



Kidsunlimited Nurseries - Crewe

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY268939
Inspection date	09 May 2006
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Setting Address	Crewe Business Park, Coppicemere Drive, Electra Way, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6GZ
Telephone number	01270 254662
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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

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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, Crewe, is part of a chain of nurseries run by Kids Unlimited. It opened in 2003 and operates from a purpose built building situated in one of Crewe's business parks. It is within walking distance of the railway station, local businesses and a college.

A maximum of 132 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07.30 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year. It closes only for

statutory bank holidays. All children have access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 103 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area as many of their parents travel in to work on or around the business park. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special needs, but there are no children currently attending who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 regular and 4 relief staff. Of the regular staff, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications and 4 are working towards a qualification. The nursery has access to education and special needs advisors from Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay very healthy because practitioners employ a thorough knowledge of appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. The environment is well designed and staff are well organised to ensure that children wash hands, blow noses, keep warm and protect their clothes with suitable aprons. Hygienic nappy change procedures are routinely used and shoes are taken off or covered to keep the floors clean for crawling babies. Individual face cloths are used to wipe toddler's faces after meals. Tables are cleaned and cloths put on in all rooms for all meal times. Three and four-year-olds have brought in their own toothpaste and brush to use after lunch where parents support this. All these procedures effectively support children's good health. However, there are no mats by some outside doors, which means that wet and dirt is transferred indoors, sometimes posing a slipping and hygiene hazard.

Three and four year olds show good levels of independence with toileting, hand washing and preparing to go in and outside. For example, they ask whether they need to put on their sun cream or wear their hat. Children also demonstrate an understanding of why they need sun cream and why they wash their hands. Some staff support the development of good bodily awareness by talking to children about this regularly through the routines of the day. However, older children have few opportunities to help with sweeping, mopping or wiping down surfaces after themselves. Staff have to spend time cleaning play dough out of the water tray, or wiping up spillages from the drinking water jug. This means that children are not always learning the consequences of their actions and lack good adult contact when staff time is taken up with cleaning.

Many staff are trained in first aid or food hygiene. They follow clear written sickness procedures and keep parents well informed about childhood illnesses and diseases. They follow the policy displayed in the entrance for parents by ensuring that sick or infectious children do not attend, for example, until their chicken pox have all scabbed over. Rigorous systems ensure that parents give detailed consent and designated staff make full records for all medicines administered. Accidents are also

properly recorded, with parent signatures of acknowledgement each time. These procedures help to protect children's health.

Children enjoy adequate physical activity indoors and participate in occasional yoga, soccer tots or music and movement sessions. Babies have safe and appropriate furniture to pull up on as they begin to walk. If the weather is bad, rooms are adapted and bikes are brought inside and used in the spare downstairs rooms. Outside, the designated play area comprises a soft surface area for each age range with an additional grassed area for the pre-school children. Children can enjoy a variety of free play which nurtures their sense of space and ability to control their bodies.

Children are very well nourished and enjoy a healthy balanced diet because the menu for snacks and meals is planned by a nutritionist. Menus are displayed for parents and food is fresh, and prepared from scratch. Children eat well and their intakes are recorded, even in the pre-school room. This enables correct feedback to parents about what, and how much, children have actually eaten during the day. Babies are weaned when parents indicate their wish for this and bottle feeding is managed efficiently, using good preparation routines. Staff are well organised and sit with children, one of whom helps to serve the meal or snack. Children enjoy the social aspect of meal times and can talk amongst themselves and with staff.

Children drink water or milk and have access to water at all times. Under 3s have drinking cups readily accessible, while jugs of drinking water and cups are set out for pre-school children to help themselves. Children have any special health and dietary needs carefully met because practitioners work well with parents to elicit any information about these at the beginning of placement through enrolment forms. All staff are aware of the details of all food preferences and allergies and make sure that needs, such as dairy allergies are not overlooked. Procedures, such as using colour coded plates and dishes ensure that the right meals go to the right children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a purpose built, warm, bright, secure and safe environment. The entrance is spacious and calm, with soothing music and pleasant aroma therapy oils to welcome children and parents. Each home room is comfortable, with toilets or nappy changing areas, so that children can move around the setting with confidence. Furniture is minimal and appropriately sized to facilitate easy access for eating or working at table-top activities. However, in the pre-school rooms, noise levels are very high because sound is magnified through echoing and is not dampened by anything which absorbs sound. This adversely affects children's ability to concentrate and persist in their learning and play.

There is excellent security to the only public entrance door. It has a keypad system, so that only registered parents and staff can get into the building. Health and safety policies are displayed and used, while risk assessments are systematically used to identify any safety problems which are rectified through the staff safety representative. Staff are vigilant and try to ensure that children move about safely within the setting and with increasing responsibility for themselves. However,

pre-school children sometimes run indoors, using the toilets corridor to go between their two areas. They do not always put chairs back under tables when they get up to move on. As a consequence, one child trips over.

Children use some stimulating resources which are clean and purchased from reputable sources. For example, an investigation table with a light source allows children to examine objects closely. Story sacks provide props and activity ideas to capture pre-school children's interest in stories, while wooden toys and sensory bags provide babies and toddlers with a good range of sensory experiences. These resources contribute significantly to children's enjoyment and achievement and staff set them out for children to access easily. However, children rarely choose resources independently because many items are in large cupboards or on window ledges which they cannot access. Some of the resource boxes, although accessible, are very heavy to move.

Children are secure and well supervised throughout the day because staff are vigilant. They keep areas clean, dry and safe. In addition they regularly practise the emergency escape route and procedure. This proficiently ensures children's safety in an emergency situation. Parents give consent for photos, baby massage and administration of nappy and eczema creams. These help to ensure children's health, safety and protection from abuse.

Children are adequately protected from abuse because all staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection, which is explained during the staff induction process. Child protection concerns are recorded and shared with the designated child protection staff member. The policy about child protection is displayed and parents are asked to sign that they understand the staff's responsibility to follow up any child protection concerns with social services.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and toddlers are developing a high level of confidence and self-esteem because staff talk and listen to them, having high expectations of what they can achieve. They benefit from the early communication skill of baby sign language which is taught to babies and used by parents at home. As a result, they separate well from their carers and go to play confidently alongside staff and friends, using a good range of appropriate toys.

Children are happy and settled because staff generally interact positively with children and work well together as a team. They put children into small groups for many activities, such as outside play, focussed learning activities and craft work, so that they receive sufficient help and direction to make the most of the activity. Babies are particularly secure and alert because they receive so much one to one attention from staff who are giving eye contact, cuddles and talking constructively to them. Children show adequate levels of interest in what they do, but very little adult led play is offered to 2 and 3-year-olds. Instead, children mostly select from activities which have been set out and seldom select other games or toys from around the room.

Staff plan activities which clearly follow the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. As a result, children's enjoyment and achievements are generally good and their progress is fed back clearly to parents. However, they are not clearly adapting their plans to meet each child's specific needs for their next steps.

Outdoor activity areas are adequate but there are few opportunities for children to extend their learning while outdoors. This is because there are too few items of interest and staff do not involve themselves sufficiently in developing outdoor games and activities. For example, climbing and developing balancing skills are under-developed because there is only one climbing apparatus in the pre-school playground. Other resources, such as chalking boards on the walls have no chalk supplied and the large sandpit remains covered because the sand is old and needs replacing so children do not benefit from this either.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere; a varied programme of activities covering all the areas of learning; and an approach which fosters good relationships, self-confidence and good social behaviour. Children enjoy an adequate range of activity areas within their base rooms. Role play, reading, construction, craft and experimental areas are set up at all times, but some of these are poorly resourced. Books are worn, role play props are limited and the computer mouse is not working. This limits the stimulation which children get when they are playing freely and choosing activities.

Staff make too few opportunities to play alongside children during free play, to extend their achievements and learning. There is under use of areas during free play time because staff do not question, challenge and join in enough to help children to focus, persist, resist distraction and achieve as much as they can. Children also have few opportunities to discuss and understand the structure of the day, the purpose of activities and how these link to the current theme. This means that children ask few questions, cannot make sufficient links in their play and activities and therefore do not make as much progress as possible.

Children understand what behaviour is expected of them and are making satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. This is because staff are generally successful in providing for their personal, social and emotional development. Staff know each child well and encourage friendships between them, so that they know about one another and consider one another. There are some positive techniques to encourage children to help, join and behave well. For example, 'oranges' can be awarded to individual children for them to hang on the tree with their name apple. Good social skills are nurtured especially at meal times, where children serve one another and wait until everyone has their meal before beginning to eat. Likewise, children enjoy good opportunities to talk with staff in very small groups as they complete pictures and weekend news for their weekend scrapbook. This quality attention is positive and underpins children's ability to learn because it gives them great self-confidence and a desire to learn new skills.

Children make steady progress because staff have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage and a satisfactory appreciation of how young children learn. Their

activity planning is according to termly themes and carefully addresses stepping stones to the early learning goals. Daily activity plans give direction for the activities undertaken during the day. However, staff do not introduce these clearly enough for children to make connections between the activities and structure of the day and what they are learning. Staff regularly evaluate the outcomes from activities undertaken and complete individual profiles on each child, which show when stepping stones have been achieved. They also make written observations, dating and using these examples to bring children's developmental records to life.

Children's progress is best when staff lead group or individual activities. Some staff present well planned activities to children in a way that includes each one and helps them to consolidate and move on in their learning. For example, a member of staff leads excellent small group sessions with about six children. She uses 'compare bears' and flashcards to successfully involve children in exciting and fun learning about number, shape, size, opposites and 'spot the mistake'. Staff also encourage children to calculate and use number through daily routines, such as lining up to go out. However, opportunities to write and to talk about sounds and letters through the routines of the day are seldom taken .

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children join in reasonably well, take responsibility and play a productive part in the setting because the warm environment and friendly, purposeful staff, help children feel at home from the outset. All aspects of the day endeavour to promote children's sense of belonging and responsibility for themselves and others as they play. There are good settling in procedures and babies are held regularly and receive good eye contact. There is lots of one to one comfort given to babies when they are upset, for example, because they are teething.

Children's individual needs are met well because staff skilfully make individual plans and use their time to help children with health, concentration, behaviour, language or other particular needs. Staff use enrolment information well to ensure that individual children's routines are followed. For example, special creams may be applied for eczema after every nappy change, feeds can be at times requested by parents, and comforters from home can be kept with the child. Children with special needs are included fully in the life of the setting because there is space for easy movement. Adults are committed to inclusion and keep up to date by undertaking relevant training and welcoming professionals in to assist with play plans. However, not all staff working with children are familiar enough with individual play plans. This means that the plans are only really followed in assigned one to one time, rather than throughout the activities of the day.

Children are helped to consider and value diversity because there are various books, dressing up costumes, dolls, musical instruments, play figures, and games which show positive images of culture and special need. Activities using food tasting, photos, stories and role play have successfully brought festivals and saints' days, such as Chinese New year, Diwali and St. Patrick's Day to life for children. Posters or

pictures are also used which show people from other cultures. There are also some resources to promote children's awareness of disability.

Most children behave well and work harmoniously together because staff are generally vigilant and teach them how to consider others. Most children sit on their bottoms so that they don't tread on others, but a few will not sit nicely and fidget constantly. Staff explain to children why their behaviour is unacceptable and encourage them to show how nicely they can sit. Toddlers are encouraged to hug their friends by way of apology if they have been unkind. Staff shadow children who are biting and distract, redirect and monitor, ensuring that parents know what action is being taken without identifying the biters. Good manners are taught and expected from pre-school children at meal and snack times. Staff usually praise children when they clear up properly, sit well for group time, or wait their turn. However, pre-school staff are not always utilising their oranges reward system to full effect.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good. Children receive consistency of care between home and nursery because staff communicate well with parents. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the care and education from the nursery. They have regular opportunities to verbally share their own expectations and their child's routines and starting points with a key worker. In addition, written reports of their child's daily progress are made available alongside evidence of work and developmental profile reports which are regularly completed. Newsletters keep parents well informed about general matters, while information about the pre-school educational programme is also given and displayed with photo evidence to support it, so that parents can appreciate the curriculum which their pre-school child is following. Parents also have many ways to be meaningfully involved in their child's learning at home, through ideas for home activities about the current theme.

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

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment and vetting procedures work well to ensure that children are well protected and cared for by suitable staff, many of whom have qualifications in child care and want to continue to improve. This ensures a consistent and skilled team to work with children. Staff are given good opportunities to improve their knowledge by attending courses and workshops because relief staff cover is planned. In addition, good arrangements for induction, in house training and staff meetings ensure that staff stay up to date. They use their knowledge effectively in their planning, to provide children with a wide range of learning experiences.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Head office, the nursery manager and coordinators, provide good support to all staff. However, there are no room leaders responsible for the work of all the staff within a room at any one time. On occasions, this leads to reduced time spent directly with children and a lack of direction on the part of some staff. As a result, children are sometimes left too much to their own devices. Nevertheless, solid and supportive relationships are developed with all staff so that together they provide an inclusive

environment where every child matters. The leaders and managers support this and are committed to facilitating improvements wherever possible.

Staff deployment contributes satisfactorily to the outcomes for children. Staff to child ratios are adequate and staff generally work cooperatively together to effectively support each child. However, staff deployment in toddler rooms does not sufficiently prioritise contact time with children. As a result, children there do not make as much progress as possible. Staff deployment contributes best to children's health because staff are well informed and committed to meeting children's individual health needs which they do well, using established systems.

Policies and procedures work very well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. For example, child details provide sufficient information to enable good care to be given and policies are clear and appropriate, detailing the principles and practices of the setting. Registers and signing in books are accurate at all times and are reliable in the event of an emergency. Children's records are completed regularly so that profiles and reports are up to date.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four recommendations made at the last inspection in February 2004. The two which relate to documentation have been fully completed. Daily attendance registers now reflect children and staff's attendance and are kept in home rooms. All policies are up to date and available to staff and parents, including a lost and uncollected child policy. These are displayed and also given to all staff and parents. Children's safety is improved by these measures.

The recommendation relating to staff ratios is generally met, but ratios are still under when staff take breaks and lunches. However, staff ensure that children are organised so that this does not present a risk to them. Most children are asleep when lunch breaks are taken and large group activities are taking place when other staff are on breaks. Sufficient staff are always on the premises to manage any emergency evacuations safely.

The recommendation to maintain good behaviour during circle time has been partially met. New strategies have been used to some effect, but behaviour is still not always well controlled in group situations, especially when staff are on breaks. Children's enjoyment and achievement is partially improved as a result.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received concerns in relation to staffing ratios and staff deployment (National Standard 2). It was alleged that while staff members are on lunch there is one staff member looking after approximately 10 children aged under the age of two years, and that staff members are asked to do cleaning and domestic chores whilst being

counted in the adult to child ratios.

Ofsted investigated the concerns by carrying out an unannounced visit on the 7 June 2004 and an announced visit on the 8 June 2004. Discussions, observations and examination of records demonstrated that National Standard 2 was not being met. Therefore, two actions were raised.

A further unannounced visit was made to the nursery on the 22nd June 2004 to monitor the actions raised. Discussion, observation of staffing ratios and examination of records demonstrated that the actions raised under National Standard 2 had been met. Ofsted is therefore satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps action and 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):

- ensure that background noise is reduced, so that the indoor environment is suitable for its purpose as a learning and play space for three and four year olds
- extend the range of age appropriate, good quality resources available to children at any one time
- extend the range of opportunities available for children's physical development, particularly for those under three
- review staff deployment in the toddler rooms to ensure that contact time with children is prioritised.

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):

- ensure that staff use their time and resources to help children make as much progress as possible
- ensure that teaching methods and questions challenge and interest children to help them focus, persist, resist distraction and achieve as much as they can
- ensure that leaders set clear directions in the room and are aware of how to adapt plans to meet individual children's needs so that there are improvements in organisation and the outcomes for children.

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