



Kidsunlimited Nurseries - Milton Park 2

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134929
Inspection date	23 June 2006
Inspector	Sheila Collins / Sheena Bankier
Setting Address	106 Milton Park, Milton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4RZ
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Kidsunlimited Milton Park Day Nursery is one of a chain of nurseries owned by the Kidsunlimited group. The nursery opened in 2000 and operates from purpose built premises. Each age group has their own base room and secure outdoor play area immediately outside the doors. The nursery is situated on the Milton Park business complex, near Didcot in Oxfordshire. A maximum of 148 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open on weekdays, from 07.30 to 18.00,

throughout the year, apart from bank holidays. The nursery serves the local employees and families from the neighbouring communities.

There are currently 185 children aged from five months to under five years on roll. Of these, 58 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 45 members of staff. Of these, 24 hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are developing an understanding of the need to follow good hygiene practices, such as washing their hands after using the toilet or before snack. The older, more able children are independent in their self-care skills, for example taking themselves to the toilet and getting tissues to blow their own noses. Staff follow good hygiene practices when caring for babies and younger children, which ensures their ongoing health.

The areas where the children are cared for are clean which contributes to keeping the children healthy. However in the kitchen some of the higher appliances and the extractor vent are dusty.

Staff discuss with parents of babies, their individual routines for eating and sleeping, which reassures the babies and makes them feel secure. Children's health is maintained because staff have good knowledge of the children's health and dietary needs. There are staff trained in first aid on duty at all times. All the relevant documentation is in place, to support the children's well being.

Children have healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Meals are cooked on the premises. Both the nursery staff and the kitchen staff are aware of children's individual dietary needs and special diets are well catered for. However, when being served the meals are not well presented in all rooms by the staff and the older children are not consulted about the size of their portion or what they would like. Children have access to drinks in their rooms. In the pre-school children do not seem to be aware of this or encouraged to ask for a drink. Children are unable to see their labelled cups easily as there are too many in one place for the children to decipher their own.

Children enjoy physical activities. Children access out door play. They have opportunities to run, use apparatus and to ride bikes. Children are becoming confident when using equipment, for example throwing and catching balls. They run and jump and crawl through tunnels and also take part enthusiastically in Yoga.

Babies are learning about their own bodies and what they can do. They roll, crawl, sit

and practice standing, gradually developing new skills as they play in their base rooms or in the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

All areas of the nursery are colourful and welcoming. Staff display the children's work well in all the areas. All rooms are laid out well and the pre-school is an inviting learning environment. Children in all areas have access to a wide range of resources. There is a good range of age and stage appropriate resources available, which offer sufficient challenge and interest to the children. Staff check these regularly to ensure that they are clean and safe for the children to use. Children access resources easily in all rooms from those stored at child height. Children in the toddler and pre-school rooms are learning to keep themselves safe, by helping to tidy up in their base rooms, as part of the routine, which they undertake willingly. They are confident when moving between areas of the nursery and within rooms.

Staff have a good awareness of safety issues which ensures that children's safety is maintained. Staff conduct risk assessments daily, which ensure that any potential hazards for the children are identified and minimised. Children take part in regular evacuation drills. All visitors are challenged which ensures that the children are protected from non-vetted people. All staff have a working knowledge of child protection issues and know to report to senior staff if they have any concerns. The manager is clear of the routes of referral, which ensures that children's welfare is not at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children from birth to three years enjoy planned activities as well as free play. Each child is able to choose activities that they would like to take part in and staff are sensitive to the children's individual needs. Children are able to explore activities and staff support child initiated play. Babies enjoy a variety of activities and receive a lot of one to one support, which helps them to achieve. For example, a baby enjoys playing peek- a-boo with a staff member and others explore treasure baskets and enjoy bubble play.

The children are benefiting from the staff's awareness of Birth to three matters, which they use as a planning and assessment tool, so ensuring that the children have suitable stage appropriate experiences. Staff plan a range of activities which interest and engage the children. Children enjoy a variety of experiences, which help them to develop new skills. For instance, the younger children enjoy painting, making objects from clay, taking part in singing activities and small world imaginative play. Children in pre-school are keen investigators and explorers for example, when they take part in ice experiments and growing activities.

The children are happy in the nursery and are keen to take part in activities. They

settle in well as staff support them until they feel confident in their environment. Through praise, encouragement and support of the children's efforts and achievements, staff boost the children's self-esteem and confidence.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Senior staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals and have undertaken training in this. Less experienced staff are mentored by the senior staff to develop their good practice and understanding. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. They benefit from the well-planned activities which take into account the less and more able children's needs. Staff observe children regularly. However, some of the observations are not meaningful and lack information about what the children can do. Development records are not up to date with the observations and do not provide a clear picture of individual children's progress along the stepping stones. This means that staff can not use them to identify or plan for the next steps in individual children's development. The nursery does not have a comprehensive system in place for evaluating the activities to see how effective they are in promoting children's learning. The staff discuss about how effective individual activities are but do not make records of these. This does not provide sufficient information for the staff to review the effectiveness of the curriculum for the children.

Parents are able to contribute to their children's learning at home through the nursery library scheme. This encourages children and parents to share books together which helps support the children's interest and enjoyment. Parents have access to the plans, information about activities and can observe the many photographs of the children enjoying and participating in activities. Parents are invited to attend special events at the nursery such as sports day and Maypole dancing. Parents are also requested to bring in items relating to topics. This encourages parents understanding of how their children learn.

Children are motivated learners and show a lot of interest in the planned topics, for example, the children listen and concentrate well at a group discussion about bones and later the children drew detailed skeletons with chalk. These included attention to detail, such as drawing in ribs and brains. Children can be independent in their self-care as they visit the toilet and at times can pour their own drinks, although this is not always consistent at all meal and snack times. Children have good relationships with each other and work together well, for example, a small group of children build a fire engine out of mega blocks.

Children are beginning to understand some of the rules and expectations of them, for example, most children line up when coming indoors from the garden and some children help tidy up the mega blocks before tea. Most children behave well overall. However, some children behave unacceptably towards other children and do not always use toys and equipment appropriately. Staff are not always consistent in their management of unacceptable behaviour and staff do not set clear boundaries.

Children are able to use the sand and water trays to explore different mediums,

measure and develop their manipulative skills. Children use different textures and materials to investigate, such as raking bark and finding plastic mini-beasts hidden in shredded paper. The use of orange water and hidden shells in the water tray encourages children to develop a sense of adventure, which in turn supports their confidence and self-esteem. Children use their imaginations well, for example, they play with small world toys, pretend to change the dolls nappies and pretend to be Doctors and use stethoscopes on the dolls.

Children have access to several comfortable areas where they can access books. Children handle books carefully and enjoy looking at them on their own or having them read to them by adults. There is a wide selection of books which include fiction and non-fiction. This develops children's understanding that books can be used as a reference tool. Children understand that print carries meaning through the many labels on the displays, some of which the children have written themselves. One of these areas is the information technology corner, where children have drawn pictures of the equipment and have written related words for their pictures, such as power socket, mouse and monitor. Children spend time individually or in small groups practising their emergent writing in structured learning activities. Staff encourage children to sound letters of words out and help them to identify the different sounds the letters make, including the initial, middle and end letters. There is a mark making area for children to practise their emergent writing although children have little opportunity to use their emergent writing in role-play situations such as the home corner.

Children use positional language in everyday situations, such as clapping their hands behind their backs and in front of them, acting out the 'Going on a Bear Hunt' story pretending to go 'under' and 'over'. Children use work sheets to support their learning and understanding of numbers and basic addition and subtraction. Staff use group times to count with the children, such as, counting their ribs during the discussion about bones. Practical activities help children to understand mathematical concepts, for example, they weigh and measure out ingredients in cooking activities, sort coloured linking elephants into colour groups or add the required number to the corresponding number in rooms of the dolls house.

Children enjoy varied physical activities which are planned to support children's large and small physical skills. The outdoor area is used well; children use their small skills in the sand with tools and to plant vegetables. There is a good range of physical play equipment including bikes to ride singly and together, trolleys to push and pull, blocks and crates to balance on and a fixed climbing frame and slide. Children take part in activities such as Tai-chi and Yoga which develop their control and co-ordination and help children to relax and be calm.

Children have access to a range of resources that reflect positive images of society. They learn about diversity through topics and themes about festivals and religious dates and enjoy food-tasting experiences. This broadens their knowledge and understanding of others. Children grow their own vegetables which helps them understand how to care for living things and learn about a healthy lifestyle. The children benefit from visitors to extend their experiences and understanding, these include visits from the Fire service and Zoo-lab, which brings a range of animals for children learn about. Outings enrich the children's knowledge, such as to the

museum to see the dinosaur bones and they widen their understanding of different modes of transport by taking the bus to the railway station.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents have a sense of belonging because staff meet and greet them individually. Most children arrive happily and settle quickly. Staff know children's individual needs and routines and this contributes to their well-being. Children in all areas of the nursery have good relationships with staff. Staff support children with learning difficulties well.

Children are beginning to understand the expectations for behaviour. Most behave well and respond to praise and encouragement from the staff. However, at times staff do not manage behaviour consistently and the behaviour of some children prevents others from fully enjoying their play.

Children in all rooms have equal access to activities and co-operate with tasks, such as tidying up. Older children in the pre-school learn about being responsible by helping clear up, laying the table, looking after belongings and help to care for the nursery pets. Children are beginning to understand about the wider community.

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

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive good information about the nursery, including the six areas for early education through the company's information packs. However, these do not always give an accurate reflection of what actually happens in the individual nursery. Parents are kept informed through daily discussions about their child's progress and achievements. Staff complete information sheets for the younger children, which they share with the parents. However, development files are not up to date and parents do not have sufficient encouragement to ask to see their child's file.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are good procedures in place for appointing new staff, with robust procedures for recruiting and checking sent down by the head office. This ensures that the staff working with the children are appropriately vetted, so safeguarding the children. Management are aware that the deployment of staff is not always effective, as there is not always an appropriate balance of qualified staff in all rooms.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities within the nursery for the children's well-being and those working with the under threes are developing their knowledge of Birth to three matters. Staff with an extra, specific responsibility, for example the Health and Safety and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, have good knowledge of their roles.

All policies and procedures are in place and used effectively to promote the health, safety and welfare of the children. Children of all ages have sufficient space to play both in and out of doors and the nursery is organised in a child friendly way.

The leadership and management is good. The manager and her deputy have overseen and just completed the merger of two nurseries onto one site. They have a good understanding of the weaker areas of practice within the nursery and a commitment to improve these aspects.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the nursery was given two recommendations to improve the care for the children. These were to ensure that all staff are able to interact effectively with children and have the appropriate skills to meet children's individual needs and to ensure that resources and equipment are used to create an inviting learning environment.

The nursery staff have reviewed their practise and now interact well with all the children. Children's individual needs are known to the staff and they work with their colleagues to meet those needs. All areas of the nursery are colourful and welcoming. Children's work is well displayed in all the areas. All rooms are laid out well and the pre-school is an inviting learning environment, which benefits the children.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to improve on four key issues.

These included opportunities for children to extend their physical skills outdoors, the use of development records to regularly record progress and to plan the next steps of learning and to share these with parents, staff evaluation of how effective the activities are in promoting children's learning and the management of large group times so that children can listen well and behave more appropriately.

The nursery have addressed the key issue in regard to the children's opportunities to extend their physical skills. This has been done by extending the range of equipment and having well-planned activities. Planned activities include ball catching skills, football and using equipment, for example, to build a bridge from the crates and to balance when walking across.

The nursery has not sufficiently met the key issue in regard to the use of development records to regularly record progress and to plan the next steps of learning and to share these with parents. Although observations are regularly undertaken these are not entered into the individual children's development file. Therefore files are not up to date and an accurate record of their progress is not maintained and can not be used to plan for the next steps of learning. Parents have access to development records at parents evenings held twice a year and can ask to see their child's development file if they wish to at other times.

The nursery has not sufficiently addressed the key issue for evaluating the activities to see how effective they are in promoting children's learning. The staff discuss about how effective individual activities are and do not make records of these for all activities. This does not provide information for the staff to review activities for the future.

The nursery has addressed the key issue to manage large group times so that children can listen well and behave appropriately. Children are broken into three groups for this time and therefore children can listen well and a smaller group enables children to sustain their interest and concentration better. This reduces the children's inappropriate behaviour.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received two complaints regarding the provision.

The first concern related to Standard 4 - Physical Environment, regarding the cleanliness and state of repair of the toilet facilities. Ofsted asked the provider to carry out an internal investigation and report to Ofsted within 10 days. The provider explained that there had been problems with water leaks in the bathroom area and that these had been fixed as quickly as possible by their maintenance team and that during these repairs children did not have access to the affected areas. The provider demonstrated that they were adhering to the Standard under investigation and remained qualified to be registered.

The second concern raised related to Standard 6 – Safety, in that a child had been seen playing with a rat poison box. The provider was asked to carry out an internal investigation and to report to Ofsted within 7 days. The Provider responded with a detailed report of the incident, together with details of the full risk assessment that had been completed. They advised that they were making further improvements in their communications with parents and that they were adhering to the Standard under investigation. The Provider remained qualified to be registered.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- review the arrangements in place to make sure that all children are given drinks at regular intervals and also the procedures at mealtimes to ensure that individual children's appetites are catered for
- ensure that all staff are consistent and adhere to clear boundaries when managing children's behaviour [also applies to nursery education]
- ensure that there is an appropriate balance of qualified staff in all rooms at all times

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the recorded observations made on children are meaningful to show what children can do and that development records are regularly updated to provide a clear picture of individual children's progress along the stepping stones
- evaluate the planned curriculum activities to identify how effective they are in promoting children's learning.

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