

Garden House Nursery School (Gotherington)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	510041
Inspection date	13 September 2007
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	Village Hall, Gotherington, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 9ET
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Registered person	Garden House Nursery School
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Garden House Nursery School (Gotherington) is one of two nurseries under the same ownership. It re-opened in 2001 and is sited in the village of Gotherington outside Cheltenham. The group runs from the village hall and has access to an outdoor play area and playing field. A maximum of 20 children aged from two to three years attend on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday during term time. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.15. There are currently 10 children on roll.

Five members of staff work in the group with three adults normally present. All have appropriate qualifications, including one with teacher status and one who has a degree in Early Years and is Montessori trained. This a Montessori-based group with membership of the Association Montessori International and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have good opportunities for exercise and fresh air. They have ample, indoor space to move and play with physical equipment, including prams, bikes, a tunnel and soft balls. They go outside each day, weather permitting, often walking all round the playing field and negotiating the challenging, large equipment to develop their swinging, climbing and balancing.

Effective procedures, such as staff wearing disposable gloves and daily maintenance, sustain high levels of hygiene and help prevent the spread of infection amongst children. The children are cared for in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Staff discuss their toilet training with them and they willingly wash their hands after toileting and before eating. Children are cared for effectively if they are ill, as staff share procedures with parents and follow exclusion periods to minimise the risk of cross infection.

Some children bring their own beakers and others have cups of water so they can help themselves. Staff regularly encourage children to drink so they do not feel thirsty, particularly after play in hot weather. Children's snacks, such as a savoury biscuit, cheese and grapes, are nutritious and balanced, and their individual dietary needs are well met. They effectively learn about healthy eating through helping to prepare food, such as rice cakes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe in the secure environment. The community-hall premises are spacious, airy and kept at a steady temperature to ensure children's safety and comfort. Staff welcome children by making sure their personal belongings are stored at their height. Toys are set out ready for their play on arrival, though the presentation of these, and of other resources, is not best considered to welcome the families. Children have ample space to play that is well organised to meet their needs. The room is divided into areas with low furnishings so the staff have an open view to make sure that children play safely.

The children have a free choice of resources within the effective range of activities provided. Staff are careful to make sure that these are entirely safe and suitable for the age and stages of the children, including blunt sticks for fruit kebabs. Children can access the toys and equipment easily from low tables and shallow, storage boxes placed on the floor.

Children move safely within the hall as staff are vigilant. Detailed plans identify risks and minimise danger to children currently attending. For example, adults check stacked chairs, gate the kitchen entrance and lock the main door at all times. Toilet door bolts cannot be easily opened from the outside to ensure older children's safety. Staff are aware of patterns of accidents and remind them of potential risks, including bumping into others. The children learn to keep themselves safe from a young age. They regularly practise leaving the building in an emergency and tell others to watch the 'stingers' around the playing field.

The children's welfare is given high priority and they are safeguarded by the staff's clear understanding of first aid and child protection issues. This is underpinned by the comprehensive child protection policy and procedures to support staff to take appropriate action in the event of any concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery as they gain confidence and independence. Staff use their good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework to select and provide a wide, balanced range of resources, activities and experiences. These effectively encourage young children to build on their natural curiosity as learners, develop their language and mathematical thinking and use their imagination. The young children effectively develop social relationships as they play alongside others and increasingly participate in group activities, such as music time with a visiting teacher.

Staff observe the children closely and gain a good understanding of their individual needs. As a result, they effectively respond to the children's interests, such as trains, and set up individual learning plans to support and maximise their development. Able children are well stimulated and challenged as staff draw upon appropriate resources from the vast quantities at the adjacent nursery school for older children. These include graded, mathematical equipment, exploratory play with sand and water and stimulating natural objects, such as baskets of shells and driftwood.

The children receive good support from attentive adults to extend familiar skills and try new activities in a safe and supportive environment. They have time to play and learn independently. They initiate their own activities, for example, when a child experiments by pouring water onto a wheel and then onto her arm, exclaiming, 'It tickles.' Children have good opportunities to consolidate their understanding in stimulating, weekly activities repeated on different days, such as painting and cooking.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children receive good support to settle so they make choices and gain self esteem. Their differences are acknowledged and valued as staff invite them to join activities, such as story time, and their chosen level of involvement is respected. They form good relationships with staff and, increasingly, with each other. For example, they request an adult to join their play with toy cars and sit sociably around the snack table. Tasks, such as taking bread to feed the ducks, help them to care for living things. Children appropriately learn about different people through the display of positive images displayed, including in books and posters. They hear stories about people in other countries and taste the foods, including fruits mentioned in 'Handa's Surprise'.

Children's individual needs are very well supported, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff work very closely with the children's parents and a wide range of other professionals to support them at the group and to transfer to their next setting. Young children's behaviour is managed sensitively and consistently so they learn to share and take turns. This is because staff are polite and calmly give positive directions, suggest how to ask for a toy and encourage good behaviour through sincere praise.

A warm, personal welcome is given to all parents and their children. When prospective parents visit, staff spend time with them to answer all their queries so they make the best decisions for their children. Families are closely consulted over the children's requirements so they receive consistent care. Parents are sent clear information about the setting, for example, in policies and newsletters. They are well informed about the children's development so they are able to support them effectively at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are well cared for by staff who are, overall, experienced, well qualified and involved in on-going training. They benefit from high levels of adult attention. They and their families receive personal support from key workers, who are the adults to whom the children relate to best. Children are effectively grouped by their interests and respond well when invited to join others for group activities. Good use of space and resources effectively support the children's development. They have ample space for their activities, such as experimenting with wheeled toys. The hall is made bright and interesting with temporary screens for information and posters, while display of the children's work fosters their self esteem.

The setting informs the regulator of significant events, and procedures for appointing, vetting and checking staff's on-going suitability are robust. Children are suitably protected from non-vetted persons as they are closely supervised in public areas and visitors are accompanied. Good systems are in place to maintain the setting's documentation to support the children's care. Staff have sheets to set up a log to record any complaint and include the necessary information. The register clearly shows the children's hours of attendance to foster their safety. During sessions, children's confidential records are kept accessible to effectively support their care and well-being. The group has well adapted its policies to reflect the younger children's development through the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved procedures to obtain parents' signatures on records of medication given to children and to monitor children's access to the kitchen.

Staff now make sure that parents sign the written records of medication given to children and have made the kitchen inaccessible to the children. As a result of the changes, the setting has improved the care for children's health and safety.

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 the 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

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.

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):

- assess the risk to children in relation to whether locks on toilet doors can be easily opened from outside and take action to minimise this
- develop the ways in which the premises are made welcoming and friendly to children and parents.

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