



Caring Kindergartens

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220176
Inspection date	20 June 2006
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	48 Hardwick Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 5AD
Telephone number	01933 225633
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Registered person	Caring Kindergartens 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Caring Kindergartens Nursery in Wellingborough is one of five nurseries run by Caring Kindergartens Ltd. It opened in 2000 and operates from a converted house in Hardwick Road, a short distance from the town centre. A maximum of 80 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 53 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the town and surrounding area. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs thirteen members of staff. Of these, ten hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

The nursery is accredited through the Pre-school Learning Alliance 'Aiming For Quality' accreditation scheme. Caring Kindergartens Ltd has achieved the 'Investors in People' award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities and regular opportunities for fresh air which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities such as music and movement sessions and action rhymes. They also regularly use the outdoor play area where they enjoy playing with equipment such as ride-on toys, balls and hoops, and larger equipment such as the parachute, slides and tunnel.

Children's overall development is consistently promoted as staff have a good understanding of child development and combine this with their knowledge of individual children to ensure that all areas are covered. An example of this is staff members providing a wide range of resources which encourage young children to reach out and explore, for example, a sensory area where babies explore bottles filled with coloured water, foil, mirrors, textured textiles and a range of natural materials. Staff work in partnership with parents to ensure that children's care is appropriate and consistent, for example, they make good use of communication sheets, where they record children's daily routines and parents record home routines and any current issues which may affect their child, enabling staff to provide appropriate care.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. There are good daily hygiene practices in place which help them to learn about the importance of personal hygiene, for example, they wash their hands before snack and meal times and clean their teeth after lunch. Their understanding of the relevance of these practices is promoted through topic work but their daily understanding is not consistently promoted because staff do not always discuss this with them to reinforce their learning. Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented and observed. They are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals as staff have a good understanding of this area and the nursery has achieved a healthy eating award, enabling them to promote this. Meals are prepared daily on the premises and contain a balanced range of fresh ingredients and all food types, promoting children's growth and development. Children's understanding of the relevance of healthy eating is developed through topic work but this is not reinforced

on a daily basis as they are not always given opportunities to discuss this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and stimulating environment where there are creative displays and resources are well organised. All resources are clearly labelled with words and pictures which helps to facilitate children's choice. Their safety is given a high priority and staff carry out daily safety checks in all areas, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. A major risk assessment has also been completed and this is reviewed on a regular basis. All accidents are comprehensively recorded and are reviewed immediately, with any necessary changes discussed with staff and implemented. These measures help to ensure that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety, for example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised each month. Children's safety is further enhanced through the setting's attention to all details such as building security, the monitoring of all visitors and the close monitoring of sleeping children.

Children are developing their understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves safe. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff to help them understand the relevance of safety rules, for example, they understand why it is important to take care when using the stairs, walking slowly and holding on to the hand rail. Children use toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Staff check these on a regular basis to ensure that they are clean and safe. Children's welfare is very well promoted because staff have attended additional training and have a good knowledge of child protection procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled, enjoying their time at the nursery. Their self-esteem and confidence are consistently promoted because staff are sensitive to each child and offer appropriate support and encouragement. Babies and new children settle well and become secure in their relationships with staff because staff take time to get to know the children, making sure that they are aware of all routines, paying particular attention to ensuring that they have all relevant information from parents. Children's progress is further enhanced because staff have a good knowledge of child development, gently encouraging babies and children to take the next developmental step, for example, a baby laughs and giggles whilst being encouraged to crawl towards a staff member.

The comprehensive planning of activities for all age groups ensures that children are consistently offered a range of opportunities which are linked to their individual needs

and capabilities. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, utilising this in planning and assessment for younger children, ensuring that their play is fun, meaningful and stimulating. The thoughtful organisation of play areas and the careful deployment of staff further promote this, allowing babies and young children the space, resources and attention they need to develop. For example, there is a separate outdoor play area for children under two years old which means that they are able to explore and play in a safe environment but are still able to see their older peers over the low fence. Staff are caring and show genuine enjoyment of their work, demonstrating this through their constant interaction with the children. For example, older children using the outdoor play area enthusiastically listen as a member of staff shows them how to play skittles, encouraging them to stand further back once they have mastered the necessary skills.

The use of good teaching methods and a range of communication techniques helps to keep children's attention and interest, enabling them to participate meaningfully and to extend their learning. An example of this is a group session with two-to-three year olds, where children sit quietly and are praised both verbally and through sign language for their good behaviour. They correctly identify that it is afternoon and when asked how they know this, they reply 'because we've had our dinner'. The member of staff holds the children's attention by whispering 'whose name is going to come out of the box?' and children eagerly anticipate, correctly stating the names as they are presented. They then sing as they pass a box around, choosing a colour when the box stops with them and using the correct Makaton sign for this colour. Staff also make the most of opportunities to reinforce children's learning, for example, while they play out in the garden, children look at laminated pictures attached to the fence, illustrating flowers and the life cycle of the butterfly. Children's independence and choice of activity is generally promoted and they confidently move between activities throughout the session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, planning and adapting activities appropriately. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing them and for evaluating individual activities, using information gained from this to determine future activities.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities. These include sand and water play, cooking, a wide variety of crafts and construction and opportunities to engage in imaginative role play scenarios such as playing travel agents or creating a Chinese restaurant. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics, enabling them to look more closely at subjects such as 'Growth, Flowers, Plants and Trees', where they plant sunflower seeds and investigate what they need to grow, talking about water, sun and shade. Children are learning about making relationships and they relate well to adults and to their peers, for example, confidently talking with staff and organising games and role play. They are beginning to communicate through writing, for example, they are able to write their names and simple words, practising these skills when writing in their work books and 'News Book'.

Children have opportunities to explore texture, form and colour, for example, through creating an 'Under the Sea' collage using a variety of papers, sand, paints and dried pulses. They enjoy joining in with favourite songs and action rhymes, showing an emerging awareness of rhythm and beat. An example of this is a group music session where children choose their instruments and attempt to beat time as they sing. They are developing a good awareness of different forms of movement through organised activities, for example, children playing 'Simon Says' blink, wiggle their noses, kick their feet, 'march like a soldier', nod their heads and clap quickly and slowly.

Children show developing skills in mathematics and are beginning to use numbers in a meaningful context. For example, a four-year-old playing with shop role play resources identifies written numbers from one to nine and checks through the play money, carefully sorting out all the five pence pieces. Children are able to name basic shapes, with older children naming more complex ones, for example, creating a pictorial display of palm trees and correctly labelling the rectangles and crescents. They are encouraged to understand and appreciate animals and other living things, for example, children enjoy seeing the guinea pig in the garden, learning to handle it carefully, helping with feeding and putting in clean bedding. Children are gaining a sense of place and an awareness of other ways of life because they have regular access to a range of resources to promote this knowledge, for example, role play resources connected with travel agents, a Chinese restaurant, the dentist, chemist and post office.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are able to feel welcome because staff value and respect their individuality. Children's personal routines are well documented and are observed by staff, for example, children bring comforters from home and sleep according to their needs and parents' wishes. Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented, working appropriately with individual children to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines.

Children are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. For example, they celebrate Chinese New Year with activities such as making masks and hats, tasting Chinese food and attempting to use chopsticks. Children's knowledge of wider society and the world is promoted through resources such as 'Travelling Ted', a teddy bear which children can take on holiday with them, taking photos of this and creating a display of all the countries visited. Their understanding of different ways of life is further promoted through opportunities to fundraise, for example, for a clinic and school abroad.

Children's independence and their opportunities to choose activities are generally promoted. However, this is sometimes limited because staff usually put out resources, children visit the bathroom in groups and staff carry out some tasks for

them, thus limiting the extension of their learning in these areas. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is good throughout the day as they choose their activities and organise turn-taking and sharing. They are beginning to take responsibility for their own actions because staff always offer clear explanations, enabling them to understand their behaviour and make decisions about this. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. There is a strong commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are given clear information when their child starts at the nursery, with a member of staff going through all policies and procedures with them. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's progress through daily discussions with staff, newsletters, displays of themes and topics, consultation evenings and regular written reports.

Children's welfare and development are further enhanced through the excellent system for parental support. Parents are encouraged to discuss any issues or anxieties which may be affecting their child. Whilst strictly observing confidentiality, staff may then help allay these concerns by sensitively addressing the issues with all children, for example, using books and resources to discuss visiting the dentist or dealing with bereavement. Nursery managers can also recommend publications to parents to offer them additional support. Feedback from parents is positively regarded and is used as a way of reviewing and improving practice. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. They benefit greatly from the care provided by experienced, skilled and well-supervised staff. Their daily comfort and enjoyment is greatly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and the meticulous attention to all details relating to their care and well-being. Their play opportunities and development are further enhanced by the thoughtful organisation of space, allowing them the freedom to move safely and independently from one activity to another, initiating their own play and learning. An example of this is the organisation of the rooms for older children, which are divided areas according to activity or area of learning, for example, there are maths, language, role play, construction, writing, painting and messy play areas.

Children's welfare and safety are promoted through the setting's exemplary policies and procedures and the staff's practical knowledge and daily implementation of these. There is an excellent induction process for new staff, providing information, training and support. This continues through the staff assessment and appraisal system, which ensures that all training needs are identified and staff are able to work appropriately at all times. Children's overall welfare is further promoted by the clear

understanding that the nursery owners have of their role and responsibilities, ensuring that they are aware of all regulations and changes in legislation, reflecting these in the procedures, policies, staff training and daily practice of the nursery. Excellent forward-planning and organisation means that existing resources and routines and the involvement of other staff are used positively to promote children's understanding and knowledge. For example, the nursery cook has been involved in providing additional sensory activities for children over two years old, such as food tasting where children tasted cooked and uncooked foods, observing and investigating different textures and tastes.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the excellent understanding that the manager has of her role and responsibilities. She ensures that she is aware of all regulations and changes in legislation, working alongside area managers to research, review and implement any changes, carefully considering the implications of these to both children and staff. The manager acts as an excellent role model and staff are highly motivated, regularly attending additional training. This creates a positive atmosphere in which children can learn and develop. All daily sessions are very well planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the day. Staff pay attention to what children are doing and ensure that they are always given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks. Staff meet regularly to plan future work, and thereby ensure that the needs of individual children are met, the development of all children is promoted and the setting continues to be able to provide high quality care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the nursery was asked to encourage the movement of children and staff between groups during the course of the day. Staff now move between groups, enabling them to get to know the children well. Children are also in mixed age groups at the beginning and end of the day, enabling them to play with their peers and enriching their play experiences. The nursery was asked to ensure that the behaviour management policy is consistently applied. This is comprehensively covered during staff induction and is included in staff meetings twice a year, ensuring that staff have a full understanding of this area and children are offered consistent care. The nursery was asked to ensure that children belong to a key group and have a keyworker. All children are now in allocated groups and parents are aware of the key staff members for their children, ensuring that there is clear exchange of information and children are offered appropriate care. The setting was also asked to ensure that minimum space requirements are met and managers now monitor the use of space, ensuring that requirements are consistently observed and all space is suitably used in order to meet children's needs.

At their last inspection of nursery education, the setting was asked to further develop the assessment and planning programme. Detailed assessments and planning methods are now in place, enabling staff to ensure that there are no gaps in children's development and to produce regular reports of children's progress. The nursery was asked to ensure that routines do not affect children's opportunities to participate in and complete activities. Children are now given plenty of notice of snack and meal times and are able to leave resources out and return to these at a

later stage, enabling them to enjoy their play and feel a sense of achievement as they complete their tasks. The nursery was also asked to provide ways for children to record their learning in an individual way. They now make good use of notice boards and displays to show children's work. Children also have work books which demonstrate their progress, for example in mathematics, writing and science.

Complaints since the last inspection

In February 2005, concerns were raised with Ofsted about the supervision and safety of children, following reported injuries to a child and concerns about behaviour management and interaction between children and a staff member. Ofsted received written information about this from the nursery and subsequently visited the setting to discuss the issues of concern, to review relevant records and to observe nursery practice under National Standard 1 (Suitable Person), 2 (Organisation), 3 (Care, Learning & Play), 6 (Safety) and 11 (Behaviour). Based on the evidence obtained, Ofsted was satisfied that the Nursery was meeting the National Standards as required in relation to these issues and no further action was taken.

In March 2005, concerns were raised with Ofsted about the safety of children playing in the outside area and about the supervision and behaviour management of children. Ofsted visited the provision to discuss the issues of concern in full and to observe the setting, nursery practice and review relevant documentation under National Standard 6 (Safety) and 11 (Behaviour). Ofsted was satisfied that the Nursery was meeting the National Standards in relation to the issues of concern raised but it was recommended that the nursery undertake a risk assessment of the outdoor area and take appropriate action to minimise identified risks. Ofsted was satisfied with action taken and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 good. 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):

- develop opportunities to promote children's understanding of the relevance of hygiene practices and of a healthy lifestyle.

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):

- develop opportunities to encourage children's independence and choice so that they are able to become more involved in activities and further develop their learning opportunities through this.

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