

Kingston University Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Kingston University Day Nursery opened in 1987 and is run by the university. It is registered on the Early Years Register and operates from two adjoining Victorian houses, situated between two of the university's campuses, in a largely residential area. Children are divided into two groups; one for the two to three year-olds and one for the children aged from three years. Both groups have the use of two rooms and their own toilet facilities. There is a kitchen, staff room, office, family room and secure garden for outdoor play. The nursery has a pet hamster. Meals are cooked and delivered to the nursery by a specialist early years catering company.

The nursery provides part-time and full-time subsidised childcare for children of students and staff of the university. Non-subsidised care is offered to the general public. Opening times are Monday-Thursday from 8am until 6pm, and from 8am until 5.30pm on a Friday, for 41 weeks of the year. A playscheme operates for an additional 8 weeks during the summer holiday and is open between the hours of 8.45am and 5.15pm. In the main it is the nursery children that attend, but the scheme is open to all children in the community. Registration is for no more than 25 children in the early years age range; of these not more than eight may be aged under two years at any one time. However, the nursery does not currently accept children aged under two years. There are currently 29 children on roll. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.

The manager is qualified to Level 4 and is supernumery. Six other staff are employed, five of whom are qualified to Level 3, and one to Level 2. Two staff jobshare the deputy role. Four staff have valid paediatric first aid certificates, and two have "First aid at work".

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This small and highly effective full day care setting, which is staffed by an extremely experienced and enthusiastic team of long-standing early years practitioners, provide exemplary standards of care and education. Equality and diversity is embedded in all aspects of the provision. Children's levels of independence, creativity and critical thinking skills are inspirational and fundamental to the outstanding progress they make in their overall learning and development. Highly effective partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies ensure that children's individual needs are fully understood, supported and safeguarded. Self-evaluation is highly effective. Leadership is highly committed to ensuring a continuously developing provision. The team work extremely hard to overcome the challenge of financial restrictions and, overall, are highly successful in their targeting of priorities for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- consider [economical] ways to develop the educational programme for promoting science and technology.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a secure and well-maintained environment, by a team of fully vetted, suitably qualified and highly experienced early years practitioners. A notable feature of this setting is the strength of leadership provided, by the manager and two deputies, and the sense of belonging and level of teamwork demonstrated by the staff. Children's welfare, development and learning is closely monitored and safeguarded through record keeping, staff's secure knowledge and understanding of their child protection responsibilities, and partnership with parents. Safety procedures, such as risk assessments and for meeting fire safety regulations, are highly effective.

The team's creative use of resources to support all areas of learning is fundamental to the outstanding outcomes for children, and the setting's sustainability. The nursery is a non profit-making setting and they have to be frugal with the budget. Children have access to a wide range of creative media and recyclables which they transform into props to support their self-initiated play. The walls, from floor to ceiling, are filled with children's artistic and literacy achievements, photographs of their home experiences and all achievements that cannot be kept. Very good use is made of the community to support learning. Staff's professional development is exceptionally well supported by management, who are experienced and skilled in carrying out staff appraisals.

The effectiveness of the setting's promotion of equality and diversity is highly evident within the planning and delivery of the educational programme. This is tailored to meet the individual learning needs, interests, and unique dispositions of all children. Parents, unsurprisingly, are delighted with the service provided. They describe how staff help them to understand children's preferred learning styles and how quickly children who are learning English as an additional language progress. They are 'amazed by children's rapidly developing literacy, numeracy and social skills', and are immensely impressed that children enjoy their learning so much. Parents are fully involved in planning and supporting children's learning, for instance by contributing to the learning journey record and planning for their next steps. The setting has formed strong relationships with the schools that children transfer to, and has firm and highly productive links with child development experts and health agencies involved with children.

The overall effectiveness of the setting's use of self-evaluation is underpinned by

leadership's use of appraisals, mentoring, coaching, and team building strategies. Staff trust each other enough unreservedly and, as a result, new ideas are tried and tested. For example, preschool children, who are supported to review their own learning during the second to last week of term, plan the activity programme for the last week. One staff suggested that children might be capable of also identifying the learning intentions. No-one knew if this would be successful, but they gave it a go and the outcomes are an excellent example of how the setting acknowledges and supports 'gifted and talented' children. The outcomes are amazing. For example, 'playing nicely with your friends' was identified as a learning intention for Personal, Social and Emotional Development, 'putting numbers in order' for Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, and 'making things with sand and an oven' for Knowledge and Understanding of the World. The setting's main priority for improvement has been to develop the outdoor play space to provide all-weather play. This has been achieved. They have introduced home-visits to support the process of settling-in new children. The use of observational assessments, to inform and guide planning, has been perfected and partnership working has been significantly strengthened. Current priorities include re-vamping the garden playhouse, and creating special boxes for children to keep their personal belongings. The team are fully aware of the areas for improvement, such as to develop the programme for science and technology, and demonstrate exceptional levels of enthusiasm to achieve this. Finances have, in the main, determined the level of development, but not quite all possibilities have been explored. This is a hugely progressive setting with equally huge capacity for sustaining ongoing improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children exude happiness and demonstrate an immensely strong sense of belonging and emotional security in this delightful nursery environment. The procedure for settling-in new children is highly effective in minimising parent-child separation anxiety. Staff gather comprehensive information about children's individual needs and interests before children start and by the time children are left for their first full session a secure and trusting relationship has been established between them. Children demonstrate high levels of confidence, independence and self-esteem. Outings enhance children's understanding of their immediate world and are exploited by staff as an opportunity to promote all areas of learning. For example, walks around the neighbourhood introduce them to the basic and complex shapes of windows, doorways and bricks. The camera, which children competently use, is always to hand to capture their fascinating findings, such as engravings on stone plaques. Children contribute hugely to the day to day planning and are enthusiastic and competent learners. Circle times provide for children to share their experiences, such as 'snorkelling with daddy' and as a time for reviewing their own learning. They are helped to understand about different cultures and beliefs as they learn about each others family traditions, which parents often come in to share.

Maximum use is made of the setting's outdoor play area, local parks and wide

open spaces throughout the year. Newly purchased wet suits enable children to have fun in the rain and snow. The large, recently acquired, outdoor shade protects them from the effects of the sun during the summer. Children enjoy nature walks in the nearby wide open spaces, where tree climbing is encouraged. Indoors, children enjoy music and movement and yoga sessions. Road safety is reinforced during the regular trips out in the community and stranger-danger is sensitively explained to them by local Community Support Officers who regularly visit the setting. The weekly testing of the smoke detectors, which provokes much excitement for younger children as they wait with anticipation for the shrieking sound, as well as the monthly evacuation practice, ensures they never forget the rules.

Children demonstrate high levels of creativity and critical thinking skills which is exemplified in their pretend play and ability to organise their own play and learning. Younger children's imaginative play is inspired by the provision of real domestic resources, such as metal and wooden kitchen utensils and food packaging. All children explore and experiment with texture and produce the most amazing artistic self interpretations. Preschoolers make their own treasure dens, along with drawn, and constructed, arrows which are carefully laid out on the floor to provide "a map". Cardboard cylinders are transformed into 'sound-makers', which they vocalise each time they touch an attached item of creative media, for instance a bottle top produces the sound of a siren and a ribbon "a meow". Children's highly developed levels of pretend play are encouraged by staff's innovated planning. A great example of this is when the outdoor play-house is transformed into an ice cream van. Pretend ice creams are made from coloured cotton wool and real cornets. A menu is created on the chalk board. With cash tills, coins, and paper money available, the cost of an ice cream ranges from anything from 5p to £100. Play is brought to an exciting climax when children are given real ice cream to scoop into a fresh new cone.

Preschool children use the computer with confidence, but the laptop keys are a little too challenging for the younger children. The adult keyboard, with its uppercase letters conflicts with the educational programme for teaching children to write in lowercase. Resources, such as the toy microwave, introduce children to early technology and preschoolers use the camera with skill. However, overall, science and technology is not as successfully promoted as all other aspects of the educational programme. Children squeal with anticipation as they prepare for physical play which challenges their numeracy skills. They think carefully before running to a printed numeral inside a hoop because staff might be "tricking them"; the numeral might not be there. Children adore stories and undertake regular book reviews, which involve thinking about their favourite parts of a book and their understanding. They reproduce this in stunning annotated drawings and paintings. Innovative activities, such as making "a sound soup" introduces younger children to phonics. Preschoolers link letters to sounds with skill and write clearly recognisable letters. They do this spontaneously within their play showing great understanding of purposeful print. The team's knowledge and understanding of how to promote and support bilingualism is highly secure. Children are encouraged to use their first language alongside their developing English. They communicate confidently, as do those with speech difficulties.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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