

Kingsley Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650081
Inspection date	28 September 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	5 Austen Close, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3TX
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Registered person	Jacqueline Renew
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 satisfactory. 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?

Kingsley Preschool opened in 1983. It operates from two rooms within a community centre in Loughton. Children share access to a secure outdoor play area. The preschool is open during term time, every weekday morning from 09:30 until 12:00, on Monday afternoon from 12:30 until 14:30, and every other afternoon from 12:30 until 15:00.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the session at any one time. Currently there are 50 children on roll, of whom 29 receive funding for nursery education. The preschool supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

A total of five staff work with the children. All members of staff hold a relevant early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted adequately as the preschool has appropriate procedures in place. All necessary medical records are maintained. Children are excluded if they have an infectious illness so as to protect others. Children are suitably taken care of in the event of an accident as staff are aware of the need to keep up to date with first aid training. Staff are attentive to matters of hygiene. They ensure that tables are wiped prior to snack time and encourage children to wash their hands before eating. Children are becoming aware of good hygiene practice themselves. They use tissues independently and know to wash their hands after going to the toilet. These procedures contribute to keeping children healthy.

Children learn about healthy eating through being offered a wide variety of nutritious and healthy snacks. For example, they enjoy fresh fruit, salad vegetables and different breads. Older children talk about which foods are good for them while eating their packed lunches. Children with special diets eat appropriately as all staff are aware of their dietary needs. There is drinking water available to children at all times to help prevent them from becoming dehydrated. Children enjoy good opportunities for physical activity. They have fun in the garden riding around on cars and trikes in the fresh air. They develop confidence as they climb and balance on the wooden climbing frame indoors. When participating in action rhymes, children increase their body awareness and coordination. These activities help them to keep fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are care for in bright and comfortable surroundings. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to ensure the safety of the premises. There are good fire precautions in place and children practise an evacuation plan so that they know what do in an emergency. Staff carry out a visual safety check each day, for example, ensuring that the safety gate is on the kitchen and that all low-level sockets are covered. However, some play activities have not been thoroughly risk assessed in order to ensure that proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents. This results in a potential risk to children during free choice play. The main door of the hall is kept locked during sessions so that children keep secure. However, there is a lack of close supervision by staff at the end of each session, resulting in a potential security risk to children.

Children use a range of suitable and safe resources. These are easily accessible to staff in a large storage cupboard and a selection is set out each day for children. All resources are checked for safety and rotated during the week for variety. Children are encouraged to be aware of their own personal safety during play, for example, when using large equipment. However, they do not always follow safety rules, such as walking rather than running around the building. Children learn about road safety when out walking in the local area. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues. There are procedures in place for recording any concerns and staff have access to information which enables them to seek advice. Therefore, children are protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and show interest in the resources on offer, becoming quite involved in some activities. For example, they enjoy doing puzzles, exploring play dough and playing imaginatively with toy animals. They develop good relationships with others and like to play together in pairs or groups. They respond positively to invitations to join in organised activities, such as sticking and painting. They are encouraged to communicate through staff engaging them in conversation. They especially like to share books with staff and this increases their awareness of language and representation. When playing with sand they learn to use tools to make sandcastles, discovering the difference between wet and dry sand. Their self-esteem is boosted when praised for their achievements.

Children are gaining confidence and at times explore happily on their own. The end of session group time is well organised and offers a good opportunity for children to enjoy songs and rhymes. However, there is a limited choice of activities overall that really hold children's interest during the morning. After their initial curiosity has led them to explore what is available some begin to wander from table to table. Although staff have a copy of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for guidance they do not use it effectively to plan a wide range of stimulating activities to engage and interest young children. As a result children are not always enabled to build on their natural curiosity or to begin to make meaning and connections in different situations.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff plan the educational programme around themes, ensuring a balance of activities across the six learning areas. The learning objectives for each activity are linked to the stepping stones of learning so that staff can make use of them to focus learning. Children's progress is assessed in relation to the stepping stones and this is taken into consideration when planning new activities. However, staff do not interact effectively with children during the morning sessions to promote learning and develop children's skills, particularly in the areas of language, literacy and mathematical development. They support children in their free choice play and exploration, but do not always take the opportunity to encourage them to think further. Older children who attend in the afternoon have a little more challenge, for example, in developing early writing skills and comparing shapes. However, staff do not plan extra activities for this session to extend children's learning in these areas, building on what children already know and can do.

Children are learning to concentrate and particularly enjoy organised activities, such as painting and sticking. Younger children explore mark making, although there are few opportunities for them to learn about the sounds and shapes of letters. They like to listen to stories and look at books. However, staff do not often use group times for story telling to help increase children's enjoyment of books. Children are beginning to count confidently when joining in number rhymes at group times. They have limited opportunities to increase their awareness of mathematical language, concepts and numbers during play. Older children are becoming more aware of the use of language when staff add written descriptions to their drawings and help children learn to write their names. Children are beginning to recognise numerals and use them in counting activities, for example, drawing around their fingers and labelling each one. However, there are few planned activities for older children to increase their skills in literacy and numeracy.

Children have good opportunities to develop a knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about the properties of different materials, such as sand, water and cornflour. They discover how seeds grow and how ingredients change during cooking. They use a variety of construction equipment to make models, learning how to arrange and join pieces together. They are developing creative skills when using paint or paper shapes to make pictures, using their imagination to express their own ideas. They are able to join in role play in different situations, for example, a hairdresser's or home corner. In physical activities children learn to use their bodies in different ways to travel or balance. Older children have particularly good opportunities to extend their physical skills in organised activities, such as parachute games and obstacle courses.

Overall children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and included in the setting. Staff are welcoming and help children to develop a sense of belonging, although a feeling of security is not always engendered amongst children and some find it difficult to settle. Staff are always on hand to meet children's practical and physical needs and encourage them to develop personal independence. Children learn to make choices as they select from the resources and activities on offer. They learn about diversity through using a variety of resources which reflect differences, such as play people with differing abilities. They take part in activities planned around cultural and religious festivals, for example, Diwali, Chinese New Year and Easter. There are appropriate procedures in place for supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is generally acceptable, although they lack an awareness of their boundaries within the setting and this has an impact on their personal safety. For example, they often run around the building despite being asked by staff not to do so. Snack times can be a little chaotic and children sometimes leave tables whilst eating food. Children often play together harmoniously but when disputes occur staff are inconsistent in their approach. They do not explain issues clearly or help children to negotiate. Consequently, children are not learning to behave responsibly and respect others' needs.

The preschool has a close working partnership with parents and carers. Staff provide information about the setting in a brochure and this includes details of their key policies and procedures. They get to know parents well through the weekly provision of groups for children of different ages. The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage in the brochure. The activity plans are displayed so that they can become involved in their children's learning. Parents are able to discuss their children's progress with staff when they receive termly reports. Children benefit from staff's liaison with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The preschool's policies and procedures provide a sound framework for its practice. All the necessary policies are in place and readily available. Parents are asked to supply information about children's needs on the registration forms to help staff offer the appropriate care. The

attendance registers are well maintained and staff ensure that children's contact details are easily accessible. Staff are encouraged to attend training courses in order to continually improve their practice. Overall children's needs are met.

Staff are caring and attentive to children and ensure good adult child ratios. They are aware of their responsibilities with regard to the daily routine. Children enjoy having time to choose resources and play alongside staff. However, staff do not make effective use of the available space and time to provide a structured and stimulating learning environment for children. There are few opportunities to learn as a group, the circle and snack times are a little disorganised and transition times can be chaotic. As a result children are easily unsettled and are unable to benefit fully from the learning experiences on offer.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager meets with staff to plan the activities and to discuss children's progress. She leads staff in daily discussions as they work out priorities for each session. Staff evaluate the written planning and talk about ways of developing this in future. The leadership contributes to the ongoing development of the programme.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the preschool was asked to improve various aspects of paperwork relating to safety and to review the provision of resources so that children can access more equipment independently. All the relevant paperwork has now been revised and is in place. Resources are made more easily accessible to children through offering a wider choice in each session. This response has led to an improvement in the safety outcome for children and in their ability to develop personal independence.

At the previous nursery education inspection the preschool was asked to improve the short term planning and review the system for recording children's individual development. They were also asked to provide more opportunities for children to explore technology equipment and express their own ideas creatively. The short term planning has been developed and now shows what children are expected to learn in each area. The system for recording children's development has been developed so that the information can be used to guide future planning. Children have various opportunities to explore technological equipment, such as a laptop, calculators and telephones. They are able to express themselves creatively in free choice creative activities, for example, drawing and painting. These improvements have contributed to a broader provision of learning experiences for children.

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 that all play activities are risk assessed in order to minimise potential risks and that children are not able to leave the building unsupervised at the end of the session
- increase opportunities for children to build on their natural curiosity as learners in a range of interesting activities, using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- develop strategies for behaviour management that are appropriate to children's level of understanding and used consistently by all staff
- review the organisation of the available space and daily routine in order to meet children's needs more effectively.

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):

- ensure that staff interact effectively with children during free choice play in the morning sessions in order to promote and extend their learning in all areas
- plan a range of extra activities for children who attend the afternoon sessions in order to build on what they already know and can do and extend their learning.

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