



The Stables Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY221535
Inspection date	12 October 2005
Inspector	Jane Shaw
Setting Address	Grimsditch Lane, Lower Whitley, Warrington, WA4 4ED
Telephone number	01925 730055
E-mail	
Registered person	The Stables
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 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 Stables Nursery School is one of four nurseries run by Kids Academy Nursery Group Limited. It opened in 2002 and operates from a converted stable barn within the Lower Whitley area of Cheshire.

A maximum of 61 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. Children are cared for within four rooms according to age, with a separate baby annexe. All children

share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Appropriate toilet, hand washing and nappy changing facilities are available. There is a kitchen on site for the preparation of meals and snacks.

There are currently 131 children on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs. The nursery serves the local community.

The registered provider employs 20 staff within the nursery. 13 of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Seven staff are working towards a qualification.

As the nursery is in receipt of funding for nursery education they have access to a Foundation Stage teacher and other advisory staff from the local authority. The nursery has achieved Investors In People status.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a healthy and hygienic environment. Staff are vigilant about children's good health and employ thorough procedures and routines to ensure all areas are clean and hygienic. Children are well aware of the need to wash their hands before and after certain activities, such as, after using the toilet or before meals. Older children are able to undertake this task independently or with gentle reminders. Younger children's hygiene is dealt with by staff. Children within the nursery are also encouraged to think about keeping their teeth healthy, cleaning their teeth regularly after midday meals; appropriate arrangements are made for the safe and healthy storing of toothbrushes. Various themes enable the children to think about healthy eating and healthy body awareness. A detailed sick child policy and procedure ensures staff are alert to children who might be feeling unwell and that any necessary arrangements are made. Effective hygiene routines and procedures are employed by care staff and the cook when preparing meals and snacks ensuring children are kept healthy and free from infection at all times. Good procedures are in place for the regular cleaning of toys and equipment to ensure children are free from cross infection and good hygiene procedures are also implemented and followed by staff during nappy changing.

Children's healthy eating is well promoted through the provision of healthy snacks and meals throughout the day. Meals are freshly cooked each day and offer the children a balanced diet. Children learn the importance of healthy eating and through a range of activities look at the different healthy foods. Good arrangements are in place to ensure children have access to drinking water throughout the day. Wherever appropriate children are able to help themselves to drinks during their play through the provision of jugs and cups. Staff are vigilant about offering and ensuring children have extra drinks following exercise or outdoor play, further promoting children's good health and overall development.

Children's physical development is promoted well. Children have daily access to a variety of physical play activities and opportunities to be out of doors such as outdoor play or walks within the locality. Children are developing their physical skills well. Children competently climb, balance, travel over, under and through as they use 'adventure' type equipment which includes ladders, a bridge and slide. Pre-school children competently climb stairs to their first floor group room, children also access sit 'n' ride toys and other outdoor equipment which is rotated regularly. Children develop competent small physical skills through access to a wide variety of equipment and activities. For example, children competently use scissors, a computer keyboard and mouse, a variety of craft materials when being creative, writing materials, construction equipment and sticky tape dispensers.

Staff have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. This framework has been implemented well across the nursery and is used effectively to plan and provide good activities for this age range. Long, medium and short term plans are devised and involve the children in stimulating and suitable activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety and welfare is promoted well because they are cared for in a well-planned and organised environment. Children are well cared for in rooms that are organised according to age, rooms are well prepared each day prior to the children's arrival. Children access a variety of activities and opportunities on a daily basis which are supported by good resources and equipment. Children enjoy a range of activities both indoor and outdoor which contribute to their enjoyment. All available space is well used to provide the children with good learning and development opportunities.

Children access a good range of toys and equipment. Resources are regularly added to and are well used to support activities and children's enjoyment. Children have opportunities to develop their skills of independence as they self select toys and equipment from those on offer and from low shelving. Babies access toys and equipment placed next to them. Opportunities for free play throughout the day enable children to make choices about their activities and self select toys and equipment. Children under 3 are offered opportunities and activities which are planned in line with Birth to three matters. Children access toys and equipment which is checked regularly for safety and hygiene to ensure their safety at all times.

Children are cared for within a safe and secure environment because there are good safety policies and procedures in place. Staff are diligent in their care of children and the provision of a safe environment through the use of suitable safety equipment, plans and procedures. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis on all areas used by children and particularly within the outdoor play space during autumn, as this area is located in close proximity to falling leaves which present potential hazards. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff and gentle reminders, for example, during outdoor play and when using the stairs to the first floor.

Children's welfare is given a high priority. Staff have a good understanding of child protection policies and procedures and their role within this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are learning and developing well through well planned activities and opportunities which promote their good learning, overall development and enjoyment. All children are offered good opportunities which are planned by qualified and experienced staff. Staff make good use of the Birth to three framework and Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to plan a good variety of activities and opportunities for the children. Children across the whole provision enjoy well planned activities which are supported by a range of resources covering a variety of play experiences, for example, very young children are involved in a variety of sensory experiences, such as using feathers, older children enjoy water play being involved in looking at what sinks and floats and have fun when using bubbles in water. However, some resources are not suitable for very young children and the organisation of activities within the 2 to 3 year group sometimes results in children not being actively engaged in activities.

All children arrive excited and happy, they are warmly greeted by staff who are enthusiastic and welcoming. Staff communicate and interact well with all children and as a result children are becoming competent learners. Children under 3 benefit from activities provided by staff who clearly understand Birth to three matters. The registered provider, managers and staff are committed to both the Birth to three matters framework and the curriculum guidance. The manager regularly monitors activities and staff performance across the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy a varied range of stimulating and exciting activities and experiences. Children enjoy and are actively engaged in activities which support their learning and development across all six areas of learning. All children arrive eager, motivated and excited to learn and try the new experiences offered to them. Children are developing good relationships with one another and adults. Children understand the need to share and take turns with toys and equipment and to sit quietly and listen to others when they speak. Children show they are able to co-operate and help one another, for example as one child helps another to use a tape dispenser. Children are making good progress in developing their skills of independence. They are able to deal with personal tasks and pour their own drinks and help themselves to snacks. Children are becoming confident communicators as they engage in conversations with one another and adults, as they talk about writing letters and recalling their nature walk, describing why the leaves change colour and where conkers come from. They are developing a good vocabulary as they describe the sound dry leaves make as 'crunchy'. They enjoy and listen well to favourite stories read to them by staff. They are competently able to use books independently and use them correctly. There are many examples of well written words and print around the room but pictures to illustrate these words

and letters are not used.

Children are developing an understanding of numbers and are able to count using a variety of objects, for example one child collects leaves during outdoor play counting them into a member of staff's hand. Children are developing skills of sorting and sequencing as they sort objects of the same size, colour and shape and as they help to tidy away equipment during their day. They are introduced to the concept of coins and money as they use pretend money to purchase items at snack time or when buying cakes in their bakery.

Children engage in a range of themes and activities that help them to consider the wider world and the world they live in. They enjoy visits to the setting from various people including a gentleman with a variety of snakes. Children think about others as they deliver parcels to elderly residents within the community at Harvest time. Children are learning French from a visiting specialist. Children celebrate various festivals throughout the year. Children are involved in early science as they engage in simple experiments such as sinking and floating, pouring through tubes and funnels in water play.

Children's physical skills are well provided for with access to a good range of equipment to aid the development of large and small physical skills. They competently climb and balance. Children's manipulative skills are well developed as they use writing materials, scissors and thread and as they use tape dispensers. Children's imagination is developing well through access to a range of resources. Role play areas are regularly changed to encourage the development of children's imagination. Children access a wide variety of creative resources and opportunities to develop their creative imagination.

Activities are well planned by the early years co-ordinator involving the children in a range of interesting activities across all six areas of learning. Long, medium and short term plans engage children in stimulating activities enabling them to make good progress in all areas of learning. Themes and activities are evaluated promptly; these are well used to plan future activities and the next steps for individual children's learning and the group as a whole. Some activities offered by visiting specialists are not appropriately pitched. Children's development and progress is observed, monitored and recorded spontaneously and during focused activities. This information is used to formulate children's profiles, to inform future planning and to identify the next steps for children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children have equal access to the activities and opportunities offered. Children's equality of opportunity is given a high priority across the nursery. All children are included in the activities provided; their individual needs and circumstances are known and provided for by staff. Children develop an understanding and awareness of their own environment and of the wider world. Children access a range of resources and opportunities which promotes their understanding of diversity well.

Children with English as an additional language, special educational and specific needs are well supported by staff across the nursery. Staff work closely with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that children are cared for well and receive support enabling them to participate fully in activities.

Children's behaviour is good because staff are good role models. Children receive lots of positive praise and encouragement for their efforts, attempts and achievements which has a positive impact on the development of their self confidence and self-esteem. Children are polite, share, take turns, co-operate with one another and show consideration for others as they wait quietly when others are talking. Staff work well together as a team and interact effectively with one another and children.

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

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit from the very good partnership with parents and carers. Children's development and achievements are shared with their parents and carers on a regular basis. Informal discussions upon collection of children, written records and attendance at parents' evenings and curriculum evenings ensures parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. Parents and carers have access to and receive plenty of excellent information about the setting and what it has to offer in terms of care and education, themes, plans and information on the educational provision as a whole. Staff make excellent use of notice boards to provide information for parents and carers. Parents and carers spoken to were very positive and supportive of the provision and what it offers their children. Regular parents' evenings keep them up-to-date with their child's development, achievements and general well-being. Pre-school children's development and achievements are recorded and shared with parents and carers regularly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Children benefit from the effective leadership and management of the nursery. The registered person and all staff work well together to ensure the provision of good quality care and education. Senior staff undertake the regular monitoring of the provision looking at staff performance, training and development, activities and the curriculum. There are clear development plans for both staff and the provision as a whole. Regular staff and senior staff meetings and appraisals ensure staff are working in a consistent way across the provision and that training needs are identified and addressed.

Comprehensive and detailed policies, procedures and operation plans are in place. Meetings and staff appraisals are used to ensure that staff remain up-to-date with policies and procedures.

Qualified and experienced staff support children's learning and development well. Staff are qualified and experienced in childcare and education. Staff are committed to and offered further training opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. This

has a positive impact on children's learning, development and welfare because staff keep up-to-date with new childcare initiatives.

Children enjoy a wide range of play experiences which are offered across well-organised play spaces maximising their play and learning opportunities.

All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and wellbeing is in place, is well maintained and regularly reviewed. However, not all accidents are recorded.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the setting have improved outcomes for children in terms of their safety by replacing all carpets that create potential hazards with laminate flooring, thus ensuring children are safe at all times.

The organisation of the nursery has been improved by the accurate recording of both staff and children's attendance on a daily basis showing actual times of arrival and departure.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 accidents are recorded
- consider the re-organisation of activities within the 2-3 year group room to ensure children are actively engaged in activities. Ensure that children have access to age appropriate resources to ensure they are safe at all times (baby room).

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 all activities including those provided by outside specialists are appropriately pitched for the children attending
- provide pictures to illustrate labelling to support children's letter and word recognition.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk