



Kings Cottage Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219173
Inspection date	06 March 2006
Inspector	Susan Tuffnell
Setting Address	Unilever Research site, Colworth Road, SHARNBROOK, Bedfordshire, MK44 1ET
Telephone number	01234 222589
E-mail	kingscottage@brighthorizons.com
Registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd.
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kings Cottage Nursery opened in Colworth House in the rural village of Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire, in 1990. It is a community nursery managed by Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited, who run a chain of childcare establishments across the country. The nursery is located in a pair of converted and extended semi-detached houses. There is a secure garden and the nursery uses the extensive grounds of the country house.

There are currently 60 children aged six weeks to five years on roll. Of these 22 children receive funding for nursery education. There are no children attending with a special need or who have English as an additional language. The nursery is open for five days a week, between the hours of 08:00 until 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year.

The nursery employs 16 staff, 10 of these have a level three qualification, 2 staff have level two qualification and 3 staff are training for their level three qualification. The nursery also employs a qualified nursery teacher. The nursery receives support from an advisory teacher from Bright Horizons and from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through extremely well-planned daily routines and topics which focus on independence skills and keeping children healthy. Older children have a secure awareness of how and why we wash our hands and when it is important to do so. For example, before meals and snacks and after messy activities. Younger children develop their understanding through watching others, discussion and through the positive role modelling of the adults. The children are protected from infection through effective hygiene routines which are practised by the nursery. For example, the high level of attention by staff when providing personal care to younger children. Well-maintained, clean toys and equipment encourage children to take part in the general care of their home rooms. For example, children use a toy vacuum cleaner to "get rid of germs and yucky stuff". Efficient nappy changing routines and toilet training methods and a sick child policy also contribute to a healthy child. Staff are well informed about children's health issues and enhanced records and documents are in place. Four members of staff hold first aid certificates and are deployed around the nursery to administer first aid to the children as soon as possible to prevent them becoming distressed.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. The nursery continually works towards developing nutritious meals and snacks to promote healthy eating with the children. The meals on offer cater for the children's various dietary needs with dietary alert forms displayed for staff and a record kept by the nursery cook. For example, children on gluten free diets or other food allergies. A satisfactory range of different cultural foods are offered as the cook prepares food items such as chilli, chow mien, noodles and pasta. This enables children to gain an understanding of healthy food in other cultures. The monthly menus are planned in advance with all ingredients being fresh and appetising which is demonstrated in the enjoyment children have of their meals. A pleasant, happy and social occasion is created for the children to encourage them to gain social skills and manners while also trying new tastes. Children have opportunity to use appropriate cutlery and all children are becoming skilled using it. Older children are able to serve themselves and others and this increases their independence and self-reliance. For example, designated children lay the tables setting out knives and forks and helping each other work out how many they need. Children are able to eat at their own pace. Conversations take place at meal times around the food and what food is good for us. This helps children gain a

healthy respect for food and how it can make them strong. Younger children are very well supported by staff. They are encouraged to persist when feeding themselves either using spoons or fingers. Babies and toddlers enjoy meal times because the staff create a happy and relaxed atmosphere. Children have access to fresh drinks throughout the day. For example, they use the fresh water dispenser independently.

Children enjoy a stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development. They are keen to use their physical skills and develop these further through well-planned activities both indoors and outdoors. The garden has been planned to incorporate different activities which encourage the children to use their bodies for keeping fit and healthy. Children move with confidence and skill as they ride cars and bikes. Children have access to climbing and balancing equipment and the more adventurous use this well. Less mobile babies are able to enjoy fresh air in the garden and park from their buggies. Younger children join in activities which are often adapted to meet their stage of development and staff are on hand to support and guide their play. Babies mobility is developing with the use of low-level furniture, walking aids and space to roll and crawl. For example, children are given lots of encouragement by staff as they attempt to walk for the first time. Children's hand and eye coordination is well developed as they play with small world figures, manipulate jigsaws and one handed tools. They spontaneously take part in a music session, join in with favourite songs and ring games and play along with the taped music using a range of musical instruments. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance well to provide an exciting range of physical play experiences for younger children. They make choices about play and are developing their confidence as they move around the room. Hand and eye coordination and mobility are developed as they reach for toys, attempt to stack bricks and use the mini climbing frame and slide with increasing confidence and control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is of high priority within the organisation of the nursery. Staff are vigilant when recognising hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Systematic risk assessments with excellent recording are carried out and all staff share in the responsibility for keeping children safe. Accident records are used to identify areas of risk and steps taken to reduce these. A health and safety coordinator oversees this throughout the nursery. Each area of the setting is well-planned, with space for children to move freely and safely around activities and play areas. Impressive and well implemented safety and security precautions are in place to promote and safeguard the children's welfare. For example, security at the entrance and outside play area. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the nursery as they explain and practise simple procedures such as emergency evacuation and the boundaries necessary to help children participate in their own safety. For example, children contribute to their own safety by helping to tidy away toys after use and low level storage unit with clear labelling encourage children to put items away correctly. Comprehensive safety measures are in place to protect the children from harm such as, socket safety covers, high handles, fire safety equipment and fire alarms. Children use an extensive range of safe, good quality and

developmentally appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well-planned and organised throughout the setting with lots of child height storage units to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. Equipment and activities are attractively presented to help children learn to respect and look after their resources. For example, imaginative play areas are well resourced and interesting. In the rooms with less mobile babies all equipment is bright and cheerful, easily accessible and promotes mobility. A good level of supervision is maintained by staff to support and guide the children during their play.

The overall environment throughout the nursery is stimulating, bright, cheerful and child orientated. Colourful and attractive posters are situated appropriately where children can see them and children's work is well displayed to give them a sense of achievement and pride in their own work. A calm and relaxed atmosphere is created in the sleep areas to help young children settle and sleep. The outside play area is well-planned with soft safety surfaces, a covered area and a range of static equipment.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for the protection of children. Staff are secure in their knowledge about child protection and all procedures are in place and implemented. The nursery's good practice ensures any concerns are dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner. There is a procedure in place to clearly show the steps taken in the event of any allegations made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy, contented and secure throughout the nursery. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and are forming secure relationships with staff and other children. Staff have an excellent understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has a positive effect on the younger children's enjoyment and achievements. Staff plan activities in line with this framework and have gained a secure knowledge about what children can learn. Planning for 'Birth to three' clearly reflects all areas and children's progress is well documented and shared with parents. Babies and young children receive lots of cuddles and have developed strong bonds with their key workers which increases their sense of well-being and contentment. Younger children exhibit great delight when joining in with activities, they use items such as mirrors and finger painting to help develop a strong sense of self. Children develop their language skills as they respond to others around them. With the use of verbal and non-verbal language they make their needs known to staff who are adept at interpreting these needs. Younger children are eager to take part in activities and join together with others. For example, during a singing session they sway to sounds, shake rattles and join in with familiar songs and rhymes. Older children benefit from a fantastic range of labelling around the room, they recognise that print carries meaning and can read familiar words. Children access excellent resources which they use spontaneously. They recreate real life situations as they mimic adults in the role play area. For example children imitate the Ofsted inspector by sitting with a notepad writing, looking up and around

and writing again. Structured learning sessions build children's knowledge of letter formation and sounds. Children are very skilled at giving examples of words beginning with the letter 'C'. Children develop writing skills as they join dots on words, letters and numbers. Children's mobility is extended through the first hand support offered by staff as they move freely and easily around the room. Children of all ages and abilities use a range of creative materials such as sponge painting, sticking, printing and other messy activities and are directly involved and interested in their play. Children learn about responsibilities and the effects of their actions. For example, when throwing a toy they are encouraged to pick it up with a clear explanation from staff about how they could hurt others. Through the meaningful praise and encouragement by staff children are developing a sense of well-being and self-esteem. Children exhibit high levels of confidence and this has been achieved by the consistent support and direction of staff. For example, children show interest as they plant vegetable seeds in pots. They select from a variety of seeds and learn how they grow by caring for them.

Nursery Education

Children are absorbed, engaged and happy in the activities provided. Staff are skilled at extending the range of activities which supports the children's learning and enables them to make progress. Children have a wonderful sense of belonging as they greet each other and seek out friends to share play with. Children share and play cooperatively together. They help each other for example, laying the table and using scissors. Children enjoy using language in their imaginative play and during group discussion. They are confident speakers in small and large groups and are developing good listening skills. They enjoy books immensely and use skills learnt to take part in role play situations. For example, children use magazines and books in the 'travel agents'. Staff introduce new language which children emulate in play. For example, children showing off junk models describe them as 'Stonehenge'. Children enjoy using their mark-making skills and confidently use a wide variety of tools. For example, children write notes and use pencils and paint to make marks. Most children are secure recognising their own name on cards and names of other children. Excellent labelling around the room develop children's early word recognition. Children have a growing concept of matching, sorting, size, shape and simple problem solving skills as they take part in many activities such as laying the table, cooking activities and computer programmes. Children weigh, measure, experiment and calculate using the well resourced maths area and through structured learning sessions. They have an excellent understanding of shapes and can name shapes and match and sort them. Children learn how things work and to connect ideas through simple scientific experiments with magnets and melting and freezing ice. They discover how things grow by planting seeds, using planting medium and can easily explain the process. They experiment to find out how things change by adding bubbles to water and food colouring to play dough. Children take part in a fabulous topic 'Zoo Lab'. They have opportunities to touch, feel, smell and look at different creatures such as a snake, African snails, frogs, tarantula and gerbils. They are able to hold some of the creatures and discuss how many legs and how they move. Children extend the experience by moving like the animals. Children who held the snake described it as "soft and warm". Children discover the world around them through interesting topics which engage and hold their interest. For example, children

take part in a project about planets. They make the planets from a range of different materials and hang them from the ceiling showing the children distances from Earth and the Sun. Some children are able to name the planets in sequence. Children gain a wonderful understanding of different cultures and beliefs through a range of topics, resources and discussions that take place. For example, Chinese New Year. Children enjoy many varied creative activities. For example, children have an excellent awareness of colour and experiment with changes such as adding it to playdough. Children thoroughly enjoy a music session and explore sound with a selection of instruments brought in by the music teacher for children to try.

Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones. Staff use on-going observations extremely well to plan the next steps in children's learning. A system is used to identify children's entry profile and starting point before moving them forward. This is useful when children have followed through the nursery as staff are able to build a sound profile of individual children. The assessments give clear evidence of the children's progress and achievements and any gaps can be quickly identified to inform future planning. Each child has a folder containing examples of their work and comments linked to the Bright Horizons world at their fingertips. Planning clearly shows the areas of learning and the stepping stones broken down into colour groups so children's achievements and progress is easily identified. Key person conference report sheets share information with parents. They give very concise and clear details about children's progress with space for parents to comment and agree set goals for children to achieve. Activity observation sheets are very well used by staff with tracking sheets and individual activity plans to build on learning in specific areas so that all children are included and their individual needs met fully. Children's attainment record through the Foundation Stage is transferred to school when children leave the nursery to ensure that there is a smooth transition through the education system.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff enrich the experiences for all children with well-planned activities and resources. They have a good awareness of children's starting points and use this to plan the next steps in their development. Consistent staff impacts on children's confidence and security within their base room. Sensitive settling in procedures builds on this giving children confidence to participate. Staff know the children well, know when to step back and let the children take over an activity, creating a realistic balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. They are successful at motivating children to capture their interest and arouse their curiosity. For example, the Zoo Lab activity and topic about the planets. This gives children the skills to succeed in most given tasks. Staff take time to explain to the children what is expected of them and are very positive and patient role models. Staff inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. They encourage children to gain the confidence to succeed and support them well as they aspire to do so. Small groups work very well to maintain children's interest and increase their concentration and language skills. Staff will intervene with any disputes but encourage the children to resolve differences themselves. Staff respond positively to children's requests. For example, children request musical instruments and staff and children get involved in a super spontaneous music session. Staff encourage children to ask questions and think for themselves. For example, when working out how to mix play dough and how the colour will change. Children are

supported by staff as they learn new skills that challenge them. They move from dependence to independent learning as they are provided with activities to move them on to the next stage of learning and are given opportunities to succeed. Children are rewarded with praise and positive language for their efforts. Children's education is greatly enhanced by qualified and experienced teaching staff which impacts directly on their successful accomplishments and the delivery of a sound educational programme. Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. This gives a clear picture of the aims and objectives of each activity and the learning intention. Activity planning clearly shows the activity, the grouping of children, the main learning intentions, key vocabulary to introduce, resources, how the activity can be adapted for individual children and an evaluation. Staff are enthusiastic, patient and caring and this impacts greatly on the children's enjoyment and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. Children take part in a range of activities of both familiar and unfamiliar festivals and celebrations. For example, Christmas, Easter and Chinese New Year. Children gain knowledge and experience of different customs by participating in a range of activities. For example, creating an attractive display of dragons, lanterns and paper chains. Staff have positive attitudes and present themselves as sensitive role models. This helps children relate to others and gain a secure understanding of the needs of others. For example, sharing the task of laying the table and helping each other with cutting skills. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Children are valued and respected as individuals and all their needs are well documented and implemented. Children thrive in their environment where they are engaged and nurtured free from any type of stereotyping. Staff are clearly committed to supporting each and every child in order to meet their needs and promote a truly inclusive environment where every child matters. Detailed pre-registration forms gain full information from parents about each child in order to fully meet their needs.

Children are gaining a worthwhile understanding of the boundaries within the nursery and respond to direction from adults in a positive fashion. They eagerly respond to the consistent approach followed by all adults. This impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children develop secure levels of self-esteem and are beginning to resolve differences and gain an understanding between right and wrong. Highly effective behaviour management defuses situations and distracts and engages children in worthwhile activities. For example, children are busy, occupied and interested in the activities. Children share in the responsibility for their own behaviour as they learn to listen to others, share and wait turns and be kind to others. Staff have high expectations for all children and are excellent role models.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging, security and well-being. Parents' play an active role in

their children's care and a two way sharing of information is encouraged with the use of a daily report sheet that includes information on children's learning, enjoyment and achievements. This gives parents opportunities to extend activities at home. For example, reading poems and extending language. Parents are invited to regular parent evenings to share information about children's progress and have opportunities to discuss their children's care and education with the key worker daily. Their involvement impacts greatly on the children's good health, safety, care and learning. Staff are approachable and friendly, helping parents feel secure and at ease, confident with the care provided for their child. Parents have been informed about the 'Birth to three matters' format and how the nursery implements this. Information about the Foundation Stage and curriculum is available to them so they gain an understanding about how their child will make progress and how this can be supported at home. Plans are displayed in each room so parents gain a further insight into the type of activities their child takes part in and enables them to talk about these with their children. A settling in sheet is provided when children move into the pre-school room to provide a clear picture of how children have settled and any comments or thoughts parents wish to share. Parents have access to an excellent and fully comprehensive range of policies and procedures which include Bright Horizons Family Solutions to give parents extensive information about the nursery and also outside agencies. A bright colourful information brochure and prospectus contains detailed information about the setting, settling-in policy, activities and planning. A comfortable family room contains additional topical information regarding child care that parents can take away. For example, healthy eating and eating disorders and children. Information on the 'Birth to three matters' framework is available for parents to read or lend. Enrolment agreements, family partnership agreements, new family satisfaction questionnaire and departure questionnaire ensure that partnership with parents is very successful and children are given the best care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the quality of organisation. Leadership and management is outstanding. This benefits the children as they move through the nursery from baby room to pre-school. The nursery manager continually enhances her knowledge through training and provides a thorough training program for staff. The manager is responsible for all aspects of the nursery including recruitment and employment, ratios and deployment, operational plan, staff training and qualifications. She is very well supported by the head office development team who regularly update their policies and procedures in line with current legislation. All staff have a secure knowledge of the National Standards which they apply throughout the nursery. This is enhanced with their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. High regard for the well-being of the children, their group sizes, adult support and well-planned activities, contribute to children's enjoyment and achievements. The manager, deputy and room leaders work closely together and have built a stable, positive and dedicated staff team. The re-organisation of staff in some areas ensure staff are motivated and work in rooms where their experience allows them to enrich and promote the care and learning opportunities for children.

An inclusive environment has been created which clearly shows that each child matters and the management have a clear vision for the future development of the nursery.

The nursery is very well-organised with both indoor and outdoor space effectively arranged to maximize the play opportunities for children. This leads to an extensive, imaginative and safe environment the children can enjoy. Excellent use of low-level storage units in all rooms enables children to develop independence and contribute to the safe organisation of their own environment. Children are able to take part in this organisation by helping to tidy away items used in the appropriate marked containers and shelves.

Highly effective organisation of all records and documents ensures children's welfare. Staff are committed to the continuous evaluation and improvement of their practice. They regularly monitor and improve the quality of their care through comprehensive evaluations and staff meetings. New staff have a well-planned induction process to follow and sign to state they have read and understood the policies and procedures. They are appointed a senior member of staff as a mentor to help them settle in to their role and a colleague as a 'buddy' . All complaints are logged and procedures are met in a robust manner. The manager and deputy manager work closely with staff, visiting the rooms throughout the day to ensure all procedures are met and staff are able to implement them successfully. This enables them to support any staff and ensure the welfare of the children is safeguarded. However, regular supervision of staff does not take place. The leadership and management team have a robust and rigorous system in place to ensure the children are cared for by staff with appropriate qualifications and experience and an effective induction and assessment system is an integral part of this process. The overall team spirit and morale is excellent throughout the nursery with the high levels of support provided by the management team.

Overall the needs of all the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children's Act inspection the nursery was asked to take action to ensure a clean and well maintained environment is provided for the children. Improve the presentation of the role play area and book corner in the pre-school room and extend the range of toys and equipment available to children over two years. Ensure that drinking water is made available to the children and ensure that minor amendments are made to policies and procedures to fully comply with the National Standards and associated regulations. All the recommendations have been met. The nursery is very clean throughout and cleaners are employed each day. The role play area and book corner in the pre-school room has been improved with a large role play area and a comfortable book corner for the children. The range of toys and equipment has improved considerable with excellent new provision purchased. The nursery has a fresh drinking water machine where children can help themselves. Policies and procedures are now linked to the National Standards and updated.

At the last Education inspection the nursery was asked to continue to develop the

programme of training to ensure all staff have a secure knowledge and understanding and practical skills to challenge and manage children's behaviour. The majority of staff are well qualified and experienced in all aspects of children's behaviour management.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 outstanding.

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 staff have regular supervision

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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