



## **Kidsunlimited Nurseries - Countess of Chester Hospital**

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 305135  
**Inspection date** 22 August 2006  
**Inspector** Suzette Butcher

**Setting Address** Countess of Chester Hospital N H S Trust, The Countess of Chester Health Park, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 1UL  
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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](http://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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kidsunlimited - Countess of Chester opened in 1994 and is one of the group of nurseries owned by Kidsunlimited Nurseries. It operates from a purpose-built, one storey building which is situated in the grounds of the Countess of Chester Hospital, on the outskirts of Chester. It caters for children from a wide surrounding area. The nursery is open from 7.00 to 18.00 each weekday throughout the year. Children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 95 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are 17 members of staff, of whom, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 2 members of staff who are working towards an early years qualification and 2 staff are unqualified.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Good health and hygiene routines are followed throughout the nursery to ensure that children are protected from cross contaminations and infections. Staff are trained in first aid and regularly update their knowledge to enable them to deal with minor injuries. Effective policies and procedures are in place to meet children's needs in the event of an emergency, accident or illness. Children develop good independence skills because they are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own health and hygiene as they follow good routines and guidelines from an early age. Staff ensure that children continue to learn and make progress in their self-help skills as they offer discreet support with lots of praise, gentle prompts and reminders. Younger children are skilfully guided through their personal care and offered many opportunities to become more independent. For example, children wipe their hands and faces with a fresh, wet flannel after they have eaten and gentle prompts remind them to find a tissue to blow their nose. Older children confidently manage their own personal care as they take themselves to the adjacent toilets and understand the purpose of hygiene routines. They proudly take turns to be the teacher to ensure that everyone washes their hands before meals. Consequently, children develop a strong sense of identity and self-confidence.

Children learn about the benefits of healthy eating in daily activities. They help to cultivate herbs and vegetables, such as onions and tomatoes and look forward to eating them for lunch. Children chat together and ask questions about where different fruits and vegetables grow. They think about which countries they come from and which items they ate on their recent holidays. Cookery and food tasting sessions provide opportunities for children to try new tastes and textures and consider the outcomes of a healthy diet. A daily breakfast club promotes a healthy start to children's day when they have time to enjoy cereals and milk in a calm, relaxing environment. Children enjoy a nutritious and balanced diet in the nursery with menus carefully planned in advance with advice from a nutritionist. Menus are displayed on a blackboard each day for parents. Babies and toddlers benefit from a well-planned weaning programme which is adapted to meet their individual needs and parents' preferences. Special dietary needs are effectively met as required and children's specific meals are clearly identified by using different coloured plates, cups and cutlery. Snacks and meal times are social occasions where staff and children happily gather together. Good manners are actively promoted when, for example, everyone says thank you before they start to eat. Children happily help themselves to pieces of

fruit and enjoy a drink of milk or water. Toddlers learn to use a spoon and fork and to drink from an open cup. Babies enjoy feeding themselves with their fingers or a spoon as they experiment with different textures and tastes. Fresh drinking water is available for older children to help themselves throughout the day and younger children are offered drinks on a regular basis or ask for drinks of water. Children are encouraged to drink more fluids in hot weather or after energetic play and they are reminded about the benefits of drinking plenty of water in a healthy lifestyle.

Every child enjoys regular opportunities to explore and develop their physical skills in the indoor and outdoor environment. Babies happily develop and practise their skills as they grasp interesting objects and eagerly test out their balance when they take a few steps on their own. Sessions of baby massage and yoga further develops their physical control and sense of well-being. Children gain confidence as they learn to move with control and use their bodies in many different ways. They make good progress in their physical development and are helped to understand how exercise helps them to stay healthy in 'soccer tots' sessions and movement activities. Children eagerly join in an organised race where they pedal their bicycles or drive their cars as fast as possible. Younger children enjoy running up and down grassy slopes or learning to negotiate the large climbing apparatus with guidance and support from staff.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in the well organised environment where staff vigilantly follow good procedures to protect every child. A secure entry system ensures that visitors are clearly identified and children are protected. Children move about freely and safely within the nursery areas. Daily risk assessments are in place to identify and minimise potential hazards and reduce risks. Toddlers are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe as their attention is drawn to recognise potential hazards and dangers in a supportive environment. Staff gently remind young children that if they do not sit carefully on their chair they may fall off and hurt themselves or they may have an accident if they ride around without looking. Staff regularly explain and skilfully reinforce safety issues in a way that is appropriate for each child's level of understanding and maturity. This enables older children to accept responsibility for their own safety within the nursery because they recognise potential hazards and have a good understanding of the possible consequences of their actions. For example, children remind each other that they may fall and bump their head if they rush around indoors. Older children eagerly discuss and agree safety rules within their play activities when, for example, they decide that it is safe for no more than two children to play in the tent at one time.

Children and their families are warmly welcomed in bright environment where informative notice boards in the entrance hall and nursery rooms keep them informed and staff are readily available to offer support. Colourful mobiles, photographs and bright, tactile displays of children's art work further enhance the attractive environment. This creates a strong sense of belonging for young children and their families. Babies and young children sleep safely in cots or on a mattress and are

frequently monitored by staff. A wide range of good quality, suitable resources are available for children to choose from throughout the setting and high safety standards are maintained. Children help themselves to interesting books or select a train to play with on the train track. Natural materials and everyday objects are in daily use in, for example, wooden furniture, numerous treasure baskets or low level sand and water trays. The outdoor play area provides further play opportunities on grass, hard or soft surfaced areas.

The good welfare of children is maintained because staff all recognise their responsibility to protect children. They have a clear understanding of child protection issues and procedures and the manager regularly attends training to update her knowledge. This ensures that all contact details and procedures are correct to enable the setting to safeguard children.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Babies and young children make good progress in all areas of their development in the supportive and stimulating learning environment. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is well established and provides a firm foundation for young children's play and development. Staff record observations of children's learning and plan future activities but the planning, observation and assessment cycle is not complete because staff do not effectively plan the next steps for each child. Kidsunlimited have recently introduced a planning system that identifies next steps in learning to enable staff to build on what each child already knows and can do and plan next steps in learning. The nursery are in the process of adopting this system to further improve the quality of children's play and learning.

Children enjoy themselves and are helped to achieve as they happily explore and experiment with an extensive range of interesting sensory and tactile materials. For example, a silver area is full of shiny materials, pots, pans, glittery mobiles and musical instruments or a wicker basket reveals a loofah, large stones and cardboard rolls. Babies happily explore and experiment with the numerous textures, sounds, smells and tastes with vigilant staff supervision. Staff are aware of when to stand back and when to become involved as they skilfully extend play and learning when, for example, they shake a plastic bottle full of glittery sand and praise a baby who copies the action. As babies play, they begin to realise that actions have consequences and begin to make more sense of the world around them. Toddlers are learning to concentrate for longer periods as they become purposefully engaged in meaningful tasks. For example, toddlers eagerly investigate a selection of inset puzzles where they gradually learn through trial and error and proudly share their pleasure with staff when they complete the task. Young children's learn to use their imagination as they enjoy pretend play activities with train tracks or play houses. They learn about cooperative play as they begin to interact with other children in a game of peep-bo or laugh together when they look into a mirror. Connections are made between other areas of learning when young children experiment with the property of magnets when they make a longer train.

Language and communication skills are strongly promoted throughout the nursery. The use of words, signs, gestures and facial expressions are encouraged and valued. Baby sign language is skilfully used to supplement and enhance the early stages of language and communication. Babies who are babbling and experimenting with sounds are offered praise and encouragement as staff repeat and develop sounds into words. Toddlers enjoy lively singing sessions and stories where they join in and learn to use the appropriate gestures. Older children happily gather together in a cosy area to listen to stories and share information.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a thorough understanding of the principles of early years education and their sound knowledge of the stepping stones and the early learning goals underpin their current practice. They understand that children progress at different rates and have individual strengths and weaknesses and activities are adapted appropriately to meet individual needs. This means that children are offered sufficient challenges and opportunities to progress at their own pace. Individual children's progress is observed, assessed and recorded on the 'How is it going?' document and this information indicates that children make steady progress within the Foundation Stage. Planning systems are in place with observations securely linked to assessments. However, the next steps in learning for individual children are not clearly identified which means that the planning cycle is incomplete and staff do not have all the information to build on what each child already knows and can do. Staff rotate the task of writing short-term plans with a member of staff from their nearby nursery. Consequently, plans are activity based and staff are creating plans for children they do not know.

Children are confident and relaxed because they are treated with respect and actively involved in decision making and relevant planning. For example, a new theme provides an opportunity for children to share ideas, offer suggestions and decide the directions they hope to follow in a spider diagram on the topic. They decide to change the role play corner into Rainbow Café after reading a story and making pictures of the Rainbow Fish in a colours topic. Children are encouraged to reflect on how well things have developed and how problems have been solved. They confidently offer new ideas and solutions, such as introducing numerals into an outdoor game where children run to find and identify different shapes. Staff ensure that there is a balance of free play and adult directed activities and opportunities are identified in short-term plans. Informal learning opportunities are maximised as staff skilfully introduce and reinforce concepts, such as shape, size, colour or weight in general discussions. They make comparisons and remark on the difference between a full and empty bottle of milk at snack time or talk about the changing colours when mixing paints.

Children have fun experimenting and making connections as they extend their experiences and learning. For example, children recall how they made chocolate play dough together and list the ingredients on the recipe. They comment on the changes in consistencies they noticed when they mixed solids and liquids together. They finally enjoy exploring the new smells and textures as they chat together. They estimate that they have made millions of shapes in a pattern, count how many more there are and compare the different shapes and imaginative objects they are

creating. Children eagerly respond to adults' interest because staff are skilled in talking and listening to children. They ask open ended questions that extend their experiences and learning and share information in lively conversations and informal comments. For example, children ask what twins are in a story and agree that 'It is quite amazing' when two babies are born together. Children enjoy many writing and mark making activities when they confidently write their own name or attempt to copy words in their news book. A shared reading scheme and introduces older children to meaningful literacy activities and a wide selection of books provides opportunities to research and gather information.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are well-behaved, polite and considerate towards adults and each other. They are confident and relaxed in an environment where they learn from the staff's calm, consistent and respectful example. Children are happy and develop positive self-esteem because they are valued as individuals and actively involved in decision making. They are skilfully helped and encouraged to be aware of the purpose of rules and boundaries and to understand that they are important for everyone to play fairly and have fun together. Minor disagreements are skilfully dealt with in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and level of understanding. Babies and young children enjoy warm relationships with staff and are reassured with lots of hugs and cuddles as they become more confident and gradually learn to recognise right and wrong.

Older children proudly accept responsibility for their own behaviour and learn to consider the consequences of their actions and the impact they have on others. They are actively involved in agreeing and reviewing rules and consequently respect boundaries. Stories and discussions provide opportunities for children to talk about feelings and emotions and develop empathy with others. Frequent praise and encouragement from staff enables children to develop independence, confidence and self-esteem. Children's achievements are enthusiastically celebrated and shared with parents.

Everyone is valued as an individual and warmly welcomed into the inclusive environment. Staff foster positive links with children's own culture and language and involve parents when, for example, they learn about and celebrate the Rakhi festival together. 'Sans limites' sessions further enhance children's awareness of different cultures when they learn basic French phrases and about life in France. Children have access to a well organised and varied range of resources which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Such opportunities helps children to appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are actively involved and included in a supportive and welcoming environment. An experienced and effective co-ordinator fosters a strong partnership with parents and relevant support agencies to support individual children and their families. Activities are adapted appropriately and additional support provided when required to help children to develop independence, confidence and achieve their learning potential. Individual programmes are implemented and

regularly reviewed to enable children to work towards identified learning and behavioural goals. These positive approaches help to foster children's spiritual, moral, and social development.

Information is regularly shared between parents, carers and staff to promote good continuity of care for every child. Keyworkers share information in informal chats with parents at handover times and form an effective partnership. Staff write an individual 'Day in the life...' on sleep, diet and activities which provides a progress record for parents and carers of babies and younger children. Observations about a child and individual records are made available for the child's parents when requested. Parents and carers also receive a report on 'How is it going?' twice a year which records special themes and activities the child has been involved with and the progress they have made in the different areas of learning. Parents are invited to share any reflections and comments in return. Information on the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' is displayed and newsletters inform parents about current topics and activities. Good settling in procedures are followed when, for example, children attend for short visits as they gradually familiarise themselves with the setting and people. This reassures new parents and every parent is encouraged to ring the nursery if they have any concerns about their child. Parents comment on their overall satisfaction with the quality of care provided in the nursery. Children and their parents enjoy special events in the nursery when, for example, they are invited to a Mother's Day or Father's Day breakfast club. The partnership with parents is satisfactory for funded children. Parents are informed about the children's activities and invited to discuss their own child's progress and development in parents' evenings. Parents who request advice from staff are offered suggestions and ideas about ways they can help their child. However, parents are not automatically offered the opportunity to become actively involved in their child's play and learning at home and in nursery. Children regularly take books home to share with their parents and often bring in items from home or from their recent holiday to share with everyone. This helps to promote stronger links between a child's life in nursery and at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is organised creatively to meet the needs of children and their families. The nursery rooms are all interlinked which reduces isolation amongst the staff team and promotes positive relations between staff and children across the age ranges. This enables children to happily move up to the next age group where they quickly settle. Areas within the rooms are organised for different play and learning activities with imaginative role play areas and cosy book corners. The outdoor environment provides an extension for some areas of children's play and learning but there are limited opportunities for babies and the outdoor area is not accessible in inclement weather.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Kidsunlimited organise effective procedures for recruitment and employment and staff suitability is established through comprehensive vetting procedures. Clear induction procedures are followed for new members of staff and an appraisal system continues to monitor



staff suitability and identify future training needs. Staff meetings provide opportunities to share information and review progress. Cluster meetings are held with key staff from other Kidsunlimited nurseries and Kidsunlimited employ their own care and curriculum team to offer guidance, support and training to staff. There is stable staff team in the nursery with many experienced members who are trained to degree level or have an early years qualification. Staff have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. They are deployed effectively and contingency arrangements are in place to cover for staff absence.

Kidsunlimited have recently introduced a comprehensive self-evaluation form which has been completed by the staff. This document identifies the settings strengths and weaknesses and enables management to prioritise areas for development and continually improve the quality of care they provide. Management have established a firm foundation for the provision of nursery education but they have not identified a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education. This means that the setting's strengths and weaknesses are not clearly identified to continually improve the quality of nursery education.

Accurate documentation is in place to support the care of children. Records detail the individual requirements of each child and include all relevant consents and contacts. Comprehensive policies and procedures are readily available for staff, parents and visitors. These are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Computerised systems ensure that effective contact is maintained with the Kidsunlimited central office and other Kidsunlimited nurseries.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the providers agreed to ensure that the operational plan was complete. Systems have been reviewed to ensure that all required details are in place to protect children and their families.

There was one point for consideration at the last inspection for nursery education; to extend information on short term plans to link with early learning goals and children's learning. Planning systems have been reviewed to include further details to improve the quality of learning within nursery education.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 1, Suitable person and National Standard 2, Organisation. An inspector visited the provision to carry out an investigation visit. The provider continues to meet the National Standards and 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 good. 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):

- increase outdoor play opportunities for babies and children.

#### **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):

- identify next steps in progress for individual children to build on what they already know and can do and to inform future planning (also applies to care)
- offer parents more opportunities to become actively involved in their child's nursery education
- implement a system to effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of nursery education.

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