

Kidsunlimited Nurseries - Long Road

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY309174
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Inspector	Jean Goodrick / Veronica Sharpe
Setting Address	Robinson Way, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB2 0SR
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Registered person	Kidsunlimited Nurseries
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kidsunlimited Nurseries - Long Road is one of a national chain of nurseries run by Kidsunlimited Nurseries. It opened in June 2005 and operates from a purpose-built building. It is situated on the grounds of Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The day nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 152 children at any one time. The nursery is open all year round from 07:00 to 18:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 196 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area and their parents are often employed on the hospital site. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 45 members of staff, of whom 19 staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play outside every day and therefore benefit from fresh air and exercise. Resources such as tricycles and scooters enable them to pedal, push and manoeuvre with confidence. A weekly 'soccer kids' programme helps some children to develop their skills using balls and cones. Indoors children join in action songs and games, such as 'sandy boy'. Babies enjoy outings in the fresh air as they are taken out for walks in the hospital grounds in double buggies. Babies and younger children rest and sleep according to their individual routines.

Children's health and well-being is promoted, and they are protected from the risks of cross-infection by appropriate hygiene procedures, for example staff use gloves and aprons when changing nappies and changing mats are cleaned between uses. Older children know to wash their hands during the daily routine. Appropriate procedures and documents are in place to ensure children's individual dietary and medical needs are met, for example all medical consents are obtained from parents and staff in supervisory roles hold first aid certificates.

All children enjoy sufficient quantities of food and drink to ensure their nutritional needs are met. Meals are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises each day and the menu takes into account children's individual dietary needs. Babies are held tenderly whilst being bottle fed. Menus are available to parents and include healthy options such as fruit and vegetables. Children have some opportunities to develop their independence but meals are functional rather than social occasions where staff focus on the practicalities of feeding the children. Babies and younger children have drinks available in their rooms but they are not regularly offered water between meals and snacks when, for example they become hot and flustered. Water is not always available for older children to help themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment; they move around freely and safely in the space provided. Children's safety is enhanced by good security procedures used to restrict access to the setting. Risks are minimised as regular assessments are carried out conscientiously. The outdoor play area is secure and children are well supervised. Staff carry relevant information when children are taken out of the nursery.

Children learn about keeping safe as fire drills take place regularly and staff explain about dangers such as running indoors and climbing on the furniture. This helps children to develop their understanding of hazards and to take responsibility for themselves. Children use an adequate range of safe equipment and resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. The range of toys and activities are not always readily accessible to children so they have limited opportunities to make their own choices and develop their play. The range of books available to children is also limited.

Children are protected and kept safe from harm as the staff have a satisfactory knowledge of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and relevant information is easily accessible. Parents have access to the nursery's policies and procedures so that they are clear about the provider's responsibilities. However the manager has not attended relevant training to update

her knowledge and to improve her understanding of her overall responsibilities to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed as they enter the nursery. Staff are friendly and caring and children have positive relationships with adults and each other. Children enjoy warm and affectionate relationships with staff and benefit from the key worker system which helps them to feel secure, when operated consistently. Babies and toddlers also benefit from the satisfactory support offered during their activities and they enjoy 'snuggling in' to look at books and sing rhymes. Babies' early communication skills are developed through warm interaction with the staff, who respond to them with respect. However staff's knowledge and understanding of child development, including the 'Birth to three matters' framework is not consistent throughout the nursery. Therefore the quality of interaction is variable and staff sometimes interrupt children's play, for example when they are engrossed in feeling and exploring the sand, asking children unrelated questions rather than observing what the children are doing and supporting their play.

Children are generally interested in the suitable range of activities and resources on offer and are excited by activities that offer challenge and stimulation. However, some resources and activities both indoors and outdoors, are not used imaginatively or creatively. They offer insufficient challenge and cannot be accessed easily by children to enable them to develop their independence, follow their own interests and begin to direct their own play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Practitioners have insufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage and do not fully understand how the activities they provide contribute to children's learning and development. This lack of knowledge means that the quality of the activities provided is often poor and many fail to engage children's interest. Some activities are inappropriate for the age and stage of development of the children attending as practitioners do not have realistic expectations of what they should achieve. As a result children have limited opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills and have their learning and developmental needs met.

Children's assessment records provide an incomplete picture of children's attainments and therefore do not offer an effective tool for practitioners to plan children's next steps. Few observations are collected in order to find out what children can do. Those that are collected are sometimes based on focus activities, which children do not choose for themselves. Therefore the observations are not based on what children enjoy and can do. Parents do not contribute what they know about their child's abilities and this means that practitioners have an incomplete picture of children's attainments. Consequently, the activities do not take into account children's interests and lack challenge.

Routines enable children to have short periods of free play at various times of the day. Some of the resources available to the children are high quality, such as a large Noah's ark and children clearly take pleasure in playing with these. However, accessible resources are inadequate in quantity and those that are available are not always deployed effectively. For example, there are only small quantities of play food and no writing materials in the role play areas. Children move around the provided activities and sometimes show interest and enthusiasm, but

practitioners do not effectively engage with them in order to promote their interest and extend their learning. This means children soon lose interest and fail to sustain their play. Often, when they do become engaged in an interesting activity, such as an impromptu 'picnic' they are interrupted by a practitioner who requires them for a planned activity, or suggests they are making inappropriate use of the resources.

Children are not asked about their interests or enabled to give their opinion about what they would like to do. Instead they are chosen to take part in specific group activities that are adult-led and do not provide appropriate challenge or interest. Some of these, such as using flash cards or a 'sound-learning' game with two-year-olds are inappropriate for their age and stage of development. This leads to children becoming bored and restless, which affects their disposition to learn.

Children generally communicate well with each other; they share their games and chat together about their family and interests. They enjoy books and sit together to share the story and pictures. Most of the children enjoy story time and some respond well to familiar stories, such as 'going on a bear hunt'. They choose books spontaneously and sit together to share their choice with friends. Children's early writing skills are poorly catered for as there are limited accessible resources for all children to practise this skill in a variety of everyday situations. Examples of children's emergent writing are rarely displayed to show children how their efforts are valued, although some examples are kept in their art folders. The range of activities which prepare children for early writing is limited, for example, they have insufficient chances to paint or use malleable materials.

Children demonstrate some understanding of numbers and counting, for example, when asked they can say how old they are, or count their peers at the lunch table. Songs, such as 'baa baa black sheep' help children begin to sequence and recognise numbers. Generally, though, numbers are not used often enough in the daily routine to help children develop and practise their ability to estimate, calculate, or to see the practical applications of numbers. Although children have few planned opportunities to leave the nursery to go for walks or explore the wider world, they do have visitors who show them, for example, insects and small mammals or how to make fruit 'smoothies'.

Children express their imagination through role play as they wear fire-fighters hats, or prepare a picnic. They draw with interest and admire each other's self-portraits or discuss a picture of an aeroplane drawn by a practitioner. Although children show an interest in some art activities they have insufficient opportunities to express themselves in different media, such as paint and play dough. Children's ability to extend their ideas and develop their imagination is limited due to a lack of suitable additional resources, for instance younger children using paper plates and colouring crayons soon lose interest as there is nothing else to stimulate their imagination. Overall children do not make good enough progress in most of the areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met as the nursery gathers clear information to meet these needs and this contributes to children's well-being. However, children have limited access to a range of suitable resources, including books and images, which help them to understand about their differences and similarities or which promote a positive view of the wider world. Satisfactory systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this ensures they are able to participate in activities and that their needs are respected.

Children behave well and older children demonstrate an understanding of the rules for good behaviour with the support of staff. Staff generally use effective strategies to manage children's behaviour and this means children are beginning to understand what is expected of them. However staff sometimes repeat instructions, particularly at lunch time, such as 'sit nicely' and 'don't turn round' rather than engage positively with children whilst they are sitting and waiting.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is not fostered.

Children benefit from the good settling-in procedures to support them in the transition between home and nursery. Parents speak appreciatively of the support of staff when their children start at the nursery. This ensures that children feel secure and generally settle readily. Parents receive information about the setting on the notice boards and through newsletters so they know about activities and events. They have daily opportunities to discuss their child with staff and receive written information about their daily routine. Parents also comment favourably on the recent improvement in the range of resources and toys available to their children.

The partnership with the parents and carers of children who receive early years education is satisfactory. Parents and carers receive regular written reports on their children's progress. They speak to practitioners about their children's well-being on a daily basis so they have a reasonable idea of the activities their children have participated in. Various notice boards and the nursery prospectus tell parents about the early learning goals so they understand about the education process. At present parents and carers have few opportunities to contribute what they know about their children. This means practitioners do not take account of what children can do at home when planning for their next steps. Parents and carers rarely access their children's development records although some say they are aware that records are kept.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the system of ensuring staff working with children are vetted and suitable to do so. All required documentation is in place, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. Confidentiality is respected. The nursery has a professional framework of policies and procedures for the benefit of all the children which is available to parents. Some staff have early years qualifications but the lack of training opportunities, for example in the 'Birth to three matters' framework affects the overall quality of childcare practice. The new manager is committed to improving resources and childcare practice. Satisfactory use is generally made of time, space and resources to provide a range of age-appropriate activities. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is inadequate. Some practitioners have suitable qualifications but the management team has not effectively monitored the provision in order to ensure practitioners have the necessary skills, knowledge and resources to support children's learning in the foundation stage. A recent high turnover of practitioners means their knowledge of the children is limited and that some children are insecure, which limits their ability to settle.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was agreed that hygiene procedures would be improved by ensuring soap and towels are always available in the toilets. The nursery now employs a housekeeper who ensures that satisfactory standards of cleanliness and hygiene are maintained throughout

the nursery for the welfare of the children. It was also agreed that children would have more opportunities to select resources independently. This recommendation has been carried forward at this inspection as children have limited opportunities to select resources from a good age-appropriate range. Improvements in the care of babies was also agreed so that sufficient staff are available to comfort each baby who is distressed. Staff cover over the lunch time period has been improved so that an extra staff member is available when staff have breaks and babies generally receive adequate support and comfort when distressed.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. On 08 January 2007 concerns were raised about overcrowding in rooms in the setting and the safety of children attending. These concerns related to National Standards 2: Organisation, 4: Physical environment and 6: Safety. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit on 11 January 2007. The provider was not meeting National Standards 2 and 14 and the provider was therefore given two actions and one recommendation. On 30 January 2007 a response was received from the provider confirming that all actions had been met.

On 30 July 2007 concerns were raised about hygiene, staffing and the setting not dealing with a written complaint. These concerns related to National Standards 2: Organisation, 3: Care learning and play, 4: Physical environment, 7: Health and 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the premises on 02/08/2007. The provider was not meeting National Standards 3, 12 and 14 and the provider was therefore given four actions.

On 10 September 2007 concerns were raised about qualifications, supervision and hygiene. These concerns related to National Standards 2: Organisation and 7: Safety. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the premises on 12 September 2007 and found that the provider was not meeting Standards 2, 3, 4 and 5. As a result the following actions were set: ensure that staff's involvement in cleaning and administrative duties does not adversely affect children's care; ensure that staff caring for babies have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities; ensure that movement of staff around the nursery does not adversely affect children's needs for good trusting relationships and consistency of care; ensure that there are sufficient staff with the children over lunch time and other breaks so that the needs of all the children are met; plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs; provide a suitable range of age-appropriate equipment and toys to meet the developmental needs of all the children; review and improve the organisation of resources to allow children greater freedom to select toys and other activities for themselves; ensure that staff providing nursery education have appropriate qualifications and experience and implement systems to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education to ensure that children have access to good quality learning experiences. Responses to these actions were received on 22 October 2007 and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 drinking water is available to children at all times and ensure that water is regularly offered to younger children
- develop the range of accessible resources so that children can follow their own interests and develop their play
- ensure that the member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection attends relevant training so that they can carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children
- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of child development using, for example the 'Birth to three matters' framework so that children's development is promoted effectively through sensitive interaction and stimulating activities
- develop resources and activities which reflect a diverse society and help children to understand their differences and similarities.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of how children learn in the foundation stage
- develop the routines and the range of accessible resources to enable children to make decisions and follow their own interests
- improve the systems for monitoring the quality of the early years education and ensure staff have the necessary skills and resources to carry out their responsibilities.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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