



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 129395

DfES Number: 530034

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 15/06/2004
Inspector Name Julie Whitelaw

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name The Castle Montessori
Setting Address Shooters Way
Berkhamsted
Hertfordshire
HP4 3TY

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Kids Out of Hours Ltd 3518464

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Kids Out of Hours Ltd
Address Shooters Way
Berkhamsted
Hertfordshire
HP4 3TY

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

The Castle Montessori Day Nursery opened in 1999. It operates from four main rooms in an adapted building set in a semi rural part of Berkhamstead. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding villages.

There are currently 87 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes 11 funded three year olds and one funded four year old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports two children who have special needs.

The nursery opens Monday - Friday, 51 weeks of the year. Opening hours are from 07.30 until 18.30.

Six part time and eleven full time staff work with the children. Eight members of staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Three staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA)

The nursery follows elements of the Montessori methods of teaching. They are currently recruiting a qualified Montessori Teacher to work with the children.

How good is the Day Care?

The Castle Montessori provides satisfactory care for children.

Staff work well together and are deployed effectively. They show commitment to developing their skills by attending training. Management are aware a suitable deputy should be on site when required and at least one member of staff who holds an appropriate first aid qualification. The nursery has a variety of resources that help children make progress, however facilities for staff breaks and domestic style furniture to assist young children develop mobility now need to be in place.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of health and safety issues and carry out risk

assessments, however these need to be implemented more effectively. There are clear procedures in place to promote good hygiene and to ensure the appropriate action is taken if children are ill. Nutritious meals and snacks are provided by the nursery cook. Staff have a clear understanding of how to support children who have special needs. Most staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and procedures and should now be made aware of the updated child protection policy.

Staff have formed good relationships with the children and know them well. They plan and implement a variety of activities that cover all areas of learning and engage the children. The manager is planning to develop the outside play area to extend the children's learning. Staff manage behaviour consistently and set clear boundaries. They praise and encourage the children who behave well.

Staff have formed good relationships with the parents. At present they are developing methods of keeping them informed of their child's routine and progress, so that it meets the parent's individual requirements. Currently a daily verbal feedback, link books and annual reports and parents evening for the older children, keep parents informed and involved in their child's care and learning. Positive comments were received from the parents during the inspection.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection improvements have been made. The appropriate documentation is in place and available for inspection. The manager is now aware to ensure that all staff fully understand the policies and procedures.

Staff are aware of the importance of maintaining a clear record of attendance that details who is on the premises and how ratios are met.

Risk assessment of the premises was high lighted as an area that needed improving. Staff need to have effective systems in place to ensure children are safe. Therefore this will continue to be a recommendation.

The child protection policy has recently been updated. A recommendation will be that staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of the child protection procedures and updated policy.

What is being done well?

- Staff in each room complete weekly plans to ensure the children experience a variety of activities that promote learning in all areas of their development. Staff are interested in what children do and say. They listen to them and ask questions that make them think.
- Nutritious meals are provided in sufficient quantities to meet the children's individual needs. Staff support children during meal times and encourage independence.
- Staff know the children well, they ensure each child's individual needs are met. Staff give clear instructions and explanations, they use praise to

positively reinforce good behaviour.

- Staff have developed good relationships with parents. Link books which are completed daily for the younger children, reports and an annual open evening for the older children, keep them informed of their child's routine and the progress they are making.

What needs to be improved?

- the provision of a suitable deputy
- a system to ensure at least one person appropriately qualified in first aid is on site at all times
- facilities for staff breaks
- the provision of domestic furniture for children under two years
- the risk assessment of the premises to ensure it is effective
- staff's knowledge and understanding of the child protection procedures and the updated policy.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

| Std | Recommendation |
|-----|--|
| 2 | Ensure procedures to deputise are effective. |
| 4 | Ensure that staff have a room or area away from children suitable for breaks. |
| 5 | Ensure that some domestic style furniture is provided to assist children in developing mobility and to continue normal life experiences. |
| 6 | Ensure a risk assessment is carried out to identify potential hazards, especially in the garden. This refers to the lock on the shed and hole in the grassed area. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 7 | Ensure that at least one member of staff with a first aid qualification, which is consistent with any guidance issued to local authorities by the Secretary of State, is on site at all times. |
| 13 | Ensure that all staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures and the updated policy. |

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at The Castle Montessori is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

Teaching is generally good with many strong features. Staff plan and deliver a broad and well thought out range of activities. However, on occasions there are missed opportunities to effectively challenge the older and more able children. Some staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and are developing their knowledge through further training. The manager is currently advertising for a Montessori teacher and during the inspection elements of the Montessori philosophy were observed. The environment is child-sized and as many objects and activities as possible are within the children's reach. They can independently select materials which enables them to consolidate their learning at their own pace. The planning system is being reviewed to inform future planning of the next steps in the children's educational programme.

Leadership and management is generally good. The manager is a good role model and is committed to improving the care and education for all children. A system to monitor the effectiveness of the setting is currently being devised. She recognises the importance of actively promoting training and through staff appraisals their training needs are identified. Staff work well together. They have positive relationships and are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Partnership with parents is generally good. They are provided with detailed information about the setting. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and bring in items from home relating to topics. They are able to approach staff and discuss their children's progress daily.

What is being done well?

- The manager is committed to providing good quality care and education for all children. Staff are actively encouraged to attend any relevant training courses and they work well together as a team.
- Children are developing good perseverance and concentration skills. They are interested and motivated to learn, play well together and are learning to share and take turns.
- Children demonstrate a good level of confidence and their independence skills are developing well.
- Children have meaningful opportunities to explore and investigate through their nature table as they observe living things, such as the growth of cress seeds they have planted. They watch the development of tadpoles as they

learn about the life cycle of a frog, and they use resources which enables them to look at the passages worms make. Children collect items from their nature walk including flowers which the children press to create effective collage pictures.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's training needs, to ensure they receive appropriate training for the Foundation Stage
- the provision of activities and experiences that challenge the older and more able children particularly within the programmes for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development
- the planning system.

What has improved since the last inspection?

N/A

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested and motivated to learn. They are able to concentrate and persevere on their tasks. Children are confident, they play well together and are forming good relationships with adults in the nursery. Children's independence skills are developing well as they practise real life experiences as they pour their drinks, give out cups at snack time and tidy away the resources they have been using. They are developing a sense of their local community through visitors to the nursery.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children listen and respond well to instructions, stories and information. Children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversation with other children and adults. They use language for thinking as they talk about the opticians and letters used for an eye test. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters and enjoy creating sand paper letters. Older children can write recognisable letters of their name. However, there are few opportunities for them to write for a variety of purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy singing number rhymes and songs as they use props to sing ten milk bottles. Staff use everyday routines to develop children's counting skills as they count how many children are in a line and how many cups are needed for snack time. Children practise calculation through everyday situations, although there was limited evidence seen of further developing subtraction and addition skills through planned activities. Staff use lots of mathematical language such as front, back and behind.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Through topic work children learn about how rainbows are formed. They observe living things as they collect flowers from their nature walk, plant cress seeds and discuss what plants need to grow. The interest table is used well as children look at the passages the worms make and watch tadpoles develop as they learn about life cycles of a frog. There are insufficient opportunities for children to practise their designing and making skills using a variety of materials to build assemble and join.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move with control and co-ordination and show a good awareness of space, of themselves and others. They develop large and small muscles as they use climbing and balancing equipment, tunnels hoops, balls and beanbags. Children learn about health and bodily awareness as they talk about foods that are good for them. They use a range of tools and materials safely and with increasing control. Opportunities for children to make progress in the six areas of learning are limited outside.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore colour and texture as they freely paint, press flowers to make collage pictures and create swirl painting patterns. They enjoy singing simple songs from memory and match movements to music during music and movement sessions. Children enjoy playing musical instruments from around the world and learn how sounds can be made as they create their own musical shakers. They are developing their imagination well using props in role play situations and taste bread from different countries.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- review staff's training needs, to ensure they receive appropriate training for the Foundation Stage
- review the provision of activities and experiences that challenge the older and more able children particularly within the programmes for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development
- develop the planning system to ensure plans identify the next steps of the children's individual educational programme.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.