

Meopham Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127300
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
Setting Address	Wrotham Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0JW
Telephone number	01474 813076
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Registered person	Kinder Groups Ltd.
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are 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?

The nursery and holiday club is one of a chain of provisions in the Kinder Group, Kent. It opened in these premises in 2006 but had been operating in other premises before this date. The provision operates from a purpose-built building on school grounds in Meopham. A maximum of 120 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. The holiday club is open every school holiday from 07:30 to 18:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 96 children from babies to under five years on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language or are bi-lingual.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working toward a higher qualification. The nursery are working towards a quality kite mark and is visited regularly by the local authority early years teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and toddlers benefit from a warm, caring environment helping them feel emotionally secure. The babies are attached to the main carer in the baby room; they are confident and able to express how they are feeling, for example, they put their arms up for a cuddle knowing staff will respond. Babies' nappies are changed regularly to keep them comfortable. Good procedures are in place for nappy changing to reduce cross infection; staff use disposable aprons, gloves and sanitize the changing mat after each nappy change. Children's privacy and dignity are considered.

Most children learn about good hygiene practice through the daily routine. They are generally encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet, and before eating their snack, however, this is not consistently applied in all rooms in the nursery. The necessity for children to wash their hands before eating their snack is occasionally forgotten.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to be out in the fresh air. Babies are taken out in buggies around the school grounds and play in the garden. Older children play outside regularly, helping them to acquire a healthy attitude to physical exercise and develop their gross motor skills. There is interesting and challenging climbing equipment for the older children.

Staff do not care for children who are contagious, protecting other children's health. Nearly all parents sign a blanket permission slip when their child first joins the nursery to enable staff to administer medication to their children if required. This permission is then used in conjunction with nursery medication consent forms which is where the medicine, the dosage and the times to administer it are recorded. This form does not, however, record the time of the last dose given at home. Many parents leave a labelled bottle of medicine that relieves pain and reduces temperature 'just in case' and therefore, parents do not only take medicines to the nursery when this is essential.

Most children eat cooked meals delivered to the nursery by an outside agency; the menu changes regularly and are on display for parents enabling them to feel confident about the nutritional content. Drinking water is available to children at all times to prevent them becoming dehydrated. Some children bring a packed lunch; parents are informed about suitable contents. The meals are nutritious and comply with all dietary and religious requirements. There are nursery procedures for safe food handling. The food is probed to ensure it is a suitable temperature and staff wear protective aprons and gloves. The portions are a good size and look appetising, ensuring children are well nourished.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff care for children in a purpose built nursery. The nursery has a secure front entrance and parents only gain entry when a member of staff opens the locked door. However, the systems in place to ensure the garden area is secure are not sufficient. Padlocks on garden gates are not always locked and whilst children are unlikely to be able to open the gate, an intruder could gain entrance. A thorough risk assessment is carried out regularly and all staff take responsibility to maintain a safe environment. There are no systems in place, however, to ensure consistency or make staff responsible for different tasks to prevent things like the garden gates being

overlooked. The manager evaluates any accidents that occur as part of the risk assessment and this helps to identify any child who is accident prone, enabling staff to be especially attentive.

Children enjoy a range of resources that staff check regularly for their safety and suitability. Large physical equipment is always supervised by a staff member to prevent accidents. The equipment includes natural materials like pine cones, sand and bark providing children with very tactile resources. There are a sufficient number of child-sized chairs and tables to allow children to manage tasks more easily and eat in groups. In the baby room, however, there is no domestic type furniture for staff to sit and feed young babies comfortably. Staff sit in white, plastic garden chairs which do not help to create a homely atmosphere. The bean bags in the pre-school room have lost nearly all of their stuffing and are almost flat; this does not help to provide a cosy area to read books.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe because staff give them gentle reminders about how to behave, for instance, when children are given knives to make sandwiches they all quote what they have obviously been told before. They talk about being careful with other people, not to put the knives in their mouths and demonstrate how to hold them safely.

Staff induction procedures ensure they understand their role in the protection of children. The staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse; they feel confident that they would recognise if a child were being abused. The procedures to follow if any staff have concerns about a child in their care are documented clearly.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The babies are happy, settled and they separate from their main carer easily. Staff are very kind to the babies; they give them lots of attention, sing with them and attend to their needs promptly. Staff have embraced the document Birth to three matters and understand the benefits of providing the youngest children with opportunities to discover resources that reflect the natural world. Staff provide babies with treasure baskets that they particularly enjoy. The nursery provides parents with information about the curriculum for the youngest children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide a range of interesting activities that cover all six areas of learning and deliver them with confidence. Staff use assessment records effectively, they identify children's individual learning needs and ensure activities that will help them to develop in these areas are included in the plans. They are adventurous when organising the environment, for instance, the role play area at the moment is set up like a beach. Children love to lie on the sand, dig and make pretend cakes; the stimulating environment encourages children to role play and use their imaginations. Children with learning difficulties take a full and active role. They have an individual education plan that sets them realistic and achievable targets encouraging their development. Children show good levels of independence; they are familiar with choosing the resources and activities they wish to play with. They are happy and busy in their play and able to work co-operatively with one another. Children behave very well; they share successfully and take turns when they play games. Staff encourage good manners resulting in polite children.

Children have regular opportunities to recognise their names throughout the day. Staff use the Jolly Phonics system to teach children the sounds different letters make. Children communicate

well with staff, they are keen to share their ideas and speak about home. Lots of the children can write recognisable letters; some can write their names. Writing materials are always available and children demonstrate good pencil control. Children love staff to read books to them and they join in enthusiastically. Information books are on display to support current learning themes. Staff feel they are having less success encouraging children to access books alone; they continue to experiment to make this area more appealing for the children.

Children count regularly as they play. They are able to recognise and know the mathematical names for different shapes. Most children know their colours because staff regularly discuss them as they play with the children.

The outdoor area is used well to stimulate children's interest in the natural world and features of the locality. The current topic is 'Trees', staff use photographs to great effect helping children explore similarities and differences. They discuss the seasons and the weather encouraging children to be observant. Children learn about recycling and work well together to make their own paper. They have opportunities to explore some technology. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and are beginning to learn about their own and other people's cultures and beliefs.

Children use hand tools competently, most can use scissors. They are creative and experimental when they paint, making flower pictures with hand prints. They mould play dough and use cutters to make models. They discover what happens when they blow through a straw into water with bubbles and show excitement as the bubbles increase. Children understand the concept of time and are fascinated by clocks and how to tell the time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children talk happily about their home life and things that are important to them. All the activities are available for all the children. There are resources, and images that reflect our multicultural society positively about the nursery, helping children appreciate diversity.

Staff have a positive attitude towards children with special educational needs. They give additional help and attention to children who are experiencing difficulties; staff know the events that are likely to upset children and manage such situations sensitively. An individual learning plan sets targets to help their development. Staff work closely with other agencies when this is appropriate.

Children are well behaved, they play nicely together, sharing and taking turns. Staff notice if children are kind to one another; this behaviour is praised encouraging them to repeat desirable behaviour. Staff greet children warmly and often talk with them about their home life and things that are important to them. They show genuine interest and pay close attention when children talk, demonstrating that what they say is valued and appreciated. Children are learning how to become responsible citizens through activities that teach them about recycling. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. There is an abundance of good information available for them about the provision and a parents' notice board. They are provided with information about the Foundation Stage ensuring they understand what their children are learning. Parents have contact with the staff each day and communicate easily with them. Good home links are encouraged, parents frequently add to their children's development records. The nursery also has a holiday bear scheme, where a teddy bear can go on holiday with children and they can

share their experiences when they return. There is a comprehensive complaints procedure; the nursery head office provide log forms and staff understand the format in which they are to be recorded.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery is well organised and staff work well as a team. The nursery has comprehensive policies and procedures that are always available for parents to read. The recruitment procedure is robust and all staff are checked by the criminal records bureau. Most staff hold a childcare qualification and staff who deliver the Foundation Stage have good knowledge of the curriculum. There are always several staff on the premises who are first aid qualified who are able to act in an emergency. All mandatory documentation is in place. Staff appreciate and understand the importance of confidentiality. The setting meets the needs of the range children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management are good. All staff have the opportunity to contribute to the self evaluation form. They are encouraged to update their knowledge by attending training. The company develop plans and provide resources for a range of six week activities. Staff adapt these to take account of children's individual needs; they find this very helpful and time saving. All the activities address the six learning areas, providing children with a balanced curriculum. Taking part in the kite mark scheme has helped staff be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in their provision. They have a good relationship with the local authority early years teachers and these links help them exchange ideas with other groups. They are continually striving to improve what they deliver.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection two recommendations were made that relate to Standard Three and Standard Five. The recommendations related to ensuring there is a sufficiently attractive and suitable range of books for the younger children and to provide some domestic type furniture for use in the baby rooms so that staff can feed and sit with young babies comfortably.

A range of books specifically for the youngest children are available and children enjoy looking at these.

Staff from the nursery's head office gave some consideration to purchasing domestic furniture, but could not think of a solution of how they can provide soft furnishings and keep it hygienically clean. The staff still sit on white plastic garden chairs to feed babies. This is not comfortable for staff and does not provide a homely environment for the babies. On the second day of the inspection a wooden chair from another nursery was available for staff to use; this still does not provide cosy furnishing for children to snuggle up to staff to be fed their bottles, or to listen to stories, therefore, the recommendation remains.

At the last education inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report but they were asked to consider improving the opportunities to extend language development. The children now have plenty of opportunities to improve their language skills and vocabulary.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1 April 2004 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):

- assess the necessity of most parents providing permission to administer medication and leaving preparatory pain relief at the nursery before it is essential; when staff accept directions to administer medicine from parents, record when the last dose was given at home
- ensure all children wash their hands before they eat
- review the systems in place to maintain a safe environment, in particular, ensuring gates in the garden are locked to prevent strangers coming onto the premises
- provide some domestic type furniture for use in the baby rooms so that staff can feed and sit with young babies comfortably

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):

- continue to experiment with the book corner to encourage more children to take interest in this area

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