



Caring Kindergartens

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	200548
Inspection date	13 December 2005
Inspector	Sally Wride
Setting Address	369 Birmingham Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 0RF
Telephone number	01789 298563
E-mail	stratford@caring-kindergartens.co.uk
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 Kindergarten opened in 1997 and is one of a chain of five private day nurseries. The nursery operates from a large detached house on the outskirts of Stratford-upon-Avon. The nursery serves the local area and has links with local schools.

There are currently 63 children from 3 months to 4 years on roll. This includes 14 funded three-year-olds and 8 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of

sessions. The setting has procedures to support children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week for 51 weeks of the year and is open from 08:00 until 18:00.

There are 14 full-time and 4 part-time members of staff who work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. There are 8 staff who are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the local authority. The nursery has obtained the Investors in People Award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines and learning from example. Sensitive support encourages regular hand washing after toileting, outside play and messy activities. Good procedures such as children having their own individual towels for drying their hands and staff wearing disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing sustain high levels of hygiene and help to prevent the spread of infection. Children are helped to understand that washing their hands before handling food and brushing their teeth after meals helps keep them healthy. Children's needs during rest and sleep times are carefully considered, with comforters and special toys kept close by so that children always feel emotionally secure. The premises and equipment are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and older children enjoy helping with appropriate tasks to keep the room tidy. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection when children become ill, and accidents and children's medication needs are carefully recorded.

Children benefit from at least two sessions of outdoor play each day, when the weather permits. They develop confidence and enjoy moving with control as they use their bodies in different ways and through the use of a range of equipment and resources. Babies and young children are given plenty of space to roll, move and kick, and they learn to use their hands and fingers through playing with shape sorters and simple interlocking bricks. Pre-school children develop a good awareness of the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. They recognise when they are thirsty or out of breath and have a developing understanding of warming up their bodies before they exercise. They enjoy running around in the fresh air with their friends and develop climbing and balancing skills as they use a range of equipment. They move spontaneously with increasing control and coordination, and are developing an awareness of personal space. They successfully manoeuvre themselves to avoid bumping into each other as they play. Children enjoy practising their throwing, catching and kicking skills when playing with staff. They effectively use tools to roll and cut out shapes in dough and demonstrate increasing control when making marks with crayons, pencils and paint brushes.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy a wide range of varied, well presented and nutritious meals and snacks with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables included in the menus. Children with food allergies or requiring special diets are well catered for. Positive steps are taken to reduce the spread of infection, for example, children have their own named cups when having a drink and the nursery cook has completed a basic food hygiene training course. Babies and young children are regularly offered drinks and older children can readily access water throughout the day. Parents are well informed about the quantity and types of food that their child has enjoyed whilst at the setting. Children help to prepare for mealtimes by helping to set the table. Mealtimes are sociable occasions where children and staff enjoy conversations around the table. Younger children are encouraged to feed themselves and table manners are actively encouraged. Younger children who sit in high chairs for their meals are kept safe because the harnesses are altered to fit their individual size. Babies are gently held whilst being bottle fed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. They are based in rooms according to their age and stage of development. Children use a wide range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate resources. They have good access to their playthings, which are well organised in boxes at child height to encourage their independent access. Pastel coloured murals have been painted on a few of the walls around the nursery, but children's art work is displayed above child height, making it difficult for them to see what they and their peers have created. Some blank walls in the nursery lack interest or stimulation to the children.

Indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively, creating a child-friendly environment which enables children to play and explore while being appropriately supervised. Children can move freely and are protected from harm. There is a high ratio of adults to children present, and staff are appropriately deployed, ensuring children are always well supervised. Babies and young children sleep safely and comfortably and are frequently checked. Parent's wishes regarding the length of time that they wish their child to sleep for are respected. Older children have a developing understanding of safe practices, for example, staff encourage them to tidy away toys and equipment to prevent tripping and remind them to not swing on their chairs. This helps children to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. Equipment is kept clean and in a good state of repair and is regularly checked for safety.

Children are protected and their welfare promoted through regular risk assessments of equipment and premises, regular fire drills and detailed risk assessments for outings. Staff keep younger children safe as they carefully transport them up and down the stairs. Effective security measures are in place to ensure children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. There are clear procedures to ensure children are collected only by authorised people. There is a clear child protection policy that is shared with parents and made available for all staff. However, some staff are less

clear about the correct procedure to take if they have concerns. This could result in a delay in action being taken to protect a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy coming to the nursery. They are confident and self-assured to work and play independently or in groups. Children are interested and involved in a wide range of worthwhile play opportunities both inside and outside, which promote their emotional, physical, social and intellectual development. They are forming positive relationships with other children and staff who help them to develop their confidence through sensitive interactions and regular encouragement. Children begin to understand their own needs, and with adult support, become aware of the needs of others. They behave well, for example they willingly take turns and share resources. Basic planning for the younger children at the setting ensure that they receive a suitable range of activities and experiences, but this would be further promoted if staff had regard to the 'Birth to three matters' approach. Babies and young children are well cared for because staff meet their individual routines and take time to hold, cuddle and play with them. They enjoy exploring natural materials in 'treasure baskets', building simple constructions and role play with dolls.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the early learning goals and planning is based on the six areas of learning using practical experiences and play. Children are interested in the activities and as a result they are motivated and learn as they play. Children speak confidently and have access to a range of topical books. They listen and respond well to stories and enjoy relaxing with a book and freely talk about what they can see in the pictures. Children use their imagination extremely well during a variety of role play activities. Early communication skills are developing well, as they confidently make marks with paints and pens to represent letters or numbers. A letter of the week theme is threaded through many activities to encourage children's understanding of the letters and the sounds that they represent. Children are able to build and use creations to represent real life when they make models of vehicles. They concentrate well on these activities. Some children are able to count a collection of objects or the children in their group and are sensitively supported by staff if they become confused. Games that encourage children's recognition of shapes and numbers are frequently played. Children enjoy being creative in the art room. They enjoy painting, making collages and exploring what they can do with play dough. They have good opportunities to explore information technology and operate simple computer programmes well. Children learn to care for the setting's pet hamster as they take turns to care for him at home at the weekend. Children's individual interests are encouraged by the staff who know them well and question the children to offer challenges to them. Staff make observations of what the children achieve in their activities and their progress towards the early learning goals and use this knowledge when planning. However, there are some gaps in the short term planning, which is not specific to individual children and lacks direction for staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are made welcome at the nursery. Staff value and respect their individuality and work closely with parent's to meet individual children's needs. All children are included fully in the life of the setting. Children behave generally well as they share, take turns and play together in small and larger groups. However, at times older children can become restless if activities lack meaning or direction. Children develop self-esteem as they are praised openly and their achievements are celebrated. They learn respect through celebrating different cultural festivals and traditions and by being encouraged to treat each other well. The setting has a clear special needs policy and staff work closely with local support groups to identify and best meet children's individual needs. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's care, welfare and development are promoted through positive working relationships that are well established with parents. Parents' views about their child's needs and interests are sought before the child joins the nursery and these are used to help settle the child. Parents of children receiving nursery education are encouraged to share details when children make developmental achievements at home or reach milestones. Parents receive written information about how the nursery operates including details of the nursery education programme. They can access their child's records at any time and they are invited to parents' evenings to discuss their child's progress. This is in addition to daily exchanges of information with staff. A written daily diary system is in place for the younger children attending the setting. Parents speak positively about the nursery, the staff and their children's achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the effective organisation of staff, space and resources. The indoor space is well laid out into four care rooms for children of different ages. Each care room has sufficient space to allow children active and quiet play and to move around safely and freely. Their safety and well-being is enhanced by high adult:child ratios, ensuring that children are protected, well cared for and supported during their time at the setting. The structure of the daily routine for older children can mean that their opportunities to initiate and extend their own play ideas can be limited and prevent them from following and developing their own interests. Thorough and comprehensive documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and reviewed regularly.

Leadership and management is good. The nursery manager and staff work together closely and are currently planning many new initiatives to improve the overall running of the setting. They have a shared clear vision for the nursery and a commitment to providing a safe and stimulating environment for the children in their care. All staff are involved in planning and decision making to ensure that they function well as a team. They have a strong commitment to training and encourage all staff to take part in

regular training sessions to update or improve their knowledge or to gain recognised childcare qualifications. New staff have a clear and robust induction programme that enables them to get to know the policies and procedures quickly and find their place as part of the team. This means that all staff are well equipped to support children's care, learning and play. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider was asked to make several improvements regarding the organisation of the daily routine, planning for the Foundation Stage, the structure and safety of mealtime arrangements and staff's knowledge of child protection issues and the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Since the last inspection, some of the staff have begun recognised training courses to improve their knowledge of the Foundation Stage. All staff work together as a team to plan and provide a wide range of worthwhile experiences to pre-school children and evaluate these well. However, short term plans continue to lack sufficient detail and require further development. Improvements have been made to the organisation of the daily routine for younger children to ensure that their timetable is flexible and allow many free play opportunities. This however, has not been as successful with the pre-school children who at times do not have the opportunity to extend, develop and explore their own play ideas. Children enjoy mealtimes with their peers and benefit from staff interaction and involvement at this time. Younger children who sit in high chairs for their meals are safe because the harnesses are adjusted for each individual child. Some members of staff have a clear understanding of the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures, but others are less familiar and this remains an area for further development to ensure that children's welfare is promoted and safeguarded.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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.

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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):

- further improve the physical environment in which children play by displaying their art work at child height
- continue to develop the range of opportunities and experiences for children under three, for example by using the Birth to three matters framework
- ensure that all staff are aware of the local Area Child Protection Committee guidelines and the procedures to follow in the event of a concern about a child

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):

- improve the short term plans to show how children will be organised, how activities can be adapted for individuals or groups of children, the role of the adult and the resources and equipment needed
- ensure that nursery routines do not affect children's opportunities to take part in and complete activities of their choosing.

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