



Portland Kindergarten Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253508
Inspection date	18 January 2006
Inspector	Christine Hands
Setting Address	33 & 35 Tentercroft Street, Lincoln, Lincs, LN5 7DB
Telephone number	01522 528524
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Registered person	Portland Kindergarten Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Portland Kindergarten was established in 1990. It is privately owned and runs from two, next door, converted houses in Lincoln city centre and serves people living and working in the local area. The kindergarten has sole use of one building and shared use of the first floor of the other which is only used for morning sessions for pre-school-age children. The enclosed outdoor play area serves both premises.

The kindergarten is registered to care for 52 children between birth and 5 years. The

children are organised in groups of under-2s, 2-3 years and 3-5 years in different rooms. Although the group provides full day care, children are funded during the morning session. There are 14 children aged 3 years and 3 children aged 4 years who are in receipt of funding. All the children speak English as their first language and none of the funded children have special educational needs.

Three regular, full-time staff work with the funded children and they all have appropriate qualifications. The kindergarten receives support from a teacher through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted because staff follow clear procedures for maintaining good levels of hygiene. For example, all tables are cleaned before being used for food, and all toileting and nappy changing areas are kept clean and hygienic therefore limiting the spread of infection. Children are beginning to take the initiative in washing their own hands after using the toilet and before eating, with gentle reminders being given by staff. Their health is well promoted through thorough documentation as well as the high proportion of staff holding first aid certificates which ensures children receive appropriate care if they have an accident.

Children have their individual dietary needs met because staff are vigilant in recording any special requirements. They receive a varied diet of suitable, nutritiously cooked meals and are becoming aware of which foods are healthy; and how certain foods help their bones and teeth develop, whilst others give them energy. This is discussed at meal times as well as being included in activities such as buying and preparing vegetables for vegetable soup.

Children enjoy varied opportunities to experience physical activity and fresh air on a daily basis because the nursery plan activities that enable the children to develop their confidence on a range of equipment. However, there are no opportunities for children to develop balancing skills. They are skilled at using a range of small equipment to promote co-ordination skills.

Children are aware of the types of clothing they would need to wear both in cold and hot weather. A recent activity has involved making an igloo and talking about how they would keep themselves warm in the snow and ice.

Children rest and sleep according to their needs in a warm and comfortable environment

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment which is secure and safe with parents and

visitors gaining access to areas used by children by ringing a bell to alert staff. Children are kept safe through the clear procedures in place. All staff are aware of their roles, including those who will be needed to help evacuate the babies from the first floor should the need for an emergency evacuation arise. Risk assessments are regularly undertaken ensuring that risks to children are minimised. Good precautions are in place to prevent accidents, including safety gates and talking to children about the importance of road safety and following instructions. Children learn to be especially careful on the stairs leading from the pre-school room to the back garden.

Children use appropriate good quality toys and equipment which includes colourful low-level tables and chairs enabling them to sit and play safely. They sleep in comfort in cots, prams and mattresses and have soft music played to them during this period enabling them to feel relaxed.

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibility in protecting children and are aware of the signs of possible abuse. A member of staff who has undertaken training is the main contact within the nursery for any concerns. Staff are fully aware of procedures and a child protection policy is in place which includes the action that would be taken should an allegation be made about a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, confident, independent & developing their self-esteem. They enjoy their time at the nursery and play co-operatively with one another. They settle well due to the kind and caring staff. Staff's high level of individual attention and reassurance supports them to separate from their parents. This is a particular strength of the nursery as staff work with each family individually, and parents are able to stay until their child is secure. The manager ensures that she is aware as much as is possible of family circumstances so that she can tailor the care and support to meet the individual needs of the children. Babies have their individual needs met through the provision made for them to eat and sleep according to their own routines. Children freely move around and access a good range of appropriate, stimulating toys. They are aware of the expectations of staff and through praise, encouragement and gentle reminders behave very well.

Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, however as yet they have not started to use this when planning activities for younger children. Activities provided for these children are varied and aid their development. Older children enjoy some well planned activities, such as a visits to the cathedral and the local market where they are able to buy vegetables which they then prepare ready to make soup. The organisation of space and resources within the baby and toddler rooms provides opportunities for children to select and make choices in their play, building on their growing independence and learning. Children are developing their speech, and staff respond to babies babbling, talking to them continually and telling them what they are doing, for example, when going to change their nappies.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. They are happy in their environment and have formed good relationships with each other and staff. Planning systems are in place which show how all aspects of learning will be covered, however, staff do not consistently identify clear learning objectives, and activities are not always differentiated effectively to meet children's individual needs and abilities. For example, a member of staff during a craft activity with one child at a time does all the cutting out for the child although another member of staff has placed scissors on table. When discussed, the member of staff said that she really had not thought about it. This showed a lack of understanding of the purpose of the activity as well as what the child was learning from it. Consequently, older and more able children are often not sufficiently challenged. Staff provide a suitable range of activities to cover the six areas of learning, however, organisation and staff deployment means that the learning objectives of these are not always met. Children have a selection of activities put out for them each session, however because of poor deployment they are not given the support needed to ensure that they are using them to their full potential, for example, the learning objectives of a floating and sinking activity were not met because no member of staff was available to support the children. Children are developing good spatial awareness through regular use of the outdoor area. Their whole body movements are promoted through mediums such as dance and games, which help children to practise and develop their running, hopping, skipping and jumping skills. Staff know children well and generally provide appropriate support. A system is in place to assess children's attainment along the stepping stones, however, it is not fully effective in informing future planning to identify the next steps in children's learning. Children use a range of tools and resources to mark make, such as paint brushes, pencils, chalk and crayons and because these are easily accessible they are gaining an understanding that writing can be used for a variety of purposes. Some children are able to write their name and individual letters independently as well as developing an awareness of letter sounds and shapes. They benefit from seeing a range of print displayed within the setting both on the wall and name cards. Children confidently use numbers during practical activities and daily routines and can count in sequence to ten and beyond. They are developing their awareness of addition and subtraction through number rhymes and songs and are able to use mathematical language to describe position and shape, however, more able children are not given sufficient challenge to solve simple number problems or extend their mathematical skills. Children enjoy exploring and finding out about the natural world through activities connected to growing and caring for plants and caring for the nursery fish and rabbit. They are gaining an awareness and understanding of technology and use equipment such as calculators and battery toys on a regular basis. Although children are able to use the computer this is at set times and they are not able to access this independently. Children talk with interest about past and present events in their own lives and are developing a sound awareness of the local community through regular outings to the library van, local library, cathedral and museum. As the children reach the end of their time at the nursery before they move on to school they have a special outing to Newark castle which makes them feel special. This involves making a picnic for themselves and catching a train. Through this children experience a different mode of travel as well as learning about the community in which they live and past and present events. They are developing an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others through

planned activities, books and discussion. Children's creative skills are promoted through activities such as painting, music, role play and art. However, children have limited opportunities to freely access craft resources or to select their own tools, materials and resources during planned art and craft activities. Consequently, children are not encouraged to use their imaginations or to freely express their own ideas. Children join in enthusiastically during group singing times and enjoy playing a wide range of instruments and exploring different sounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing very good relationships with adults and other children in the nursery. There is a close working partnership with parents and carers to meet their individual needs and ensure they are fully included in the life of the nursery. All children and parents are warmly welcomed by staff who are sensitive to the differing family circumstances. Each child is known as an individual and time is spent making sure their needs are fully met and they are provided with equality of opportunity. Children have a strong sense of belonging and work harmoniously with others. The staff ensure that there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender, race or disability.

Parents views about their child's needs are actively sought before the child starts at the nursery, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Parents receive good quality information both about the nursery itself as well as the Foundation Stage and are fully aware of the assessments that are kept. However, as there is no formal plan for detailing what stage the child is at when they reach the age of three years, their progression cannot be fully monitored and assessed, although staff ensure that parents are given verbal information about their child's development on a daily basis. The babies have daily diaries detailing how they have spent their day which enables parents to become fully involved and feel they are involved.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and through acting as good role models and using appropriate methods, such as consistent and gentle reinforcement of rules, children learn good manners and to care for others. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff, building their confidence and self esteem.

Children are beginning to understand and respect differing needs and cultures through planned activities. Their knowledge of the local community is promoted through discussion as well as walks to places of interest including the local market, cathedral and to feed the swans at the Brayford. They regularly share news about their own lives and their thoughts both at circle time as well as other occasions during the day. Children's opinions and achievements are recognised and praised by everyone in the group. All of this contributes to fostering children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a caring and qualified staff team who ensure that they are able to meet the pastoral needs of all the children who attend. They maintain good ratios to keep children safe, and support their care and play. However, they are not always deployed effectively to fully meet the needs of the pre-school children during their funded sessions.

Policies and procedures are known by the staff and promote children's health and well-being. Children are cared for in a secure environment and are effectively supervised ensuring that the needs of the range of children for whom the setting provides are met. Some staff are attending training courses to enhance their knowledge and understanding, and others have experience of caring for children in a variety of roles including special needs.

Leadership and management for nursery education is satisfactory. The manager and leader of the pre-school room are able to identify strengths and weaknesses of the educational provision and are committed to improving both their own and staff's knowledge to ensure they have a sound focus for future improvements for children's learning and development.

Overall the needs of all the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a recommendation was made for staff to be made aware of the behaviour policy and the methods used to manage children who display challenging behaviour. The nursery has spent some time developing this and all staff are consistent with their behaviour management ensuring that children are now not only fully aware of the standards of behaviour expected but are also aware of the consequences. This has impacted greatly on how children behave within the nursery.

Complaints since the last inspection

A complaint was received in August 2005 regarding standards 1 and 8. A visit was made to the nursery to inspect these standards which were deemed to have been met.

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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):

- review the organisation of daily routines, space and resources so that children are able to freely select from a wide variety of activities and play materials, initiate their own activities and use their imagination (also applies to nursery education)

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 planning and assessments to ensure staff deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, clear learning objectives are identified and activities are adapted to meet children's individual needs particularly with regard to providing challenge for the more able children to help them progress
- ensure all staff are deployed effectively to promote the welfare and learning of children.
- ensure that base-line assessments are undertaken for all children at the start of the Foundation Stage to enable staff to accurately assess their development.

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