



Kidsunlimited Nurseries - The Playhouse

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109124
Inspection date	11 October 2006
Inspector	Janet Maria Moutter
Setting Address	WH Smith Ltd, Green Bridge Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 3LD
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kids Unlimited Playhouse Nursery is one of 52 nurseries run by Kids Unlimited plc., opened in 1991. It operates from a purpose built, self-contained building on the site of W H Smith & Sons in Swindon, Wiltshire. Most of the children who attend live in the local area.

A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

Currently there are 57 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes 11 funded three-year-olds and one funded four-year-old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff. There are 10 of the staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. Six staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because of the good interaction with staff. They are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care, for instance when using aprons in creative play. Children have an understanding of hygiene, which is shown as they wash their hands after toileting. They benefit from the staff's ability to consistently follow health and hygiene guidelines, such as wearing protective clothing when changing nappies and serving food. However, the babies' soft furnishings, such as cushion covers and the carpeted floor in some areas of the nursery get regularly soiled, for example with spills such as the rice from lunch that are then walked into the carpet. In such a confined nursery environment this can become a potential hazard to health through cross-contamination.

Children are further protected as procedures for the safe administration of medication, clear recording of accidents and exclusion policies are kept up-to-date and meticulously followed by staff.

Children enjoy their mealtimes which are social occasions. They sit together in small groups and the tables are always well presented with objects of interest such as pebbles or dried flower arrangements on the table cloths at all snack times. Babies and toddlers have some good opportunities to practise the enjoyable skill of feeding themselves. Children enjoy a healthy, well balanced diet that has been specially devised by a corporate nutritionist and followed by the nursery cook. They learn about 'good and bad' foods and experience different tastes and textures. Drinks are accessible throughout the day in children's individually labelled cups.

Children of all ages develop their physical skills daily in both the indoor play areas and the outdoor playground. Children learn about their bodies as they develop their physical skills. Babies enthusiastically explore their environment, crawling, stretching and learning to pull themselves up on to well-placed, safe objects such as a low settee. They enjoy regular sleep times and older children benefit from an opportunity to rest and relax after lunch. The children have regular opportunities to play freely in fresh air in the outside play area and the whole nursery practise yoga while the babies have massage sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and safely in areas which are bright, comfortable and sufficient for their age. Babies are stimulated by mirrors at low level and by mobiles suspended from the ceiling. Older children enjoy a room which is laid out to give them variety of choices in different areas where they can choose from activities such as drawing, construction or using their imagination in role-play games.

Children are protected by stringent procedures to ensure that unauthorised people do not have contact with them and only people nominated by parents are able to collect them. However, some of the play areas are not very inviting and lack opportunities for children to play with a purpose. For example, toddlers one and two areas have limited resources due to the size of play space; these areas are used as corridors which results in the rest of nursery moving in and through, making this a potential safety hazard. The staff work hard to plan to minimise disruption and the children accept other people using these busy areas. Generally routines are effective, such as moving children to other areas to remain in ratio and keep them safe from the traffic.

Staff are vigilant in checking all play areas and equipment to make sure all areas are safe for children to use. WH Smith & Sons have responsibility for the maintaining of the building while Kids Unlimited staff take excellent care of the moveable equipment and attend to or report any necessary repairs. Children take part in fire drills which ensure that staff are familiar with the procedure for evacuation and fire alarms are regularly checked.

Children's welfare is closely attended to and staff are required to have a good understanding of how to implement the child protection procedures. They are clear about the signs and symptoms to look out for and the records they must keep.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure and confident in their surroundings. They separate from their parents happily on arrival and form positive relationships with each other and staff. The children listen attentively at story time and are able to recall events as they happened. Babies and children are able to choose toys from well-organised provision, thus they begin to make choices at an early age. Birth to Three Matters materials are used effectively to support planning for younger children. Thorough observations are used to ensure that children's individual learning needs are met, primarily through small group sessions.

Babies and children benefit from a good variety of activities, such as making hand prints and enthusiastically joining in songs with actions. They have warm relationships with staff, who spend time talking and listening to them, giving them good self-esteem and the confidence to approach new experiences positively. Regular yoga and baby signing sessions further contribute to children's enjoyment and wellbeing. The children have some opportunities to freely access resources and activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The range of activities offered to children promote positive learning outcomes for all areas of learning. Children benefit from the staff's good understanding of the stepping stones to the early learning goals. However, weekly observations do not include a written record of individual progress to monitor and ensure that it is part of the forward planning and their next steps in learning. Staff interaction and questioning encourages the children to think and solve problems as they take part in both self-initiated play and adult-led activities. Children are very creative and are proud to show off their displayed artwork. They have some opportunities to freely explore colour and texture. Children particularly

enjoy role-play and use a sufficient amount of resources to extend and lead their play using their imaginations. For example, three boys dressed up with helmets and handbags sat chatting on a line of chairs and one child said that it was ok as he had plenty of money to pay the fare. He had filled his handbag with wheels from the construction table.

Children learn to cooperate, share and work well together. For example, children understand that they take turns in using the home corner and share mats during their daily yoga sessions. Following the latest intake at school all the pre-schoolers were very young three year olds. The two older children were encouraged and happy to demonstrate yoga moves and how it goes, for example when slowly moving their bodies into various postures. Children are encouraged to be independent in their personal care and activity choices and are keen to be chosen as helpers to serve out snacks. A regular and big favourite activity observed was the dressing up with enthusiastic undressing and asking for support in doing up buttons and zips after some concentrated efforts to achieve this action.

Children are very creative and are proud to show off their displayed artwork. They have some opportunities to freely explore colour and texture. Children particularly enjoy role-play and use a sufficient amount of resources to extend and lead their play using their imaginations. Children communicate confidently. They greet visitors, tell them their names and proudly show their life books with their drawing and stories on. They take pleasure in accessing books, handling them appropriately and sometimes sharing aspects they have enjoyed with other children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are secure within the friendly and welcoming atmosphere. They are well supported by positive interaction with warm and caring staff. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is fostered. Children have use of good books and resources reflecting culture, race and disability. They share well and are encouraged to be kind and thoughtful to others. Children show kindness and consideration for each other as they share tidying up with their friends, pour each other drinks and include new children in their role play. Children beam with pride as they are praised for being kind, helpful and thoughtful to others and when friends show interest in their art work.

Children's understanding of cultural diversity and disability is supported by a good range of resources, such as multicultural play figures and posters and positive images of themselves made into books throughout the nursery. They learn about different cultural celebrations. There are no children with special needs attending currently but staff have a good understanding of how to fully include children with special needs in the nursery routines.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive a comprehensive welcome pack including information about Birth to Three Matters and the Foundation Stage. Company policies, operating procedures, child development and education information is shared with parents to ensure they are fully conversant with how their child will be cared for and taught. Young children sleep and eat according to their individual daily routine following consultation with their parents. Information is exchanged effectively to establish a process of shared care for children of all ages. Information regarding the child's day at nursery is shared with the parents of babies and

toddlers via a daily diary giving information on food, drink, sleep, nappy changes and enjoyed activities. Attractive wall displays explain the themes, informing them where they can find resources to their children's care and education. Parents can play an active role in their own child's achievements and learning. Positive informal links with parents promote discussion about individual children's needs on a daily basis.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. The manager works closely with her staff and children, and provides a good role model. Good communication between all staff ensures they are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The staff work well together as a team and have a shared commitment to identifying weaknesses and making improvements in the daily routines. They work well as a team to provide a safe, stimulating environment in which children are able to enjoy their play and develop physically, emotionally and socially. The manager spends a good deal of time in and around the nursery. This enables her to take a realistic overview. There are robust employment procedures in place. Staff development is given high priority and regular staff meetings are used both to inform and train. All documentation and permissions are in place and registers show the actual times of arrival and departure of both staff and children. There is a key worker system in place, which is partly used to keep parents well informed of their children's progress. Children's progress is monitored well through the use of both the Birth to three framework and the Foundation Stage.

The nursery is well resourced and staff organise the areas and resources effectively, so that children's interest is sustained. Staff ratios are maintained, allowing them to respond to the needs of all children. Children have a variety of free and structured play opportunities. The educational programme provides a wide range of experiences to enable children to make sound progress towards the early learning goals. Established systems for activity planning, based on 'Core Curriculum Activities', are clearly displayed throughout the nursery.

Children benefit from a stable staff team which means that they receive consistent care. There are regular staff meetings and the manager holds appraisals to identify the performance and development needs of each member of staff. Staff are actively encouraged to undertake training with in-service training, so that children benefit from current ideas and developments. All new staff complete an induction programme which includes familiarising themselves with essential policies and procedures. Children receive appropriate care through staff's use of the clear, accurate records. Children benefit from staff effectively implementing the policies and procedures. Children are protected by experienced qualified staff who are committed to updating their knowledge and seeking appropriate training. Annual appraisals identify any training needs as some staff are in the process of gaining higher levels of Early Years qualifications. Documentation is stored confidentially and is available for staff to use to meet the children's needs.

The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to: ensure the effective deployment of staff in the toddler room (room two); extend current risk assessments to include the individual needs of children; and to make older children aware that drinking water is available to them at all time.

Overall, the group have made good progress in each of these areas. Risk assessments are used appropriately to highlight potential areas of danger for children and staff, and the remedial actions taken to address risk issues which are recorded in all areas of the nursery. Staff are deployed throughout the nursery to ensure each child's individual needs are met. All children now have drinks available to them at all times and where appropriate they can help themselves to pour from freshly replenished water jugs. The impact on the children is that the quality of their environment has improved and they have benefited and are encouraged to be more independent.

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.

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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):

- ensure that movement of children and staff does not compromise safety
- implement a system that ensures potential hazards such as cross-contamination of babies' soft furnishings or carpets in other areas of the nursery are met at all times

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):

- continue to develop the use of consistent written observations and assessments to include children's individual progress and needs when planning for their next steps in learning

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