



Kingfishers Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508880
Inspection date	30 October 2006
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Kings Hall, Kings Chase, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 4LE
Telephone number	01277 224326
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Registered person	Kingfishers 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kingfishers Pre-School opened in 1986. It operates from two connecting rooms in a church hall in Brentwood. The pre-school is open for four days a week during term time, from 09:30 until 12:00 and then 12:30 until 15:00 on Monday and Thursday, and 09:30 until 12:15 on Tuesday and Friday.

A maximum of 28 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. Currently there are 59 children on roll, of whom, 40 are funded for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight staff working with the children and five of these hold relevant early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted effectively through the pre-school's procedures. Children are protected from infection because parents know to exclude their children if they have an infectious illness. If children become ill whilst at pre-school they are cared for in a quiet place away from other children. Staff ensure that parents are informed about any health concerns they have, or any medication administered. This helps to safeguard children and keep them healthy. Children are well taken care of in the event of an accident as staff are qualified in first aid and have good access to equipment. However, they do not always ensure that parents sign the accident book when given written information about an accident. In the event of a concern about a child's health being raised, continuity of care may be affected if the pre-school has no record of the parents' acknowledgement.

Staff are attentive to hygiene and ensure that children play in a clean environment. They have good procedures in place for changing children's nappies when necessary. They are very aware of food hygiene issues, as the church has various written procedures in place regarding the use of the kitchen. Staff always wipe down the tables prior to snack time. Children learn why they need to wash their hands before eating, and cooking, and consequently have a growing awareness of good personal hygiene. They learn about healthy eating in conversation with staff when taking part in cooking activities. Their dietary needs are met appropriately at snack time. They enjoy a range of healthy snacks, such as, breadsticks and fruit. Children with food allergies eat appropriately because all staff are aware of their particular dietary needs. Children have access to drinking water throughout the sessions. Therefore, they are well nourished.

Children enjoy very good opportunities for regular physical activity. There are various resources and activities available for them to choose each day so that children can develop their self confidence and physical skills. They have fun riding cars and motorbikes around the room, using their feet to propel themselves forwards and backwards. They like to join in ring games, for example, 'Here we go round the Mulberry bush' and try out different actions. They gain body awareness, and control, when participating in music and movement sessions. Overall, children benefit from a range of activities which help to keep them fit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff work closely with church members in order to promote children's safety effectively, for instance, in ensuring that the hallway, toilets and kitchen are safe areas. Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen or toilets and are always well supervised around the church building. Tables and chairs stored in the hall are partitioned off so that they do not pose a hazard for children. Staff carry out regular risk assessments and also daily safety checks. There are adequate fire precautions in place and an evacuation plan is on display. Children practise regular fire drills so that they know what to do in an emergency. The two main entrance doors to the building are kept locked at all times in order to keep children secure while at pre school. Parents and visitors gain entry through

the use of a bell. However, the double doors at the back of the hall are not secured and lead out to a staircase. Children may be at risk if they venture through these doors. Staff ensure children's safety on occasional walks out to the post box by taking only one or two children at a time. Overall, children are safe and secure in their care.

Children have good access to a wide range of suitable, and safe, resources and equipment. These are sorted, and stored, so that they are easily accessible to staff, who set out a selection of toys and equipment to interest children when they arrive. Children are able to choose independently from table top toys, floor play and physical equipment. The resources are all of high quality and include various attractive, and long lasting, wooden toys, for example, a tree house and sand set. Children play safely with the resources because staff regularly check them for breakages. Children are becoming aware of personal safety during play. For example, they talk about the dangers of letting sand get on to the floor. They learn about keeping safe near to roads when taking part in role play. Consequently, they learn to keep themselves safe in different situations.

Staff have a good knowledge and awareness of child protection issues. If they have any concerns in this area, the supervisor ensures that action is taken immediately. There are appropriate procedures in place for keeping confidential records and all staff are aware of whom to contact for further advice. Consequently, children are well protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled and happy at pre-school. They come in to each session with interest and are eager to play. They become very involved in their play, for example, constructing train tracks and digging sand. Children have friendly relationships with each other and happily share resources while they play. They are gaining confidence and independence. Staff encourage them to choose activities and to have a second go if they wish. Children enjoy the freedom to explore independently and in this way gain self confidence. They have good levels of concentration, persevering until they complete a task. Children develop self esteem through staff offering much praise for their achievements, for instance, when they succeed in drawing a picture independently. Overall, children enjoy play and have increasing confidence in themselves.

Children are involved in a wide range of activities which support their development and learning. For example, when making 'spiders' they develop skills in cutting, counting and sticking, with the support of a member of staff. They are developing good communication skills because staff take time to talk with them, for instance, about items on the interest table or pictures in a book. Children are gaining an understanding of different concepts, such as, day time and night time, through discussion with others. They respond eagerly to adults who ask them questions about objects associated with a theme, for example, torches and optical fibres. Children have their individual needs met effectively. They receive much one-to-one attention when taking part in activities. They have good opportunities for investigating and exploring a range of stimulating resources. Consequently, children are learning effectively through their play.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are learning to make decisions when choosing from resources, and activities, set out around the rooms. They show increasing levels of concentration, for example, when carefully cutting around a circle for a spider and sticking 'legs' on in the right places. They copy their own names onto their pictures so that they can learn to write them independently. Children particularly enjoy story times and like to look at books on their own. They are learning to recognise the sounds and letters of the alphabet and can offer suggestions for words beginning with a particular sound. They count objects, and people, confidently and use mathematical language to compare shape and size. Children have good opportunities to take part in a variety of mathematical activities which extend their skills effectively. For example, finding, matching and counting 'dinosaur bones' to fit a given picture. They also learn to calculate, when working out how many bones they need to fill the whole picture. Overall, children are showing very good progress in the areas of literacy and mathematics.

Children learn about the world around them through encountering various themes. For instance, they talk about activities associated with the day time and night time. They have many opportunities to use computer technology to support their learning in other areas. They investigate materials in different ways, for example, discovering patterns in sand through using tools, such as, scrapers and markers. When taking part in imaginative play, they take on roles and use their imagination in different situations. Children are developing good creative skills in activities where they can explore artistically. They have great fun using a selection of coloured paints to create pictures. They use their hands and fingers adeptly in construction activities and show increasing control and co-ordination when using large equipment in physical activities. For example, they work well together to move a large parachute. Overall, children are developing good creative and physical skills through a range of appropriate activities.

Staff make good use of the stepping stones in the six areas of learning to plan a variety of stimulating activities. The weekly plans provide an overview of the activities in each learning area and show the learning intentions associated with these activities. The written plans are developed over the week to include details of any extra activities, evaluations and photographs. This provides a useful and clear record of what children have learnt during the week. Each member of staff is responsible for planning activities in one area of learning. They ensure flexibility so that the needs of children of differing ages and abilities are met. When working with the children, staff promote learning in all areas very effectively. For example, an activity planned around the theme of 'day and night' includes aspects of creativity and mathematics too. Children are offered good support when learning new skills and are encouraged to think through purposeful questioning and conversation. Staff use group times to successfully engage children in active learning, for example, acting out a familiar story. They expand on the weekly theme in an end-of-session group time each day. However, some children find it difficult to concentrate after a long play time and do not always benefit fully from this group time. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is assessed by staff who make numerous observations on children and transfer these to record sheets. This provides a very useful visual record of children's progress and highlights any areas which require more attention in future plans. Therefore, children have a good variety of learning experiences which help them to develop a range of skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and included. They all have an opportunity to take part in adult led activities, and if not wishing to do so are offered an alternative. Staff help children to feel special by listening to them and acknowledging their contribution. They are aware of children's individual needs and offer children practical support. Children are developing a sense of belonging. They add their name cards to a board when they arrive each day. Any children who are upset are quickly calmed down through the attention of an adult. They learn to look after themselves, for example, fetching and putting on their coats at home time. Children are given choices during activities and this encourages them to make decisions for themselves. For example, whereabouts to stick the 'legs' on to their spider. They enjoy offering ideas in music and movement sessions. Therefore, children are developing a good personal independence.

Children with learning difficulties receive good support from staff, who work closely with parents and other professionals, making good use of individual education plans to help children progress. They monitor this progress regularly and exchange information with parents through link books. Parents, whose children speak English as an additional language, are offered information about the pre-school in alternative languages in order to meet their needs more appropriately. Children learn about diversity in society through using various resources which reflect diversity and also taking part in activities organised around cultural and religious festivals. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good and they play together harmoniously. They are aware of their boundaries and respond well to requests from adults to keep to the rules. Staff manage behaviour in a consistent manner. They explain carefully to children how they are expected to behave and why. If behaving inappropriately, children are given choices in order to encourage positive behaviour and this helps to diffuse difficult situations quickly. Therefore, children are learning to behave responsibly. The pre-school liaises closely with parents and carers. There is an effective settling in procedure in place and parents are given detailed information on the pre-school's policies and procedures. Confidentiality is maintained at all times. Staff have good relationships with parents and they are highly satisfied with the care their children receive.

The partnership with parents and carers for funded nursery children is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage of learning and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They complete a 'starter sheet' for their children which provides staff with useful information about children's abilities when they first start at pre-school. They exchange information about children's progress whenever it is felt necessary or appropriate. Parents are encouraged to be involved in children's learning through finding items for the interest table associated with the weekly theme, colour or letter. When children leave, they receive an attractive book containing their assessment record, examples of work and photographs. Children benefit from the close working partnership between staff and parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All the necessary policies are in place and readily available. Staff demonstrate how they meet the National Standards through a collection of informative documents, which provides a good framework for children's care and education. There is ongoing monitoring of the provision and staff make changes in order to continually improve. They maintain the attendance records appropriately and ensure that any voluntary helpers are aware of safety procedures. There are good employment and induction procedures in place for new staff. An appraisal system has been introduced so that staff can be encouraged in their own professional development. Staff are committed to improvement through training and since the last inspection have attended courses in Special Needs, Creativity, Behaviour Management and Equal Opportunities. Children's care and education is enhanced through staff's acquired knowledge and skills.

Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children. They have a caring attitude and keep a good eye on children to ensure that they remain happy and safe. Their cheerful and friendly attitude contributes to children feeling welcome and valued as individuals. They make good use of the available space by separating the rooms into various learning areas. The resources are rotated during the day, and throughout the week, so that children use age appropriate toys and have plenty of choice. Staff maintain good ratios and are always involved with the children. Consequently, there is a relaxed and busy atmosphere. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff are provided with a great deal of information on the Foundation Stage of learning to support them in their practice. All staff are actively included in planning the programme, and assessing children's progress, as each has responsibility for one area of learning. This works extremely well as children benefit from each member of staff having specialised knowledge. The supervisors ensure that staff are deployed effectively and that there is a good mix of free choice and adult led activities. However, the daily routine does not allow for children to join together as a large group until after play. Therefore, they lack the opportunity to learn together while they are fresh and more attentive. Staff monitor the educational programme through discussion at staff meetings so that they can extend the activities on offer over time. Overall, the leadership of the pre-school is effective in helping to provide children with a good nursery education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the pre-school was asked to encourage children's independence at snack time, ensure that a written procedure for outings is in place and that confidentiality is maintained with regard to the accident book. Children are now encouraged to be more independent at snack time through pouring their own drinks and choosing food. An outings procedure is now in place and the accident book is used confidentially. This helps to safeguard children.

At the previous nursery education inspection the pre-school was asked to develop their short term planning so as to include clear learning intentions and an extension for the more able children, and also develop their system for assessing children. They were asked to capitalise

on learning opportunities during play and improve the quality of whole group times. Staff have now improved their written planning, and assessment system, and these now work effectively in providing a good framework for the nursery education programme. They take the opportunity to extend children's learning through asking relevant questions during play and have improved group times by focusing the learning activity for children of particular abilities. This response has improved the educational programme overall.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure accident records are always signed by a parent
- ensure children's safety with respect to the back double doors.

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):

- review the daily routine with regard to the provision of large group times.

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