

Blundellsands Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310399
Inspection date	05 July 2007
Inspector	Frank William Kelly
Setting Address	Blundellsands Road West, Blundellsands, Liverpool, Merseyside, L23 6TF
Telephone number	0151 924 7795
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Registered person	Blundellsands Kindergarten
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.

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Blundellsands Kindergarten has been registered since 1996 to the current committee. It is based within a purpose built premises and is situated in the Blundellsands and Crosby area of Liverpool. A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 60 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 49 receive funding for nursery education. The setting cares for a number of children who have additional needs. Children come from a wide catchment area as parents travel into and around the area to work.

The service operates from 09.00 to 15.00 each weekday, term time only. Children are cared for within two playrooms. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting employs five staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is effectively promoted as they are cared for in a very clean and well organised premises. Staff follow good hygiene practices throughout their daily routines. These include regular hand washing and cleaning of tables and other surfaces before children eat or after messy play. Children's personal hygiene is promoted and supported by well stocked and easily accessible resources in the bathroom, such as liquid soap, toilet tissue and paper towels. In practice children follow the hygiene procedures very well. Older children confidently and independently wash their hands using all the resources available to them.

Policies regarding sick and infectious children are in place and regular notices to parents to inform them about any recent cases of infections, such as chicken pox, are displayed in the entrance hall. Two staff have up-to-date first aid training and implement effective monitoring systems to ensure that the first aid box is appropriately stocked at all times. Accident records and written consents for the administration of medication have been sought and shared with parents as required, thus, further promoting the children's safety and well-being.

Regular daily exercise is included within the planning. Weather permitting children enjoy the freedom of being outside in the fresh air where they demonstrate good control over their bodies and coordination. For example, they ride the bike with increasing control, manoeuvring in, out and around their peers and other equipment. Older children are eager to experiment with what they can do, such as propelling the trike forward whilst only using one pedal. Music and movement, dance, action songs and rhymes are regularly included within the daily routines providing children with further opportunities to extend and develop their physical skills.

Secure systems are in place for sharing information about the children's individual dietary needs and preferences. Children enjoy a range of snacks that include a wide range of fruit and the occasional treat, such as a biscuit. Healthy eating projects with the children are helping them to gain an awareness of the importance of eating a healthier diet. This is further promoted as the staff have also provided information for parents regarding healthier options that could be included within the children's packed lunch boxes. Children are able to quench their thirst at any time during their day as they have easy access to their individually named water bottles. Additional drinks such as milk are served during snack times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The setting is pleasant and welcoming for parents and children alike. There is relevant regulatory information about the setting and current information regarding forthcoming events such as, the barbeque and leaver's party. Children and parents are warmly greeted by a member of staff who monitors the entrance door. Playrooms have lots of natural light and the children's work and resources are displayed in a positive and child friendly manner. There is a very good selection of toys and resources. These are well maintained, safe and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children attending. The setting is effectively organised to provide children with good freedom of movement, whilst minimising the risk of accidental injury.

Staff follow good safety measures to protect children from harm. Risk assessments are conducted daily on toys and the premises. Access to areas of the setting including the kitchen and store

cupboards are kept secured and safety appliances, such as fire extinguishers are in place. Children are well supervised at all times, and learn what to do in the event of an emergency as they practise the evacuation procedure with staff on a regular basis. Smoke detection systems are consistently checked on a weekly basis and records maintained efficiently.

Children learn about keeping themselves free from harm throughout the daily routine. Staff gently remind children to be careful and raise their awareness of others around them. Well planned activities about road safety and visits from local safety officer to talk with the children about 'Stranger Danger' are further helping children to gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe when outdoors.

The children's welfare is further protected as staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues. The designated child protection officer has completed relevant child protection training. Policies and procedures have recently been updated to reflect changes and include details of the Local Children Safeguarding Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff organise resources and plan a range of activities, which help children make progress in all areas of their development. Children enjoy and explore tactile materials such as, sand, water and play dough on a daily basis.

Children enter eagerly and settle quickly. They have formed good friendships, relate well to each other, seeking each other out during free play. They work happily alongside each other, for example, chatting about what they are building with the small construction materials.

All children enjoy story times and listen to the stories with interest and pleasure. Younger children in particular join in heartily when singing songs and jingles. They are clearly familiar with the actions as they flap their arms and move their bodies whilst being 'Dingle, dangle scarecrow's'.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. They engage children well during adult led activities and recognise the importance of free play to enable children to practise and explore what they have learnt or what interests them. Planned activities are linked to the six areas of learning and the stepping stones detailed within the curriculum guidance. The environment is stimulating with lots of low-level print, numerals and pictorial materials clearly visible.

Staff monitor children's progress using the local authority's individual learning profile booklets. These are updated every three months using a collection of the children's work, staff notes and observations to support their assessments. However, the assessment records are still not organised or promoted so that parents can easily make comment upon their child's progress.

A strong emphasis has been placed on developing children's personal and social development. Thus, they are eager to join in both adult led activities and explore their own ideas. For example, children explain to visitors that they are sinking and floating materials. Their play extends as they confidently experiment without prompting, ways of connecting two chains with lollipop sticks. The children play nicely together and on most occasions they are willing to take turns and share resources.

There is a well resourced writing area for emergent writers, which includes a range of tools, paper and examples of written material to help children to understand that writing is used for a purpose. Many children recognise their own name and correctly select their water bottles during their play. Many have good pencil control and write their name or form recognisable letters. The children enjoy books and read independently. They are familiar with the books within the nursery and confidently share with visitors the content of several books before opening them. They show a mature respect for the books and the way they should be handled. Some older children demonstrate an understanding that the print in their books reads from left to right.

Older children count confidently up to 14 and above and recognise numerals up to 10 within their environment. They enjoy simple calculation, such as when asked if 14 children are here now and one more arrives how many will that be. Planning and displays show children are learning about shapes in their environment and children use mathematical language, such as 'massive' to describe size.

Children enjoy being creative and thoroughly enjoy their role-play. They make tea in the home corner, and invite visitors to help capture the dinosaurs in the garden. They enjoy many adult-led art and craft activities that help them experience a range of mediums. However, some resources are not readily accessible due to the limited space.

Children demonstrate a sense of time and place as they talk about their birthday and trips to France and America for their holidays. Adult led discussions about the weather and what day of the week it is, further supports their understanding. Use of technology including a digital camera and the computer helps children learn about technology. Good access to role play equipment, such as telephones, microwave ovens and a till with a plastic swipe card enable children to enact and demonstrate their understanding of its role and purpose in their daily lives.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Suitable systems are in place for sharing information so that children are treated with equal concern and staff use this information well to help plan individual care for the children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The toys, books and other resources within the nursery are reflective of the diversity within today's society. Planned activities, such as eating with chopsticks are helping children gain an awareness of similarities and differences.

The effective arrangements in place for supporting children with additional needs ensure that children are fully included in all aspects of the nursery day. The setting has established good links with parents, other relevant professionals and local schools to support and promote the children's learning and care. A clear commitment to supporting children and helping them to prepare to move onto school is clearly evident in practice.

The children are well behaved and familiar with the boundaries and simple rules. They line up well, listen to what adults are saying to them during discussion time and willingly help to tidy away and take care of the toys.

Staff's warm and pleasant attitude promotes and encourages the children's behaviour. They are polite and respectful when interacting with each other and the children, which in turn encourages the children to be polite and courteous.

Parents are welcomed into the nursery at any time, helping children to settle. Additional information is shared through daily discussion and written notices and other printed displays. Fund raising and fun day events are organised throughout the year. The partnership with the parents of children receiving funded nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive some written information about the areas of learning and may ask to see and contribute to their child's progress reports. However, at present there is little regular information about how the activities link to the Foundation Stage or children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The play environment is well organised and children are grouped according to their age and ability. All staff are qualified and experienced. The current staff team has been established for several years, thus, they are familiar with individual roles and responsibilities, which promotes good consistency of care for the children.

All regulatory documentation is in place for the management of the nursery. However, the regulatory requirement regarding informing Ofsted of changes to staff and members of the committee has not been shared as promptly as required. Written policies and procedures are available for staff to follow and the setting is currently reviewing all policies and procedures. The committee is aware of the need to update the operational plan to reflect the organisational changes that are taking place and to formalise the systems for recruitment and ongoing monitoring of staff suitability.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The two acting managers lead the planning of activities on a day to day basis and work closely with the staff team to promote the learning program. Regular team meetings take place and all staff are invited to contribute to the development of the policies and procedures. This helps staff to feel valued and feel part of the setting. They are keen to improve the outcomes for children and seek additional vocational training opportunities and support from the early years teacher team. This is enhancing the care and learning for the children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection four recommendations were made, which related to safety, documentation, resources, and children's dietary needs.

Since then the setting has made generally good progress. With regards to improving the safety for the children, daily risk assessments are now conducted to ensure the safety of the premises and equipment prior to children arriving. The operational plan has been updated but is required to be revised further as discussed under the organisation section of this report.

The setting has purchased a selection of books and good quality jigsaws that promote the diversity within today's society; these provide children with opportunities to gain a greater awareness of their immediate and wider worlds. Children's access to water is well attended to so that they can freely quench their thirst when ever they wish. Additional drinks are served with the snacks of mainly fresh fruit as discussed within the being healthy section of this report.

At the last nursery education inspection three recommendations were made. These included setting improving the system for assessment and extending children's opportunities to explore resources and their creativity.

Since then the staff have completed regular assessment of the children's work linking it closely to the local authority 'Plotting Progress' booklets and keeping some examples of the children's work as evidence. Resources have been reorganised so that children can make more choices and have more free play to follow their interests. Activities, such as growing beans in a jar and potatoes in the 'Potato maze' provide children with opportunities to investigate and learn about their world. The setting is aware that children's access to craft and creative resources is still somewhat limited.

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 complaint 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):

- keep Ofsted informed of any significant changes, such as those to the committee and persons in charge in a swift and timely manner
- update the operational plan to reflect recent changes to the organisation including; the current deployment of staff; the revised policies and procedures for recruitment; and, the vetting and checking of ongoing suitability of staff.

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):

- increase ways of sharing information about the learning programme with parents of children receiving nursery education, to show how activities link to the six areas of learning and include suggestions how parents may contribute to their child's learning should they wish to.

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