

# Caring Kindergartens

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	256754
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Denise May Smith / Anna Davies
<b>Setting Address</b>	Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood, PETERBOROUGH, PE2 6FT
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<b>Registered person</b>	Caring Kindergartens Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 opened in 1996. It is one of five nurseries in the nursery group. It operates from a purpose built building on Minerva Business Park, Lynchwood, Peterborough.

A maximum of 112 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 134 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 49 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel in to work in or around the business park. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is also able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 29 members of staff. Of these, 22 hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by staff who take a range of positive actions to develop good hygiene routines and reduce the risk of cross-infection. Toddlers and older children are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times, with adult support where necessary. Babies have their hands washed after messy play, but not prior to eating which does not fully promote their welfare. Staff ensure that tables and high chairs are cleaned prior to being used for eating. Effective nappy changing procedures help to prevent cross-infection and support children's care. The nursery encourages adults and children to have separate indoor and outdoor footwear to keep the nursery clean and hygienic. However, this practice is not extended to visitors which means outdoor dirt can be transferred to areas where babies are crawling and playing impacting on their health and hygiene.

All staff receive first aid training enabling them to care for children appropriately if they are unwell or have an accident. Records of accidents and medication details are carefully and methodically maintained and shared with parents. The nursery has a clear policy regarding children who are sick or have infectious illnesses and these policies are shared with parents. Support information about common illnesses and the care of children who have had a head bump are also available for parents.

Children enjoy well-planned and balanced meals and snacks that are freshly prepared each day. These are attractively presented, using appropriate plates and cutlery according to the age and ability of each child. Individual dietary needs and preferences are met, as are the youngest children's eating and sleeping routines. Children's understanding of healthy eating is well supported because staff talk to the children about why fruit and milk is good for their health, bones and teeth. Drinks of milk or water are provided at key times and water is always freely available to all, including the youngest children.

Children have plenty of robust physical exercise which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. For example, they enjoy climbing, using the play tunnel, taking part in obstacle courses and generally riding and trundling on the wheeled vehicles. They enjoy scrubbing the playhouse and outdoor toys in the summer with a bucket of water; this not only keeps the toys clean but provides children with a fun activity.

Children handle a variety of tools and materials such as brushes, scissors, pens and crayons, with growing confidence developing their small muscle skills.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in well-maintained, bright and welcoming premises. Staff work hard to make the nursery inviting for the children and their parents. Walls contain nursery paintings, children's art work and posters to support their learning.

Children use a wide range of toys and resources throughout the nursery, including everyday household objects such as those used in treasure baskets for the younger children. Resources are appropriate to the ages of children cared for, are easily accessible to them and are clean and well maintained. Children are safe and secure within the setting. Access to the nursery is

strictly controlled and effective procedures are in place to ensure children are not released to unauthorised people.

Staff assess potential risk to children through regular risk assessments and daily visual checks of toys, equipment and of the premises. Staff are appropriately deployed ensuring children are always well supervised. Safety equipment such as safety gates, coded door locks and socket covers are used appropriately to protect children from harm. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised regularly so that children and staff know what to do in an emergency situation.

Children's safety is further promoted because staff demonstrate a clear understanding of all safeguarding children procedures. Clear and detailed information in the policy document outlines the nursery approach to any concerns and this is easily accessible to both staff and parents.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and quickly join their friends within their base room and settle down to play. Children across the nursery make good progress in their development and learning. Resources are arranged so that during the free play sessions they are able to make choices in what they wish to play with and develop their own interests. The free play sessions are the key strength of the play provision provided. Staff support this type of play well. They sit on the floor with the children, engage with them and extend their learning through good questioning and language skills. A member of staff reads an interactive puppet book with a child encouraging the child to join in with the familiar noises within the story. Other activities such as art, craft and messy play tend to be of good quality, but very 'routine led' as to when children may experience this valuable type of play. This has the effect of limiting children's creativity.

Babies and young children benefit from the positive interaction with adults and enjoy the close contact with staff who provide reassuring cuddles according to children's needs. Staff have a clear and sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They plan a stimulating range of activities and play experiences for all young children and monitor their progress effectively.

Babies and young children access a good range of resources which stimulate and engage them in their play. They enjoy exploring natural materials and engage in a 'feeling and scrunching' activity with a range of different types of paper. However, some of these exploratory activities are undertaken in the high chairs and not on the nursery floor, which would allow children to develop this play further and negate the need to spend unnecessary time in their high chairs.

All children have time to play outdoors in the fresh air with a range of developmentally and age-appropriate toys and resources. Overall, all children experience a good range of play and learning opportunities which contributes to their overall enjoyment and development.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and use their knowledge about how children learn when supporting activities, particularly children's free choice activities. For example, children are encouraged to explore marble painting, to talk about the colours they are mixing and the patterns they are making. Long term and medium term planning is detailed and ensures that all areas of learning are covered, ensuring that children receive a balanced curriculum. However, there is not sufficient

detail included on the weekly planning or planning for outdoors. For example, there are no clear learning intentions for activities planned for outside and there is not always information included on planned activities to show how they will be adapted to challenge and support different ages and abilities of children. This results in some planned activities not having clear learning intentions or focuses. Assessment procedures are secure; both spontaneous and focused observations made on children enable their progress to be tracked and next steps identified. Children take part in a good range of interesting and stimulating activities. However, there is a lot of emphasis on adult-directed activities rather than free play which results in children spending quite long periods of time sitting and listening and at times, becoming quite restless. Most of these adult-directed activities are well-led and enhance children's learning such as wonderful, enthusiastic song times and group times where children impressively recognise and discuss features of different 3D shapes. However, some are more focused on the end result rather than the spontaneous learning opportunities to be found in the process of 'doing' an activity such as making chocolate Easter nests. Staff share warm relationships with the children and spend all of their time interacting and supporting them in a well-resourced and laid out environment.

Children display high levels of confidence as they put forward their ideas in circle times. They are eager to help with special jobs such as sharing out plates and cups at snack time. They persevere at chosen tasks for example constructing with straws and demonstrate pride as they show their efforts to other children nearby. Most children sit attentively when required although at times the emphasis and duration of adult-led activities means that this expectation is too high. They are beginning to take care of themselves as they independently recognise when they are too hot, wipe their own faces after snack time and help to set the tables for mealtimes. Children are beginning to understand the needs and respect of others as they spontaneously share popular resources with each other, listen to others ideas and celebrate events such as birthdays, that are special to individuals.

Children enjoy reading alone or sharing books with others in the comfortable book areas. They recognise words that are familiar to them such as each others name cards. They learn about the different sounds and letters that make up words and have access to a well resourced phonics area. Children practise their emergent writing skills for example as they make lists in role play areas, label their own work and make use of the good range of resources in the writing area. They learn how to communicate in different languages as some of the children attend an optional French club. Children express themselves confidently by communicating their own ideas through songs and rhymes for example, choosing different ways such as happily, squeakily or calmly, to 'sing' their names.

Children use mathematical language in their play as they count items that they have purchased in the pretend shop and describe the full funnel of sand as 'heavy'. Children are given some opportunities to calculate for example as they set the plates and cups at the table for snack time and play memory games, comparing groups of items. Children are particularly confident at naming and describing features of three dimensional shapes. For example, they are able to describe how a cylinder looks like a tin of baked beans and describe how a prism and a cuboid put together looks like a tent. They are competently able to name and find other shapes in the environment.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. For example, they look at growth as they watch bulbs and runner beans grow, take part in experiments to observe and explore changes that happen for example if you add water to different items, how to make an exploding

volcano and how magnets work. These activities encourage children to investigate, ask questions and be curious about the world around them. Children freely construct with different materials such as bricks or straws. They problem solve as they decide that their model needs 'wings to fly'. They develop a sense of time and place through the use of 'Travelling Ted' who is able to go on holidays with them to places such as New York or the Lake District. Children have good opportunities to build their knowledge of information technology through the regular use of computers, electronic toys and programmable toys. They develop an understanding of different cultures and beliefs through a meaningful range of activities such as cultural food tasting and designing Easter bonnets.

Children generally have good opportunities to be creative, particularly through free play sessions. All children join in with song times, demonstrating much enthusiasm and enjoyment during songs such as 'Down in the jungle...' where they eagerly join in with actions and express suggestions for how the song should develop. Structured music and movement sessions both indoors and out, enable children to experience many different musical instruments, exercise sessions and ring games. Children choose to play in the role play areas, developing and discussing their ideas together for example, taking it in turns to 'cook' the dinner and lay food out on the table.

Children confidently move their bodies in many different ways as they join in action songs, use balance beams, play ball games, dance and exercise to calming music. They negotiate space as they steer toy prams and scooters, avoiding obstacles in their path. Activities such as threading with twigs, orange peel and leaves suitably develop children's fine motor skills. Children are developing a health and bodily awareness as they recognise when they are hot and independently remove their jumper in order to cool down and discuss the effect that exercise has on their heartbeat.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Staff have developed effective relationships with the parents who in turn provide staff with in-depth knowledge and information about their children. This ensures that staff have a clear understanding and appreciation for the uniqueness of each child so that they are fully included in the life of the setting. Day-to-day information about the children's experiences is shared verbally for all, and also in writing for the younger children, so that parents are fully aware of their children's care. Parents have easy access to a wide variety of information relating to the policies and procedures within the nursery and receive regular newsletters about the events their children are involved in and the general life of the nursery. Parents spoken to speak positively about the staff and the care they provide for their children. The setting follows current guidelines with regard to the recording and reporting of any complaints they receive. However, the policy available to parents has not been updated in line with these current procedures. This is misleading for parents should they wish to make a complaint.

Cultural diversity is promoted well within the nursery. Staff skilfully raise children's awareness of similarity and difference in a positive way. They celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year and children play with a wide variety of resources which are reflective of our multicultural society. Children's behaviour is good. Staff act as positive role models and conduct themselves in a calm and caring manner. Children have good manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' appropriately. Staff give children gentle reminders when necessary and thank children for their responses. Children learn to share and take turns through the staff's effective strategies. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the nursery's clear commitment to a fully inclusive setting. All children are able to enjoy and take part in the play and learning opportunities provided. The setting works with outside agencies and other professionals to establish best practice and care for children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents receive a good amount of information about the Foundation Stage and the activities provided for their children. They receive regular reports on their children's progress every three months and are able to view their children's assessment records whenever they wish which ensures that they are aware of their progress and next steps of learning. Daily opportunities are provided for parents to give and receive verbal feedback about their children. There are some opportunities for parents to share their own knowledge and observations about what their children know and can do. However, this information is not routinely recorded which means that when staff plan children's next steps of learning, they do this predominantly based only on what they observe the child doing in the setting. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning through stickers given to the children for achievements such as 'I learnt a new shape today' and enabling them opportunities to share their skills and different cultures with the staff and children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

There is a clear management structure in place which offers good support to staff at all levels. The robust recruitment procedure ensures that staff who are employed to work in the nursery are suitable to do so. A comprehensive induction policy forms a firm basis for staff employment. Ongoing monitoring, reviews and staff appraisals promote good practice and offer staff support with their professional practice and development.

Staff regularly meet to share information and good systems are in place to ensure relevant information is shared promoting children's care and contributing to the smooth running of the nursery. The children's day follows structured routines. This ensure all children have their care needs met and have opportunities to experience a wide range of play experiences. However, this structure sometimes means children are sitting in highchairs for extended periods or means that children are sometimes expected to sit and wait while their friends care needs are being addressed. This detracts from the overall positive experience they receive at the nursery.

The setting has comprehensive policies and procedures which effectively underpin the running of the nursery. All, except one, are up-to date and are included in the wealth of information provided for the parents to view. Overall the setting meets needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The management team have a firm vision of the future development of the provision, concentrating on staff development and ensuring that all types of activities offered to children provide rich learning experiences. Where areas for improvement are identified, there are strategies put in place such as extra training workshops or in-house support to further develop and enhance the provision. Children's progress reports are signed off by the manager which ensures that their progress towards the early learning goals is monitored. These systems ensure that the good quality of care and education that children receive is maintained and further improved.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to ensure positive images of gender, culture and disability are reinforced throughout the nursery. They also agreed to ensure that all book areas are made more appealing to children throughout the nursery and that the children have access to a variety of books at any one time. The management had made very good progress at addressing both of these issues. Well-stocked, comfortable book areas are now well used by the children throughout the nursery rooms improving the quality of the provision. Resources, activities and positive images have been sensitively embedded across the nursery so that children become familiar with the concepts of similarities and difference in a low-key meaningful way.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to provide opportunities for children to learn about simple calculation and health and bodily awareness. A good range of planned activities and most spontaneous opportunities are now used to promote both of these areas of learning.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- minimise the spread of infection, this relates to the hand washing practice of babies prior to eating and preventing contamination of the floor where babies and toddlers may play
- ensure the structured routine of the day does not impact on meeting children's individual needs, this relates to sometimes spending excessive amounts of time in high chairs and sitting and waiting for other children's care needs to be met
- update the policy relating to the procedure to be followed in the event a parent wishes to make a complaint so that it is in line with practice and make this available to parents.

### **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):



- ensure that short term planning is sufficiently detailed to show clear learning intentions of planned activities for both the indoor and outdoor environments and how activities can be adapted to meet children's individual learning needs
- review the balance of adult-led activities and children's free-choice play and ensure that all adult-led activities are meaningful to children
- develop further on-going opportunities for parents to share their own knowledge and observations about what their children know and can do so that this information can be used by staff when planning children's next steps of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)