

The Kids Academy Chelmsford

The Kids Academy, Moulsham School, Princes Road, CHELMSFORD, CM2 9DE

Inspection date	04/03/2013
Previous inspection date	07/10/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Practitioners are inconsistent in their knowledge of children's learning. Ineffective planning results in the educational programme lacking stimulation and challenge for children and their independence is not promoted effectively.
- Children's safety and welfare are compromised as staff practice lacks consistency, for example, an external gate can be easily opened by children.
- Children whose home language is not English are not provided with opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning.
- Ineffective monitoring of practitioners results in inconsistent care practice and poor delivery of the educational programme. Changes implemented to bring about change and improvements are not effectively followed by all practitioners.

It has the following strengths

- Children engage in freely chosen play experiences, enabling them to make some choices and to develop some independence.
- The new management team has begun targeting areas of weakness. For example, children now have access to the garden throughout the day and a re-organisation of the playrooms provides more opportunities for children to access resources.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the two main playrooms and the garden.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, deputy, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of records, including staff qualifications and evidence of their suitability, risk assessments, accident and medication records, information about children's development, planning and written policies.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the time of the inspection.

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Kids Academy was registered in 2008 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises in the Chelmsford area of Essex, and is managed by a private company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from five playrooms and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs eleven members of childcare staff. Of these, ten hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including the manager with Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 86 children attending, 42 of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- consider the individual needs, interests and stages of development of each child and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences in all areas of learning and development
- ensure that the premises are safe for children to use and remain secure at all times
- provide resources and opportunities to enable children whose home language is not English to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- improve leadership by implementing effective monitoring of all aspects of the nursery to ensure the consistent delivery of the educational programme and care practices. Involve parents and others in identifying the nursery's strengths and weaknesses, to help to drive improvements.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The educational programme does not provide all children with a breadth of activities to ensure that they make sufficient progress in all areas of learning. The activities provided are not tailored to meet individual children's learning styles and capabilities, which results in many missed opportunities to challenge children's thinking. Some children appear keen and motivated, however, others show little interest in some areas of learning. For example, children rarely access the drawing and writing materials and a sand activity intended to promote children's knowledge of building with wet sand, is barely touched. Some practitioners lack confidence and experience to observe and assess children's progress and appear not to fully understand the revised areas of learning. This results in children's development not being effectively promoted.

Children, generally, enjoy their nursery experiences, participating mostly in freely chosen play opportunities. They chat to each other and some involve adults in their play. Some practitioners use skilful questioning to enhance children's thinking, but this practice is inconsistent, with many opportunities to follow children's interests being lost. For example, children who excitedly enter the pre-school room, with a long cardboard tube at their eye, announcing 'look at me' are acknowledged by practitioners. However, little effort is made to engage their interest, find out what they are doing or build upon their excitement. The moment is lost and they return to play outdoors. When children are asked what their favourite thing at nursery is, some reply that they enjoy playing with the computer. This provision, however, is not always available. The breakfast club use the laptop computer, which often runs the battery down, resulting in it not being available to the pre-school children until it is charged again. A number of children attending the nursery speak English as an additional language. Practitioners make some effort to translate key words from some of these languages to use with children. However, there are very few opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning. This potentially impacts on the setting's ability to support children's language development at home.

The newly appointed management team have recently introduced new documentation to enable parents to play a more active role in their children's progress. For example, they are now asked to complete an 'all about me form', which provides key persons with useful information about children's needs and starting points. Until this development, practitioners had little or no information about children's capabilities on entry to the nursery and, therefore, assessment of their progress was based purely on key person's observations during the first few weeks of their attendance. Parents are invited to view their children's learning journals and are provided with regular written summative assessments of their progress. The lack of a stimulating educational programme means that some children are appropriately prepared for their next stages of learning, however, some children lack essential skills, such as independence.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The nursery has a key person system in place, which helps to support children to settle and helps some children to form appropriate bonds and attachments. Recent changes to the staff team and key person groups has resulted in some children not benefitting from continuity of care. The new management team are confident that once the newly appointed practitioners who have joined the staff team are embedded, the key person system will become effective. The management of children during the afternoon sessions is not always conducive to meeting each child's individual needs. For example, children are often cared for in the pre-school room during the afternoon when numbers are low and when the after school provision is taking place. This means that children aged under two years and children aged almost five years, play with and alongside each other. Younger children are not always effectively supported during this period and many of the resources are not appropriate for this age group.

The new management team have spent time with practitioners, re-organising the two main playrooms currently being used. The rooms are now welcoming and inviting, with many of the resources presented in specific zones, for example, creative areas, role play areas and writing areas. Children are encouraged to develop independence by choosing resources from the low-level storage units and some equipment is labelled to aid recognition. Children independently access the integral toilets and hand-washing facilities and are beginning to understand the importance of washing their hands at appropriate times. Children enjoy a mid-session snack at the nursery and the newly revised menu provides children with healthy choices, such as fruit, cut up vegetables, pitta bread and hummus. Children have some opportunities to develop independence skills at these times, for example, they are given safe knives and encouraged to cut their pieces or ready prepared apple and pears into smaller pieces. However, they have very few opportunities to pour their own drinks or to help to prepare the snack as this is often delivered as an adult-led activity. Many learning opportunities are missed during snack time as practitioners do not build on children's natural curiosity and interests, to extend their thinking or use appropriate language to enhance their vocabulary and discussion skills. A number of children stay at the nursery over the lunchtime period, their lunch is either provided by their parents in a packed lunch or they have a cooked meal provided by the nursery. The nursery does not actively encourage parents to provide children with healthy options in their packed lunch, however, practitioners do encourage children to eat their savoury options before their treats. Children are reminded about safe actions, such as using their walking feet indoors, however, practitioners do not further extend children's understanding by explaining why this is important.

Children are provided with daily fresh air and exercise when they play in the nursery garden. They develop skills, such as negotiating space, learning to peddle bikes and vehicles and transporting materials when they play in the large sand pit. They have opportunities to enjoy physical activities indoors, when they participate in exercise sessions, which allow them to move and explore a range of physical exercises under the careful supervision of a person trained in this form of physical learning.

There are some systems in place for supporting children's transitions between the nursery rooms. For example, children from the younger age groups spend increasing amounts of time in the pre-school room, in the weeks prior to their transition. Their key persons

support these visits, staying with them and introducing them to the new resources and routines within the room.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

This inspection took place, following concerns raised with Ofsted which include issues from a parent, not being effectively investigated by the new manager. It also detailed information about children's dietary needs not being effectively met, parents not being informed about changes to the management and key person structure in the setting and an allegation that a practitioner had spoken to a child inappropriately. The manager investigated the concerns raised at the time and reported her findings back to the parent. She recorded her findings in the setting's complaint log.

Practitioner's knowledge of how children learn is inconsistent. This results in poor delivery of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although the newly appointed management team have introduced some monitoring of the provision, this is not being consistently followed to ensure that high quality practice is achieved. As a result, weaknesses in most areas of the provision have not been fully identified or sufficiently addressed. Managers are beginning to implement procedures to enable them to supervise and support staff, through annual appraisals and monthly review meetings. Therefore, practitioners have some access to a professional development programme, which enables them to pursue training in core areas. This also enables them to follow their interests or areas of expertise.

Suitable safeguarding procedures are in place to protect children from harm. For example, the nursery has a clear safeguarding policy and a number of practitioners, including the designated person have attended relevant safeguarding training. All adults caring for children are appropriately vetted and proof of their suitability checks are held on file. Children's safety, however, is compromised as daily safety checks, especially for the outdoor area, are not always completed. This results in some areas not being safe, for example, a gate leading to the local primary school is left open and even when secured, with a low hook and eye arrangement, would not prevent a child from being able to open it.

Self-evaluation is beginning to be used to identify the nursery's strengths and weaknesses. However, this is not yet effective enough to secure improvements. At present the manager and deputy are involved in the self-evaluation process, but parents, children, practitioners and others are not invited to contribute towards this process. The new manager and deputy have a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve quality within the nursery and have already made a number of changes since they were put in post at the end of 2012. These include, the introduction of more free flow outdoor play, enabling children to make choices as to whether they play indoors or outdoors. More effective health and safety procedures, for example, practitioners now wear hats and plastic gloves when preparing or serving food. The assessment of children's progress has been reviewed and the planning has been changed to more effectively follow children's individual learning styles. While this is beginning to be embedded, some practitioners do

not demonstrate a good understanding of the new procedures or why they are using them. Future plans for the nursery include, a re-organisation of the outdoor provision, to ensure that it offers more learning opportunities. A review of all staff qualifications and knowledge, with a view to developing a quality workforce and more effective systems for making initial assessments of children's starting points and capabilities.

Some parents are involved in their children's learning as the nursery provides opportunities for key persons to talk to them when they drop off or collect their children. At present parents are not invited to come into the nursery at the beginning and end of the sessions, practitioners take children to their parents who wait for them at the end of the entrance ramp. This limits opportunities for parents to observe wall displays, to view examples of their children's creative work and to feel welcome within the nursery. Some recent changes to the staff team and to children's key persons have not been effectively shared with parents. The new management team are endeavouring to ensure that communication between practitioners and parents is effectively promoted in a range of different ways. For example, they use text messaging, enter information on a secure social networking internet site, speak to parents directly and send out regular newsletters. There is a basic system in place for sharing information with outside professionals and other settings, which children may attend.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure that a child is unable to leave the premises without a person who is caring for children on those premises becoming aware of the child leaving (Compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that a child is unable to leave the premises unsupervised except where the childcare is open access childcare, or where the child is aged eight or over and the parent of the child has agreed that they may leave the provision unaccompanied. (Voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY365137
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	906697
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	66
Number of children on roll	86
Name of provider	TKA Management Ltd
Date of previous inspection	07/10/2008
Telephone number	01245 345599

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
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M1 2WD

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