

Kidsunlimited Nurseries - Callands

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY293578 |
| Inspection date | 12 November 2007 |
| Inspector | Sarah Elizabeth Howell |
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| Registered person | Kidsunlimited Nurseries |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Kids Unlimited at Callands is one of 45 nurseries run by Kids Unlimited and provides full day care, sessional pre-school care and out of school care. It opened in 2004 and operates from eight rooms in purpose built premises. It is situated in the Callands area of Warrington close to motorway networks. A maximum of 103 children may attend the nursery at any one time and no more than 16 children may attend the out of school and sessional care facilities. Children have access to three enclosed outdoor play areas.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 52 weeks of the year. The out of school facility operates from 07.30 to 08.30 and from 15.30 to 18.30 term time and from 07.30 to 18.30 in the school holidays. The pre-school operates two daily sessions from 09.30 to 12.00 and from 12.30 to 15.00 term time only.

There are currently 168 children on roll. Of these 58 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area and the nursery also serves the local community. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 34 full and part-time staff. Over half the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting works closely with the local authority early years department.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff employ a wide range of very good health and safety procedures to promote children's good health and effectively reduce the risk of cross infection. For example, in the baby and toddler rooms where children still put toys in their mouths, these are washed regularly and sand from the sand trays in each room is discarded if it goes on the floor and not recycled. Nappy changing and disposal procedures are excellent. Staff model very good personal hygiene routines and children are taught how to develop good routines of their own from a young age. As a result by the time they are in the pre-school rooms most children are independent in their self care skills and have some understanding of why these hygiene routines are important in protecting their well-being.

Excellent first aid arrangements and good medication policies and procedures ensure that children's health needs are effectively promoted within the setting. Provision for children with specific dietary requirements is also good. Children's early healthy growth and development is very effectively promoted through the settings excellent provision of meals and snacks. Menus are planned in advance and shared with parents. Meals and snacks are cooked on the premises each day using fresh ingredients and include lots of fruit and vegetables. Children clearly enjoy what is provided and often ask for seconds which are generally available. Children of all ages have good access to fluids throughout the day. Younger children have their own cups which are kept filled and readily accessible to them and older children help themselves from the taps or from jugs within easy reach. The nursery has recently been given a five star healthy eating award from the Local Authority.

Staff also promote children's understanding of what being healthy means through planned activities. For example, toddlers explore a variety of fruits to find out which they like, pre-school children investigate how different foods help their body to grow strong and healthy, and children attending the Early Learners sessions do exercise sessions where staff help them to understand why being active is good for their bodies. In addition, opportunities for children of all ages to develop their fine motor manipulative skills are good as staff plan and provide regular art and craft activities. Children have access to a range of toys and equipment which support this area of their development.

Children have frequent opportunities to develop their physical skills and abilities. All children have opportunities to play actively through the organisation of the indoor environment and through the provision of planned physical activities, such as exercise sessions, dancing to music and 'soccer tots'. Generally children have appropriate access to outside play although this is more limited in the winter months especially for children aged under two. Children's emotional well-being is effectively promoted. Very good settling in procedures and good use of the key worker system supports children in making secure transitions into the setting and between home base rooms, as they get older.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed into the nursery by staff. A range of useful information is displayed for parents in the reception area and they appear relaxed and comfortable in the setting, chatting with staff about children's placements as they drop off and collect. Space is generally well organised to meet children's needs. For example, good use is made of indoor space to provide opportunities for active physical play when the weather makes outside play difficult. By moving furniture out of rooms and creating larger spaces, children can enjoy using outside play equipment, such as tricycles and bicycles in their home base rooms. However, the space used by children attending the out of school and Early Learners sessions is sometimes less effective in providing a home base area for these children as it is used as a thoroughfare by parents and staff as they move around the nursery.

Provision for outside play during the spring and summer is very good as the nursery has three separate play areas which allow children of different ages to play outside at the same time. However, observation of planning for activities and discussion with staff indicates that children do not use these facilities on a daily basis, particularly in the winter months, for example, due to limited access to buggies, children under two may only experience outside play once a week.

The setting generally provides some very good toys and equipment for children and some of the home base rooms are well equipped with toys and resources. For example, Baby 1 and Rising 3s and the pre-school rooms are very well equipped with a wide range of good quality play materials. However, this is not consistent across the nursery or across the different types of provision within the nursery. For example, babies in rooms two and three have much more limited access to toys as there are none stored readily available around the room and resources which provide stimulation for sensory development are only available at set times when this activity appears on planning for activities. Children attending the Early Learners sessions have limited access to resources which allow them to develop their awareness of information technology and school age children have very limited access to resources which allow them to play imaginatively or be creative.

The arrangements for safety within the nursery are excellent. Discussion with staff indicates that they are very well informed about safety issues and that good supervision of children at all times is a paramount consideration. For example, sleeping children are carefully monitored and the arrangements for collecting and supervising children as they walk to and from the out of school club sessions are very good. A wide range of documentation shows that staff closely monitor all aspects of safety within the setting. Accident records are reviewed in detail each month and information from this process is used to inform risk assessments for each area. Similarly the arrangements for fire safety in the setting are thorough and effective with regular testing of safety equipment and emergency evacuation drills.

Children's safety and well-being are further enhanced by staff's very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. Staff clearly describe the range of possible indicators of abuse and neglect and explain their procedures for monitoring and recording any concerns they have about children's welfare. Senior staff who take the lead role in child protection are well informed about the procedures for seeking advice and guidance and referring any concerns to the relevant organisations. Written policies giving details of procedures and contact details for the agencies involved are shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff generally make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide activities which support all areas of young children's development. They work closely with parents to maintain very young children's established routines and to help them to make comfortable transitions into the nursery. Children enjoy warm, reassuring physical contact with staff; being held, cuddled and sitting on staff's knees to share books. As a result they appear settled and secure in their relationships with staff and this gives them confidence to explore their environment. Staff spend their time playing with and observing children and using the information from these observations to help them to adapt care arrangements.

At times the organisation of the environment and the routines of some home base rooms detracts from children's enjoyment of the time they spend in the setting. For example, in baby rooms two and three there are times when children appear uninterested in the limited range of resources which are set out for them. At these times children are more likely to appear tired and frustrated. Similarly, the majority of children in these age group rooms are all put down for a sleep after lunch, although this does not always reflect their individual needs. Staff talk about keeping children going so that they do not miss out on activities, however, for some children this means they then fall asleep before they have finished their lunch.

Staff provide effective support for young children's early communication and language development. For example, they respond well to babies and toddlers non-verbal communication and are encouraging of their attempts to communicate and support these through linking signing to spoken words. In addition, children enjoy sharing books with staff, singing and lots of nursery rhymes and conversation all of which support this area of their development.

Children's physical development is appropriately supported both through the organisation and layout of rooms and furniture and through the use of planned activities and a range of equipment. For example, babies and toddlers have lots of space to explore, and well placed, sturdy furniture enables them to pull themselves up to standing and feel supported whilst practising their balance and walking.

Provision for older toddlers and rising threes actively supports all areas of children's development. Rooms are well organised with a wide range of activities for children to choose from, although readily accessible opportunities for children to be creative and explore mark making when they want to are limited. Staff are skilled at extending children's enjoyment of their play through their supportive role. For example, enabling a large number of children to participate in sand play, at one time, by encouraging sharing, turn taking and cooperative play.

School age children attending the out of school and holiday club have access to a satisfactory range of resources which are stored so that children know what is available and can help themselves to what they want. Some types of play are poorly resourced or are only available to children on a limited basis. For example, props to support imaginative and social play for younger children are very minimal and although children can do colouring each evening, other art and craft activities are only planned on one evening each week. Children enjoy bringing their own hand held electronic toys, which are stored in the nursery, and are available for them to use each evening. Children also comment that they enjoy playing outside and going on trips to the park when the holiday club is operating. Staff involve children in sharing their ideas for new resources and planning activities for the holidays so that children's interests are respected and reflected in the planning for the provision.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The nursery uses continuous provision to enable children to develop their learning through doing the things they enjoy and are interested in. Generally the balance between adult and child lead activities appropriately supports children's learning. However, the emphasis on focused observations sometimes detracts from this as children are not always keen to take part in these activities. Children are developing effective listening skills as staff provide good opportunities for children to develop these. For example, stories are read with enthusiasm and expression and children listen with interest and are encouraged to ask questions and anticipate what will happen next. Staff promote children's confidence and self esteem through praise and encouragement and as a result children are positive about their abilities and happily try things for themselves which actively promotes their skill development.

Generally, planning indicates that activities provided support children's development and learning across all six areas of learning. However, discussion with staff and observation of planning for the Early Learners sessions suggests that these children have more limited access to the range of creative activities that pre-school children experience. There are few opportunities to explore information and communication technology and programmable toys. Staff explain that children also contribute their own ideas to the planning process which helps to ensure that planned activities reflect their interests. However, the emphasis on hand writing and pencil control skills for young children is not always appropriate as this is an early learning goal generally linked to older children in their reception year at school.

Monitoring children's progress through the stepping stones and onwards is generally effective. Staff currently use planned, focused observations of children to enable them to monitor children's learning and development. Children's developmental profiles are consistently maintained, although there are large gaps of information about children's progress in relation to many of the stepping stones. Staff explain that this will be changing in the weeks ahead as the setting is adopting new methods of monitoring children's progress in preparation for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This will involve them in using more spontaneous observations to reflect a more detailed picture of children's abilities in relation to the stepping stones.

Parents are kept well informed about the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum both through planned events, daily discussion with staff and regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress at the 'How is it going' meetings which are organised twice a year for the parents of all children attending the nursery. Quarterly reports also give them more detailed information about their child's progress. Staff also encourage parents to support children's learning through giving them ideas for activities they can do at home. For example, pre-school children have their own library books which they take home to share with parents. As a result children are supported in making appropriate progress across all the areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work very closely with parents to be well informed about children's individual needs, dispositions and family circumstances. In addition staff regularly observe and monitor children to help them develop their knowledge and understanding of how best to plan and provide for children's care and development. All children are treated with equal concern and staff encourage children to learn about fairness through actively promoting sharing, turn taking and kindness towards each other.

Staff provide good support for children for whom English is an additional language by working closely with both parents and children and often using words from the child's home language to ensure good communication and to help the child acquire more words in English. All children have daily access to activities and resources which give them positive messages about diversity. For younger children this is often through the use of resources, such as books, puzzles and art and craft resources. Older children participate in planned activities which enable them to explore the similarities and differences between people and their cultures.

The setting provides very good support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Through close liaison with parents and with other agencies involved in providing support to families and children, staff adapt their practises and plan effectively to overcome any potential barriers to children's development and learning. In addition, although funding is not available from the Local Authority, managers and unit coordinators make very good use of staff within the setting to provide additional support for those children who need it. Staff implement and regularly review individual education and behaviour plans to ensure effective support for children with particular needs.

The setting uses positive behaviour management techniques to help children to learn to behave well. Children enjoy receiving lots of encouragement and praise from staff about both their efforts, acts of kindness and cooperation and for their achievements. As a result their good behaviour promotes their enjoyment of their time in the setting and their ability to make progress with their development and learning. Staff effectively employ a range of age appropriate techniques to manage minor inappropriate or disruptive behaviour and to help children to learn about right and wrong ways to behave. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good. The setting provides a wide variety of useful information for parents which is very readily accessible. For example, the settings policies are displayed in the entrance area and each room displays clear information about the activities children do and how these are planned to promote their development and learning. In addition staff communicate daily with parents to keep them well informed about children's experiences and progress and written information about children's development is well maintained and very regularly shared with parents. Good use is made of photographs to help parents make links between what children are doing and it's impact on their learning and development. Parents receive very good information about how the Foundation Stage Curriculum guidance is used in the setting both through discussion with staff as their children move into pre-school and through regular written and verbal feedback using children's profiles.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Procedures for recruiting, vetting and ensuring the ongoing suitability of staff are very thorough. For example, staff undergo detailed induction procedures during their first week of employment and all staff have annual appraisals and follow personal development plans which identify their training needs. Access to training is also good as staff can participate in both local authority early years courses and those provided by Kids Unlimited as well. Staff make good use of training, for example, to inform their approach to work with children with behavioural difficulties. The organisation and deployment of staff is also effective as consistent room based and relief staff and a low turnover of staff in the nursery, provides very good continuity of care for children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Head office, the nursery manager and unit coordinators, provide clear guidance and good support for staff. However, staff working with children receiving funded nursery education do not seem clear about the some aspects of the Foundation Stage guidance, for example, the planning of age appropriate activities and the use of observations to inform planning for children's individual next steps. Current practice relates to planning for groups of children rather than clearly identifying individual children's needs. However, all activities are closely linked to the areas of learning and the stepping stones and staff work hard to keep children's developmental profiles up to date.

Head office, managers and staff also work well together to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the care and support they provide for children's learning. For example, all staff are involved in evaluating their own practice and a buddy system is used to help new staff gain confidence in using this process and developing their skills and abilities. Unannounced model inspections are carried out by the Kids Unlimited organisation annually to review the standards in the setting. These are detailed and thorough and used effectively to develop and enhance both individual practises and organisation. Head office are proactive in relation to supporting staff in keeping up with changes in relation to early years legislation and practice. They have already begun to provide training and written guidance in relation to how the setting will introduce the Early Years Foundation Stage ahead of it's implementation in September 2008.

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are comprehensive and effective. For example, accident records are reviewed in detail each month to enhance the safety arrangements for children in the setting and children's developmental files make good use of photographs to make links between what children are doing and how this supports their development and learning. Senior staff work closely with other organisations such as Sure Start, teachers from local schools and health care professionals to provide very good support for children and their families. For example, helping children make smooth transitions into reception classes and helping parents find effective support for children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in February 2005 three recommendations were made. Two of these related to the out of school facility. The setting was asked to develop it's behaviour management policy to reflect the needs of school age children. This has now been appropriately addressed and a separate policy for the out of school provision is shared with parents. In addition, the out of school facility was asked to increase the resources available to children attending. A greater sufficiency of play materials is now available to children using the facility, however, the range of resources particularly those providing opportunities for imaginative play and resources for older children remain limited. The last recommendation related to developing the process of identifying the next steps for children's individual development in the setting's assessment processes. This has largely been achieved successfully, as staff working with children under three use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help them observe and plan appropriately for children's developmental progress. Staff working with children aged three and over use key worker group observations to help them to track children's progress through the stepping stones and identify how to support their next steps.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 6:Safety. Ofsted required the provider to investigate. The provider informed Ofsted of the action taken to meet the National Standard. Ofsted is satisfied that the provider remains qualified for registration. 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 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 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 the opportunities for children under two to be active and enjoy the outdoors
- review the organisation of resources in the baby (2/3) and toddler (1) rooms and in the Out of School and Early Learners sessions so that they are more readily accessible to children and allow them to use their imagination and have more choice.

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 the opportunities for children using the Early Learners sessions to access information technology resources and programmable toys
- review planning for activities to ensure that they are informed by staff's observations of children's progress through the stepping stones and clearly identify children's next steps.

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