

Kiddiwinks Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103817
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
Setting Address	Gillingham Methodist Church Hall, 100 Third Avenue, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 2LU
Telephone number	07752449018
E-mail	
Registered person	Kiddiwinks Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kiddiwinks Pre-School opened in year 1979. The group are a Pre-School Learning Alliance constituted group with an active management committee. It operates from a large hall and most days has use of a second room in the Methodist church hall in Gillingham. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The Pre-School mostly serves the local area.

A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday, during term time from 09.30 to 12.00. The staff also operate an optional lunch club from 12.00 to 13.00 which all children can attend if parents wish.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they are also able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 11 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards further qualifications. The setting receives support

from an Early Years Advisor and the Area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). They also work with the Individual Children's Support Service (ICSS).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a warm, caring environment helping them feel emotionally secure. They enjoy a close relationship with staff, chatting with them easily and are confident to ask for help when they need assistance.

Children's good health is promoted in premises that are bright, welcoming and maintained to a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness. Staff are aware of good hygiene practice and they take sensible precautions to reduce cross infection; for example, they clean surfaces thoroughly before children eat and have good nappy changing procedures. They clean the premises before and after each session, and the toilet area and sinks are kept very clean to help prevent the transmission of communicable diseases.

Children's independence is fostered and most are able to independently use the toilet; staff provide a step to help them reach and a smaller seat to help children feel secure while they use the toilet. They learn the importance of good hygiene through the daily routine. Staff remind children to wash their hands after using the bathroom and they routinely wash their hands before eating their snack. There are photos in the bathroom area of children washing their hands to remind them. They are reminded to wipe their noses when needed and to dispose of their dirty tissues carefully. Staff provide liquid soap and they dry their hands on paper towels or with a hot air dryer, helping to reduce the risk of cross infection.

There is always a member of staff present with a current first aid qualification; as courses become available all staff will become qualified. There is a first aid kit that a named member of staff checks and replenishes as necessary. They are able to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. Staff record any accidents and any first aid that is administered whilst the children are in their care. This results in parents being well informed about what has happened to their child.

The provision has written policies that make it clear to parents that they do not care for children who are contagious, ensuring other children are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst at the pre-school are isolated as much as possible, comforted and made comfortable, until their parents are able to collect them. Staff very rarely need to administer any medication; however, they are aware of the correct procedures and have all the necessary record books available.

Children can play indoors or outdoors whenever they wish; they can go out whatever the weather because staff have thoughtfully provided waterproof clothing and Wellingtons. They enjoy this freedom and most independently manage to put on the macs and hang them back up when they come indoors. Being able to free-flow ensures children enjoy plenty of fresh air. Staff encourage children to expand their physical skills; there is interesting and challenging climbing and balancing equipment. The children demonstrate a sense of achievement and pride when they manage to walk all the way across the balance beam without help. These activities help children to acquire a healthy attitude to an active lifestyle and develop their gross motor skills.

The playgroup staff are all very aware of the importance of children eating healthy and nutritious food and learning about healthy lifestyles. The snack bar is almost always run by a parent and has provided an excellent platform for parents to take an active role in the group. Staff ensure the parents are confident about the task and are aware of food hygiene procedures. Several parents say that it is through operating the snack bar that they became interested in accessing training and considering a career in childcare. The snack bar provides children with the opportunity to try a range of healthy foods; they eat fruit most days. There is lots of information on display in the pre-school about healthy eating. Children learn good table manners because parents and staff are good role models. Children are also encouraged to take an interest in food through play activities. Staff give them real lettuce, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, pasta and rice to chop and make into 'dinners' in the role play area. This naturally leads on to staff discussing which foods are healthiest, how they are grown and prepared and asking children which they prefer. Children get to feel, smell, taste and dissect real vegetables and this is of far more interest to them than plastic resources. Water is available throughout the session to ensure children do not become dehydrated. Children pour their own drinks, encouraging their independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

This is a group in a public hall that has to pack everything away each day, despite this handicap the staff always find solutions to the difficulties this can cause. They have a 'can do' attitude and overcome any problems the premises present by finding creative solutions. With some forethought, for instance, they have created a canopy over the reading area that creates a cosy, relaxing area and can still be easily dismantled at the end of each session. Staff plan the environment thoughtfully to ensure it provides a stimulating and inviting area for children to learn through play. Staff continually evaluate how successfully different play areas are working, watching closely where children spend their time and play, and what areas they avoid. Whilst staff are always attentive the level of supervision is modified to reflect the ages of the children and their physical ability. The staff discuss how children can experiment and take calculated risks within a safe and nurturing environment.

Children's independence is fostered; they are very comfortable about making choices. The range of resources is carefully chosen and there is equipment that develops all areas of learning. There is an array of natural materials for children to explore and stimulate children's senses. All the equipment is in good condition and well maintained ensuring it is safe for children to use. There is nursery size furniture that enables children to undertake tasks easily and comfortably.

Staff undertake thorough risk assessments of the premises, equipment and activities. Children and parents are greeted by a member of staff each day and at the end of the session they ensure children are safely returned to an adult staff know and recognise managing the safe delivery and collection of the children. Staff identify potential hazards and risks and safety equipment is in place to prevent accidents, for example, socket covers. All staff are safety conscious and aware of their responsibility to keep children safe when they deliver an activity or take them on short outings in the local community. Staff take the opportunity on outings to teach children about road safety using a local zebra crossing and they discuss, in an age appropriate manner, stranger danger. This helps them begin to take responsibility for their own personal safety. A daily visual check of the premises each day is undertaken to maintain the safety standards. Regular fire drills are carried out and staff ensure they use different exits so

that staff and children do not become complacent about the procedure. A photographic sequence of a fire drill is being prepared to help children understand the procedure.

All staff are aware of their responsibility to safeguard children from harm. They are aware of the different types of abuse and feel confident they would recognise if a child needs protection. The safety and welfare of the children is paramount; there are comprehensive policies and procedures with all the phone numbers of relevant agencies to hand. Staff attend child protection training as it becomes available and cascade information to all staff members through internal training sessions. The member of staff who most recently attended training has made a notice board specifically about safeguarding children for parents. There are lots of leaflets available for parents with advice of how to protect their children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The staff have an excellent understanding of how the youngest children learn and provide them with a range of activities that follow their interest and enable them to explore and experiment. They listen carefully to what children say and take note of what they show enthusiasm about. Staff then immediately include something in the next day's plans to help them capitalise on the children's natural curiosity and current learning interests. This is teaching children that what they say is heard and of value. The children free-flow to an attractive outdoor area for most of the session. Staff are thoughtful practitioners and have made this easy for children and parents by purchasing a selection of waterproof clothing and Wellingtons enabling children to play outside in all weathers. The children can independently dress themselves appropriately giving them control over the choice to play indoors or outdoors when they wish. Many of the activities are sensorial and use natural materials; the children enjoy the opportunities to discover for themselves the texture and properties of different materials. Children ride their bikes over bubble wrap to make a noise; this activity gives rise to lots of laughter.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress toward the early learning goals; all the staff are familiar with the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. It is part of the group's ethos to use the outdoor area as often and effectively as possible. It is easy to detect the children who thrive and learn well outside. The staff use an innovative method to plan appropriate activities for the children; they include for the next day anything children have shown a particular interest in, or have asked to do. A child for example, wants to make a house and it is of importance to him that it is wall papered. Staff bring in for him recycled materials of shapes that lend themselves to becoming a house and different wallpapers. The child who requested this activity makes a house alongside several others who are inspired by the activity. Staff observe the children and identify their next steps in learning; they discuss their key children's progress at staff meetings and include information in the plans to help all staff extend the children's learning and maximise teaching opportunities. Children are motivated to learn and are happily engaged in their activities; both three and four year olds are suitably challenged.

Children show sustained interest in their activities; they demonstrate good levels of concentration. They are developing respect for their own and others' cultures and beliefs via regular topic work. Children develop meaningful relationships with the staff and other children. They understand that part of working harmoniously is about respecting one another, taking

turns and sharing fairly. Children's behaviour is very good; they are able to work co-operatively with one another.

Children communicate clearly to staff what they want to do because there is certainty that the staff will do their best to accommodate them. Even shy, more reticent children learn that what they request will be included in the plans for them. Children learn to recognise their own names because they have several opportunities throughout the session to do this. They thoroughly enjoy show and tell time and feel very important standing on the platform to speak. Staff encourage children to develop a love of books and reading. They realise that books are for finding information as well as for pleasure. Writing materials are always available and children practise their emergent writing skills regularly. All children are given encouragement to scribe and quite a lot of children are able to form recognisable letters; they are very proud of their 'writing'. Staff help children make a 'Talking and Thinking' book, recording what the children think and say about the activities enabling them to plan a new activity or extend a current theme of learning. Staff use photographs to very good effect, for example, helping children choose the resources they want even if their speech is limited. Children love to look at the photos of past events and chat with staff, re-visiting what they did and consolidating their knowledge. The group are part of a project to encourage children's communication, language and literacy development. Their hard work in this area is recognised and they are asked to share their good practice with other groups.

Most children know their colours and count because staff naturally refer to these often as they play with them. Children's spatial awareness is developed through making jigsaw puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty and a variety of construction toys. There is a good range of equipment that helps children sort, match and group objects. Children are learning how to analyse data, for example, they have made a simple graph about the different pets children own, enabling them to see which animals are most popular. Staff take opportunities as they occur to familiarise children with the correct mathematical names of different shapes. They undertake simple calculations when they sing number rhymes and at snack time. Regular sand and water play helps children begin to understand the concepts of measurement and volume.

Staff are good facilitators and enable children to be able to make self chosen projects by ensuring they have access to all the materials and suitable tools they might need to succeed. Children are confident to experiment even though things may not go to plan; there is no fear of failure, just an elimination of methods that do not work so well. This creative atmosphere allows children to gain experience and get feedback for themselves about what does and does not work. Children love to play with the 'experimentation box' that has mechanical toys that children can use to discover how they work. Regular outdoor play helps children notice differences in the weather and seasons. Staff expand children's knowledge by delivering topics in interesting ways and using as many authentic resources as possible, for example, they have real ice cubes to play with when learning about the arctic and real food to chop and mix in the home corner. Staff use flour as pretend snow and children love to drive their bikes through this, looking at the patterns their tyres make and using it to make footprints. Children learn about time through the use of pictorial time lines depicting a usual session's sequence. They also love to look at photos of past activities and remember what happened.

Staff encourage children to use their physical skills imaginatively; they are able risk-take in a safe environment. Children, for instance, are able to walk up the slide under careful supervision and use the large play equipment to discover what they can manage. They move confidently, imaginatively and safely with control and co-ordination. A soldier recently visited the group and children loved to scramble under the cargo nets he bought with him. Staff teach children

the importance of healthy lifestyles. They frequently refer to healthy foods, the benefits of regular exercise and good hygiene practice. Children use a variety of hand held tools regularly; they use scissors with increasing control. The play dough table is very popular and children mould the dough to make recognisable objects.

Staff strongly encourage children to be creative. They have good opportunities to make discoveries about a range of natural materials using all of their senses. Children use their imagination as they role play indoors and in the garden. The small world play resources are well used; children use a toy crane and pretend they are on a building site building with bricks. Children's interest in fairies was extended by making the climbing frame into a castle. Staff use a variety of props to make story telling come alive; this keeps the children's interest because they can take an active role. The children's pictures are all very different and it is evident they are able to develop their own artistic talent without having to conform to any particular style.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel confident that staff will help them; they easily approach staff if they want something. Staff have a positive 'can do' attitude and work hard to respond to children's requests promptly realising that if the child has initiated the learning, then they are more likely to remain interested. Staff are mindful that all families are different and have offered to have their policies and procedures translated for parents in the past when this has been appropriate. The images and resources throughout the pre-school reflect diversity positively developing children's ability to appreciate people's differences. The staff respect one another as team members as well as respecting the children; this creates a positive and supportive environment. Children celebrate a variety of festivals from around the world teaching them about other cultures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are aware that some children may find learning difficult or have a disability. A member of staff takes responsibility for all children who require additional help. The group value the work she undertakes and give her time each week to observe and work with the children she takes responsibility for. If they identify that a child is experiencing learning difficulties they work in co-operation with the parents on an individual education plan that identifies realistic and achievable targets to help them progress. They are very skilled at providing a learning environment where all children can thrive and take a full and active role. They work closely with other agencies where necessary to provide an appropriate service to children.

Children's behaviour is excellent; they learn the difference between right and wrong because the boundaries are consistently applied by staff and desirable behaviour is given praise. Staff take children's age and stage of development into consideration when managing their behaviour. Much of the success of this group is because staff constantly evaluate whether the children have access to activities that hold their interest. Children show kindness and consideration toward one another. Staff are positive role models, they speak to children and one another calmly with respect.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed about the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum helping them understand how the activities provided help their children develop. Staff write on flip chart paper every day comments that are of interest to parents, for example, the number of children absent with chicken pox, what courses members of staff are undertaking, a welcome to visitors and children returning after sick leave. The staff make good use of parents' talents, for instance,

a type setter professionally produces the pre-school newsletter and more parents are reading it now the presentation is attractive. Parents are made very welcome and some are working towards a childcare qualification after becoming involved in the group by helping with the children's snack bar. Whilst they study they are able to gain practical experience at the group. Parents feel part of the pre-school community and give their time willingly, a mum and her work colleagues recently painted a mural in the children's garden area over a weekend. The pre-school take an active role in the community and often invite parents and other members of the community to share their talents with the children. They have had visits from the police, the lollipop lady, a soldier, bagpipe player (in full Scottish regalia), a librarian, reception teachers from local schools and various pets. The staff have created a Safeguarding Children notice board and have leaflets available to help parents protect their children from harm. The other notice board has photos of all the staff, main committee members and information about making a complaint ensuring parents know who to contact if they have any concerns. Parents are greeted at the beginning of each session and exchange information easily with staff when they collect their children. They all speak very highly of the staff and report that they feel their children are progressing very well. They know who their child's key worker is, and feel able to talk with them at any time about their development generally and their progress at home. There are some children who are collected by a childminder and therefore, the staff do not often see the parents. The staff write a contact book for these children so that their parents are not disadvantaged in any way. Parents are invited into the group to discuss their child's progress and look at their assessment records twice a year formally, however, they are welcome to visit and look at their records at any other time as well. This is a committee run group and there are parent representatives on the committee. The committee meetings enable parents to take a very active role in their child's education. Staff send out questionnaires and have a suggestion box to encourage two way communication between home and pre-school. The group's policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and always available to parents ensuring they know how the group operate. Children are taken out into the local community, they visit the local shops, observe the different houses and post letters at the post box. Staff have forged good links with the primary schools they feed and take the children to visit. They take the children's learning story for the reception teacher to read enabling them to see the progress the child has made. This good communication between pre-school to school helps the transition to go smoothly.

The group are also a partner with Medway Education Business Partnership. They accept students and undertake to support them. They work hard to raise students self-esteem and confidence and give them an understanding of the world of work. This work in the local community is further evidence of the staff's commitment to the children in the community; their ethos is to promote good citizenship through their work.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The playgroup is committee run, however, it is the supervisor and staff who take responsibility for the day to day running of the group. There are comprehensive policies and procedures that are always available for parents to read. The recruitment procedure is robust and all staff hold a current criminal records check. Staff are encouraged to update their training as courses become available. The supervisor is currently undertaking an early years degree, and the deputy hopes to start soon. Staff are clearly inspired by the courses they undertake and they like to put in place what they have learnt helping them to provide the best quality care and education for the children. Staff meetings are held regularly and they use these meetings to review their

practice. All mandatory documentation is in place, for example, details about the children, attendance register, accident records and complaints log. Staff appreciate and understand the importance of confidentiality.

The group operate a key worker system. All the staff are dedicated to their work and take great pride in what they do. The pace and routine of the day works exceptionally well, children demonstrate excellent levels of involvement. If a child is not engaged the practitioners take responsibility for examining why and providing activities that will excite the child. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management are outstanding. Regular training helps staff keep abreast of new childcare initiatives. All staff have the opportunity to contribute to the self evaluation process. They hold regular staff meetings and on each occasion they discuss and evaluate how well they are meeting the five outcomes for children. This gives staff plenty of opportunities to put forward any ideas they may have to improve the care and education for the children. All staff are considered important members of the team, they have a passion for their work and continually strive to make improvements. An appraisal system and regular supervision help the manager and staff identify training needs. They also operate a peer mentoring scheme which staff report works very well. By observing each other, they report that they are continually learning new ways of working. All staff are encouraged to update their knowledge regularly as courses become available and they always cascade the information back to the staff who did not attend. There is a staff handbook that ensures all staff are familiar with the policies and procedures. The staff induction procedures ensure all staff know about the group's procedures for safety, behaviour management and safeguarding children. Medway council recognise that the group offer a particularly stimulating environment and they want other groups to visit them to gain experience in delivering communication, language and literacy activities.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection two recommendations were made that relate to Standard 3 - Care, Learning and Play and Standard 9 - Equal Opportunities.

The staff were asked to develop staff's knowledge and skills on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and ensure the requirements are incorporated into practice and use a system for planning and observing a suitable range of activities for children under three years which is appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs.

Both recommendations are addressed. The staff familiarised themselves with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, they purchased more resources that reflect diversity positively and appointed a member of staff to take responsibility for equality issues. All staff have undertaken training about the Birth to three matters framework and they plan and deliver entirely appropriate activities for this age group.

At the last education inspection two points for consideration were made to increase children's understanding of time by providing resources to enable them to understand the sequence of events during sessions, such as timelines, and to further promote children's independence and responsibility by displaying a rota for the day's tasks.

Staff have addressed these recommendations. They have produced a pictorial time line of the session's usual events which helps children sequence events and have a concept of passing time. They have also produced a photo album that includes all the available activities. This has been very helpful because even children with limited communication skills can look through

the book and request resources they wish to play with encouraging them to make independent choices.

All these changes have improved the service delivery for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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