and older ones are beginning to create stories together, for example when they have a party. As children progress they start on a commercial reading scheme and some older ones are starting to link sounds to letter shapes and to play with rhyming words. Children often select story books for themselves in the day and are starting to enjoy looking at books for pleasure.

Children are learning to count and recognise numerals. They take part in suitable practical mathematical activities that provide them with chances to explore shape, size and pattern making. Activities where children handle small shapes or pegs help to develop their fine skills of co-ordination and control over movements. There are accessible resources out each day to support this area of learning. The children are keen to use creative materials in their play. They enjoy a wide variety of tactile experiences that staff vary to sustain children's interest. When children play with these materials they often talk about their own experiences. Dolls receiving a bubble bath in the water tray stimulate conversations about home, bath time and hair washing, for example. Children take part in seasonal activities too and this may involve some outings in the local area to collect natural materials like autumn leaves for collages. The children are becoming familiar with technology as they sit with staff to use a computer. They are also learning to appreciate resources from different cultures as they play with a selection of musical instruments.

The staff have a satisfactory understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They use planning sheets to decide what activities are out each day and they link their plans to individual stepping stones in the six areas of learning. This produces a sufficient variety of activities to help children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. The staff build up a friendly rapport with the children and they engage in amicable conversations during activities. However the style of questions does not challenge the children or stimulate them to think. Staff make basic observations of children's progress and they helpfully collate the information for parents through the year to give an overview of achievements. Staff are aware that this information is useful for planning future activities and they have introduced group work for different age groups with this in mind. This is a promising development but does not yet take into account individual learning needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children receive support from staff when it is time to leave their parents and carers. Staff help them by offering comfort and following simple routines like waving from the window. Children stay with staff until they are ready to go and play. Children are familiar with the routine and their base rooms which helps their sense of belonging. Children play with resources in the nursery that help them develop positive attitudes to others who may be from different cultural backgrounds. A wide range of festivals are celebrated during the year to help the children learn about the wider world beyond their own experience. Older children in the nursery take part in simple French conversation groups and this helps to include their peers whose home language is French. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

Staff care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities appropriately. They plan training to ensure that the special needs co-ordinator has the necessary background knowledge of this area. The staff work actively with a range of professionals outside the nursery to ensure children and their parents have support and they arrange extra activities, such as a regular visit from the sensory bus.

Children are learning how to behave appropriately. The staff use consistent strategies and offer explanations to children of why an action is not acceptable. Older children take a more active role in setting some 'golden rules' and they think of sensible ideas like 'We walk when the fire alarm goes off' or 'We hug our friends when they are sad'. Staff help children to think of others and offer them simple choices so that the children start to make decisions for themselves rather than being told what to do. Staff work with parents and advisors to help children progress when behaviour is more challenging. They focus well on what children do positively.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive daily feedback from staff in a number of different ways depending on the age of the child. Parents of younger children have information about care issues like diet or sleep whilst those with older children hear about the focused group activities. Older children take books home for reading, enabling parents to be involved in learning and there is some curriculum information on display in rooms. Staff also offer parents the chance to discuss children's progress during open evenings. A recent distribution of a questionnaire for parents provides them an avenue to voice feelings and many report on their satisfaction with the care the children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The policies and procedures of the nursery are working generally well to support the care and education of the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The staff benefit from the back up provided by the parent company with all issues regarding documentation and policy design. This provides them with confidence in their work, though there are some lapses which lead to weak areas, for example with some hygiene procedures. Documentation is stored confidentially and the presence of supernumerary managerial staff and administrative support help room staff concentrate on their work with the children. The company responds appropriately and promptly to sudden changes in managerial

staff. Staff in individual rooms work well together and support each other in their care of the children. The day runs smoothly though the organisation of groups of children at times does not work so well.

There are robust steps in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. There are suitable systems for checking adults who wish to work with children and staff have opportunities to take up training within the nursery. Staff benefit from on-site facilities such as a staff room and fully equipped training rooms. The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. Staff conduct some basic evaluation of the education on offer, though this does not always identify weaknesses. Staff do respond to guidance from outside professionals and they speak positively about new procedures, for example with regard to planning, that are due to be implemented.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection there were three recommendations for staff to address. All of these have been attended to. Managerial staff complete regular written risk assessments for the nursery to highlight areas that need maintaining and room staff check that the outdoor area is suitable for children's play. Staff complete documentation to show when they are in the building and their presence in particular rooms. The overall impact on the children of these improvements is to protect their safety more effectively whilst they attend the nursery.

At the last inspection of the nursery education the staff were required to address four key issues. Although there have been changes in room staff satisfactory progress can be seen in the suggested areas for improvement. Staff continue to manage children's behaviour appropriately and through advice from outside professionals they are gaining valuable skills in this area. The introduction of three age-related group times for children means that their learning needs are being more appropriately met. Staff now make use of extra resources, such as story sacks and puppets, to enhance story telling. Children's achievements are now noted by staff on self-adhesive labels so that information is retained and transferred to individual records. The impact on the children of these improvements is to provide them with opportunities to make steady progress in their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- improve hygiene procedures linked to nappy changing and toilet training to protect children's health more effectively
- provide more opportunities for children of all ages to enjoy fresh air and use a wider range of equipment
- review the organisation of the two to three's unit so that children play in smaller groups and take part in activities appropriate to their age range
- improve the standards of cleanliness of furniture, carpets and toys

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):

- make more effective use of observations of children's achievements to plan their next steps in learning
- review the organisation of large group times to enable more children to make an active contribution and become involved in what is happening
- provide staff with support through training to develop more effective questioning techniques to extend children's thinking

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk