



## Kidscare Unlimited-St Stephens

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY334874
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 February 2007
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

## 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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

KidsCare Unlimited-St Stephens is known as Holly Trees Day Nursery and it opened in 2006. It is part of the KidsCare Unlimited chain of childcare. It operates from the nursery rooms within the Holly Trees Children's Centre adjacent to St Stephen's First School, Redditch. They also use the school hall and the school foundation unit. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 34 children from birth to eight years for full day care and 16 children for out of school care in the children's centre. They can also care for an additional 40 children in the school. There are currently 38 children on roll aged three months to nine years of age, this includes 15 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has procedures to support children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities, and there are children who speak English as an additional language. The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00. There will be a maximum of 11 staff members who work with the children on a rota basis. Of these, over half will have early years

qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting works in partnership with St Stephens First School and the local Sure Start initiative and forms part of the children's centre.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing a healthy lifestyle because of the ethos of the setting and the dedication shown by staff. They keep the premises very clean and levels of hygiene are exceptional. Outdoor shoes are removed by children and adults before entering any of the play rooms used by the nursery in the children's centre. Some rooms in the centre are shared with other users, such as the kitchen facilities. Every reasonable step is taken by the staff and management to ensure that children's health is not compromised by this dual use. For example, the staff frequently check the food stored in the refrigerator by other users has not passed its sell-by-date. This prevents food used by the nursery becoming contaminated. Children are well protected if they are ill or in an emergency. There are ample first aid qualified staff and strategies are in place to protect children from infectious diseases.

The younger children attending the nursery in the children's centre have a daily balanced diet provided by an outside caterer. Children have fresh fruit and other healthy snacks. Drinks are readily available and age-appropriate cups are available if necessary. Children enjoy drinking the chilled, filtered water and confidently use the water dispenser in the children's centre. The older children attending the school may take a packed lunch provided by parents. They can independently choose healthy drinks and snacks from the well organised café system in the school foundation unit.

Children have ample opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Time is made for the younger children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor area. The babies crawl in and out of the doorway as they explore and investigate. They are warmly dressed for this occasion. Some of the outdoor area used by the younger children is still under development in this recently completed children's centre. The older children also have ample opportunities to use the outdoor area shared with the reception children in the school. The school provide protective clothing so children play outdoors in most weather conditions so have daily fresh air and exercise. This means children learn to dress themselves and understand the need for appropriate clothing.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. The younger children are cared for in the purpose built nursery section of the children's centre. There are three well equipped playrooms available for the younger children. There is also a multi-purpose room used for the crèche or out-of-school care when needed. The rooms have been designed and equipped to a high specification although there have been a few design faults which are currently being rectified. The older children receiving nursery education are cared for in the adjacent school foundation unit which is shared with the reception class.

There is a broad range of age-appropriate resources in all the rooms which means children use suitable and safe equipment. This is because the setting provides furniture, equipment and toys which are appropriate for their purpose. They are of suitable design and condition and are well maintained. How the equipment and rooms are organised is constantly being reviewed and adapted as ability and needs of the children changes.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through clear age-appropriate explanations as they play. For example, the staff demonstrate how to play ball safely and then stepped back to allow the children to try for themselves. This means children are well supported in learning about safe play without inhibiting challenge and learning new skills. Sleeping babies and toddlers are well supervised with regular visual check as well as a baby monitor switched on in playroom. Visual glass panels in doors are used for constant observation by staff.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures. The staff are aware of their duties in relation to child protection because this is part of their induction when they are employed. Up-to-date information is available for staff as a reference. There is a named child protection officer and parents are informed of this role as it is displayed on their notice board.

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

The provision is good.

Children are involved in a wide variety of interesting and stimulating activities that support them making good progress. The warm caring relationships between adults and children are evident through their interaction. The staff working with the younger children have accessed relevant information sessions on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this in their planning. Children show interest in what they do because they can self-select some of the resources from child height storage. The younger children especially enjoy the many tactile activities and experiences. There is a good mix of home-made and commercial resources to engage children's natural curiosity. Children make positive relationships with the supportive and experienced staff. They are very good at responding to each child's interest and encouraging them in their abilities.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Personal, social and emotional development is supported by the settling in process. This is especially important because of the mix of age-groups in the school room. Most children arrive and separate from their parent/carer to quickly settle. Strategies and support are in place for children needing extra support at this emotional time. Most children are happy to see staff and are starting to make friends. They are starting to share and take turns. Staff provide activities and strategies to help children understand this complex social requirement. The setting operates a settling in time where parents are welcome to settle their child before leaving. Staff make themselves available to talk to parents to reassure them and together they develop individual ways of helping the child adjust to starting nursery education.

Communication, language and literacy are well supported especially for children with English as an additional language. There are many labels and posters displayed that show the written word in different languages to develop children's understanding of the importance of the written word. Most children enjoy stories told by adults and love to predict what happens next or repeat familiar phrases. There is a good choice of appropriate books and comfy cushions where children can relax and enjoy the books.

Mathematical development is good. The range of resources supports children developing a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. Children begin to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They match and sort to help them to solve problems across a wide range of practical activities such as stories rhymes, games, puzzles and in their imaginative play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world is a strength in this setting. There is a science and exploration area which is well supported by a wide range of books to support reference and research. Children's natural curiosity is well supported and encouraged. They love the outdoor area which they can freely access and enjoy. The children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. The children know about the uses of everyday technology and use Information Communication Technology and programmable toys to support their learning.

Creative play is regularly available and easily accessed by the children. They use a variety of art mediums as they experiment and enjoy participating in craft activities. The home corner is extremely well equipped so children play out their own thoughts and experiences with enthusiasm. Children participate in action songs and rhymes. They listen to tapes and with adult help they mostly participate in the songs.

Physical development is good. The children enjoy a wide range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills both when using large and small apparatus, tools and equipment. They are developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and a growing awareness of how it can help them to stay healthy. They use the outdoor facilities with increasing confidence as they climb, crawl under and over the apparatus. They also regularly use the school hall for additional physical activities.

Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning because of staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. The effectiveness of curriculum planning and assessment for all funded children is suitable. The nursery staff are very well supported by the school staff. The foundation unit is well resourced and organised into areas covering the different area of learning. There are effective strategies in place to support children with special needs. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children reach their full potential. There is a high proportion of children with English as an additional language (EAL). The strategies used ensure these children are given full support. Detailed EAL profiles and assessment is in place so the child's next step is identified and met. Occasionally the supervision and management of children's behaviour does not fully promote sharing and good behaviour. Staff achieve a balance between supervised activities and allowing children the freedom to initiate their own learning. The session is divided into times for adult directed group activities and child-initiated learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging because of the emphasis on promoting and taking positive measures to involve all children. This includes making sure staff know, spell and pronounce names correctly. The settling in procedure enables staff to work closely with parents to identify each child's needs and how to meet them. This means most children settle quickly into the nursery. Children participate in a range of celebrations and festivals to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They become aware of the wider society through a wealth of resources, posters and activities that reflect the diverse local and wider community. Bi-lingual staff are available in the children's centre and school to help and support children and families who have English as an additional language.

Children with physical disabilities or learning difficulties have their needs met because staff understand and can implement the code of practice. They work with parents to ensure all children are included in the life of the setting. They liaise with other agencies and relevant specialist staff from the school and local authority to provide a coordinated response to any identified need.

Younger children are starting to learn how to behave well in proportion to their level of understanding and maturity because staff create an environment in the play rooms in the nursery that encourages children to respect boundaries and begin to control their own behaviour. Children mostly understand responsible behaviour especially within the nursery confines. The staff act as calm role models and help younger children to understand and accept reasonable rules and codes of conduct. Sometimes in the foundation unit there are issues around sharing. When a dispute erupts, staff usually take appropriate sensitive action to enable children to find alternative ways to settle disputes. However, there are times when this is not observed by the nursery staff so occasionally the younger funded children can be intimidated by the older children. Some of the older children show care and concern for the younger children and readily offer help. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. An attractive area has been created just inside the entrance doors to the nursery where parents can sit and read a wealth of booklets and posters about childcare and education issues. The parent/carer information booklet is clear and informative so parents are fully informed about the setting and its provision. Photographs of all the staff are displayed with their roles and responsibilities so parents are fully informed about the organisation of the setting. Home visits are organised so nursery and school staff can chat and get to know the family and children. This means parents opinions and circumstances can be taken into account to fully involve them in the life of the nursery. The complaints procedure is clearly displayed in the parents' information area by the entrance to the nursery.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care and education is promoted because most of the staff are qualified and experienced. Despite having only worked together at this setting for a relatively short time, the staff make a cohesive team with high values. Appraisal systems are in place but are not

fully utilised yet in monitoring staff performance and ensuring training needs are met. There is a rigorous vetting system for staff which contributes towards children being protected. Staff from the school with access to the children have been vetted by the local authority.

The management are proactive in their approach of implementing their high standards. This is achieved because they keep staff and other users informed of the policies and procedures. Notices are displayed in all the rooms used by the nursery, both in the school and the children's centre, in regard to expected standards for meeting children's health and safety. For example, food handling guidelines are displayed on cupboard doors or walls. There is a detailed operational plan in place, however it does not reflect the complex organisation for nursery education. It includes how the nursery operates and the organisation of the rooms when it is fully operational. The nursery is low on numbers at the moment and mostly only using one or two rooms.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the setting is beginning to develop. However, whilst the provider regularly discusses ideas and changes with key staff she has no rigorous system in place to monitor or evaluate the nursery education provision as it relies mostly on the school evaluation system. The appraisal system of staff is not presently activated. This means that because there is limited monitoring of the nursery education and staff by the provider she is not fully aware if the outcomes for funded children are being met. The staff providing nursery education regularly meet with the foundation unit staff and the children's centre advisory teacher to discuss their strengths and weaknesses. They devise plans for continual improvement in line with current good practice. Overall, children's needs are met.

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

Not applicable.

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

Since registration 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 the 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 good.

## 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):

- include the organisation of the nursery education provision in the operational plan specifically how the school and nursery work together.

### **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 a rigorous system to evaluate the quality of nursery education and specifically the impact between the different age groups
- improve staff's knowledge, understanding and management of children's behaviour.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)