

Activity World Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	404820
Inspection date	23 October 2007
Inspector	Susan Smith
Setting Address	Station Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 6AD
Telephone number	01284 763799
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Registered person	Kids Play Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Activity World Childcare opened in 2001. It is run by Kids Play Ltd. It operates from premises situated close to the railway station at Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk. The out of school club and holiday play scheme operate from one main room. The nursery runs separately in two rooms within the premises. There is a activity centre which is open to the public on the upper floor of the premises.

The setting provides a before school breakfast club, after school care and a holiday play scheme for children aged between four years and 13 years. In addition, it has recently opened a nursery for children aged from three months to five years.

A maximum of 40 children aged from four years to under eight years may attend the out of school provision. It is open each weekday from 07.30 to 09.00 and from 15.00 to 18.30 during term times, and from 07.30 until 18.30 during school holidays. A maximum of 37 children aged from three months to under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07.30 until 18.30. All children share access to a secure outside area.

There are currently 70 children aged from four years to under eight years on roll at the out of school provision. There are currently 40 children aged from three months to under five years on roll at the nursery. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local community and schools within the area. The group currently supports some of the children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting employs 12 staff. Of these 10, including the nursery and out of school manager, hold appropriate qualifications and two members of staff are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted by the sound health and hygiene procedures which are normally consistently practised throughout the nursery and out of school club. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through established routines such as cleaning their teeth after meals and washing their hands after going to the toilet. Staff encourage them to become independent in their personal health care. All areas are clean and hygienic and effective measures are in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, tables are sprayed with anti bacterial liquid before snack and meal times and staff follow satisfactory hygiene procedures when changing nappies.

Staff respond sensitively to children if they are ill. Any accidents are logged and signed by parents on collection, unfortunately, some forms do not consistently and accurately log the exact location of the injury. Staff are well informed about individual children's healthcare needs, with detailed documentation and consents in place to support this. A first aid kit is easily accessible in each room and staff regularly attend first aid training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures in a medical emergency. Prior written parental permission is obtained to administer medication to children and records are well maintained. However, on a few occasions parents have not signed the record book to acknowledge the entry.

Children are well nourished and their individual dietary requirements are met. Appetising cooked meals are prepared in the settings kitchen and well planned menus ensure children receive a balanced and nutritious diet. Meal times are a social occasion and children sit together and enjoy chatting to each other. Staff are currently reviewing the organisation of snack and meal times to ensure that staff have a consistent approach with regard to encouraging children's independence. All babies feeding bottles are labelled and stored in the refrigerator in the self-contained kitchen within the babies room. Daily records are kept of babies' food intake and these are shared with parents. Older children help themselves to drinking water from jugs in the play rooms and staff constantly ask younger children if they need a drink. This encourages children's independence and keeps them hydrated throughout the day.

Children are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise. All children benefit from regular use of the indoor activity centre, where older children develop control of their bodies while enthusiastically using a range of equipment including climbing up the rope ladders, crawling through tunnels and using slides. In addition, the setting is developing an outdoor area where children can enjoy the fresh air and use a range of outdoor equipment such as balls, 'space hoppers' and wheeled toys that help them develop co-ordination and strength. Young children and babies growth and development is promoted through the broad range of physical play

equipment offered, they have frequent opportunities to be active which allows them to acquire new physical skills and develop control of their bodies. Children manipulate small tools such as scissors, brushes and dough to strengthen their fine muscle control.

Children can rest and sleep according to their needs, cots are available for babies, while older children use sleep mats, in the playroom. Each child has individual bedding which is washed regularly and stored appropriately. Children are reassured and comforted to give them time to 'come to' when they first wake up.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment that is safe and well maintained. Large colourful displays welcome children into the entrance of the centre and provide an area for sharing information with parents. The nursery rooms are bright with good use made of the space, giving defined areas in which the children can comfortably learn and play. Child-friendly cupboards are labelled with words and pictures encouraging children's decision making and independence. They use a good range of appropriately sized children's furniture and equipment that allows them to feel safe and secure.

The outside area is currently being developed but is starting to be equipped with stimulating resources to explore such as an area for planting, large sandpit and water pipes on the wall for children to pour water into and see the effect. Children are beginning to be aware of their own safety as staff remind them that they should use equipment safely and not to run inside. Sometimes staff miss opportunities to extend the children's understanding of how to keep themselves and other safe. For example, children are asked to stop waving the scissor around but it is not explained to them that they are sharp and they may hurt themselves and others.

Good security precautions ensure children are safe in the setting. For example, external doors are kept locked and the premises is fully enclosed. Evacuation procedures are practised sufficiently often for staff and children to know how to respond in an emergency, which promotes their safety. Fire prevention equipment is all in place and checked regularly. Procedures for monitoring visitors to the nursery and the collection of children are strong, which keeps children safe. Thorough risk assessments and daily checks make sure that hazards are kept to a minimum so children are kept safe.

Children are protected well from harm as staff have a good understanding of their role in safeguarding children. Relevant documentation is all readily available which ensures correct procedures can be put into place should a concern arise. Staff have good knowledge of safeguarding issues, this is underpinned by relevant training and ensures children's welfare is paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are helped to feel secure and settled. They know the routine well and enjoy positive relationships with their carers and other children. This helps them develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff provide a stimulating environment for children to promote their interests and curiosity to learn and have fun.

The nursery is making good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and they share this information with parents verbally and through displays. Staff make regular observations and assessments of children in their play and these are recorded in children's individual records and used to plan further experiences appropriate to their stage of development. Children develop at their own pace and learn through meaningful experiences, increasingly activities are carried out in response to children's interests rather than what staff choose to do. As a result, babies and young children happily explore their surroundings and stimulating resources.

Babies enjoy sensory experiences such as the feel of silky scarves. A range of natural resources are available alongside plastic 'cause and effect' toys. Treasure baskets are available for babies to explore and staff are developing their knowledge and understanding of holistic play to further enhance the learning environment. Babies and toddlers enjoy looking through linking windows at their height to see what is 'going on' and at each other. Photographs of the babies are placed at their height so they can access them easily. This gives the children a sense of belonging.

Younger children spend their time playing purposefully with a balanced range of toys and activities that motivate and interest them. Toys and resources are well organised to enable children to select activities, initiate their own play and follow their own interests. On occasions, activities are not adequately supported by staff and have limited resources. For example, the role play area was 'a shop' but it had limited resources for the children to sell and it was not supported by staff to engage the children or extend their learning. However, staff have very recently attended training on the learning environment and are very enthusiastic and keen to use their knowledge to consistently provide a rich learning environment throughout the nursery.

Children attending the out of school care show their trust and confidence in the adults around them. They engage them in conversation, sharing their ideas and thoughts. In play they encourage the adults to join in and clearly enjoy their contributions, such as making a 'swan' by folding paper. Resources are varied and appropriate to their ages and interests. Children arrive confidently and know the daily routine well. They talk excitedly with each other about their day and their home life. For example, about what football team is the best and films they have seen at home.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. This enable them to provide a good range of activities which cover the six areas of learning. Good effective use of time provides a balance of adult focused and child focused activities. This allows children time to become engrossed and encourages a relaxed atmosphere in which children can learn well. Children's progress through the stepping stones is monitored in their individual records of progress. However, this is not always used to identify starting points and the next steps in their learning, to ensure future planning meets the individual needs of all the children.

Staff are interested in what children say and do and respond to their interests. They effectively engage children through conversation during activities and encourage children to initiate their own idea's. However, staff do not always use open questioning to extend learning children and provide appropriate challenges. Ongoing training enables staff to be innovative and creative as they plan around the children's interests.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery, they are happy and well-settled and have a positive attitude to learning. They show good levels of independence and confidence and are eager to take part in new experiences. Children are aware of the needs of others and they are learning to manage their own behaviour and show the ability to stand up for their own rights.

They are confident communicators and they play together well in pairs or small groups sharing ideas and experiences. For example, they proudly describe to each other how they have used glitter and feathers to decorate their creations. Children are beginning to understand the elements of writing for a purpose as they make their mark on paintings and craft work. Tools which help them write such as pens, pencils and paint brushes are easily accessible throughout the setting. They listen and respond to stories at circle time, promoting their enjoyment of an increasing range of books.

Children use mathematical language during their play and have opportunities to compare and sort objects by colour and size. They are beginning to recognise and use numerals. Regular opportunities for sand and water play enable children to experiment independently with simple capacity calculations. Children enjoy playing with resources such as telephones and tills in their role play to stimulate their interest in everyday technology.

Most children show good levels of curiosity and they learn about living things when closely observing snails collected by a member of staff. They handle a range of tools and objects with increasing control to help develop their hand to eye coordination. Children have good opportunities to develop their creativity while accessing the interesting range of craft resources and they are given time to explore and experiment with their own ideas. They access the easel freely, exploring colour and describing their pictures to others. Children join in enthusiastically with their favourite songs and action rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the setting. Staff ensure they are able to play with the toys and equipment which meets individual needs. Children learn about the local community through visits such as to the local train station and through projects such as 'now and then'. They develop a real sense of belonging as they proudly point to the photographs of themselves which are on display. Children confidently talk about their feelings and their home lives.

Staff are motivated in providing good support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are met. They demonstrate an ongoing commitment to inclusion as effective arrangements are in place to meet the needs of children. For example, providing a visual time table to help children get to know the routine of the session.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are learning to respect each others similarities and differences. They have access to some resources reflecting a positive view of diversity and gain an understanding of the wider world through topics and discussions during their play. Children's behaviour is very good at the holiday club and generally good in the nursery. All staff act as good role models and implement behaviour management strategies consistently depending upon the age and stage of development of the children. However, the behaviour policy for the nursery does not reflect the practice of the staff.

Parents value staff's support and comment on how much their children enjoy coming to the holiday club and nursery. All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. Staff have built a good rapport with parents and exchange information verbally on a daily basis to ensure children's changing needs are met and to ensure continuity of care. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage and have opportunities to share their children's records of achievement at anytime and through more formal open evenings. Staff value parents views and a recent questionnaire was sent out to parents seeking their opinions. Staff act upon parents suggestion. For example, a parent was invited in to share some Spanish with the children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who are well qualified and have a good understanding of the needs of children. An induction procedure is in place to ensure all staff are aware of policies and procedures and are able to implement them. The registers for children are maintained. However, on occasions, in the nursery, children are signed in but they are not always signed out. Daily routines provide opportunities for children to develop in all areas of learning. All the required policies and procedures are in place which ensure the efficient management of the provision.

Children are mostly supported well in their activities because staff are attentive and conscientious. However, sometimes staff do not deploy themselves effectively so they have an overview of the children as they play. This means there are occasions where children are not always fully supported.

All necessary documentation is in place and is kept up to date so it reflects children's changing needs. Information is shared appropriately with parents and carers, which promotes children's health, safety and welfare. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the National Standards and keep Ofsted informed appropriately of any changes or events in the setting.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The new nursery manager has made a positive impact on the quality of children's learning in the nursery since being in post. She has high expectations for children's achievements and the future development of the provision. She has identified areas for development and seeks the views of parents in order to make further improvements. The organisation of the setting ensures that children are cared for in an environment where there are qualified and suitable staff to meet the needs of all the children attending. Policies and procedures protect children and are effectively implemented to promote all the outcomes for children. The management and organisation of the setting is proactive in ensuring that the practice of all staff contributes positively to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting.

Staff have clear job descriptions which are used as a basis for appraisal. Good teamwork is developing and systems are in place to ensure clear communication takes place between staff. Training needs are identified and opportunities provided for staff to access relevant courses. The quality of care and education is beginning to be monitored to ensure strengths and areas for improvement are identified, with all staff working together to act upon them. All staff value the support provided by the local authority and generally reflect on advice to improve their practice. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to supervise children at all time; ensure children do not have access to persons who have not been vetted; ensure children only leave the setting with authorised adults; that children's existing injuries were recorded and any recommendation made by the fire officer were implemented.

The premises have been altered to incorporate nursery facilities and additional toilets have been provided for the sole use of the out of school club. This enables the out of school club to operate within one room which ensures that children are supervised by staff at all times and can independently access toilets. The setting now uses the Activity World equipment at times when the public are not using the facility. This ensures that the children do not have access to persons who have not been vetted. Effective systems are now in place to ensure children only leave with authorised adults and any existing injuries are recorded. All the recommendation made by the Fire Officer have been fully implemented. This ensures the welfare of the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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.

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.

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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 all accident forms consistently and accurately log the exact location of the injury and medical forms are consistently signed by the parents
- ensure an accurate record is maintained of children's actual hours of attendance
- ensure staff deployment is effective in supporting children's play and learning and staff use questioning effectively to offer appropriate challenges to all children (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure behaviour policy reflects the practice throughout the nursery.

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 further the assessment and evaluation of children's progress, to identify their starting points and the next steps in their learning to inform future planning
- develop the evaluation of plans to effectively identify if the intended learning was achieved.

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