

Garden House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	510030
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	Gotherington Rex Rhodes Building, Gotherington, Nr Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 9ET
Telephone number	01386 881886 or 07754949509
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Registered person	Garden House Nursery School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 satisfactory. 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?

The Garden House Nursery School is one of two nurseries under the same ownership taken over in 2001. It is sited in the village of Gotherington outside Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The nursery school operates from the Rex Rhodes Building and children have access to an outdoor play area. A maximum of 24 children attend the setting at any one time. Younger children aged between two and three years are offered sessional care in the adjacent village hall. The nursery is open from 09.00 to 15.00 each weekday during term time. The Fun Club offers care from 08.00 until 09.00 and from 15.15 to 18.00 during term time. Sessions also run during the spring, summer and half-term holidays from 08.30 to 16.30.

There are currently 36 children aged from three years to under eight years on roll at the nursery school. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. Children come to the nursery from within the village and from the surrounding areas. The Fun Club cares for children aged three to eight years from the nursery school and Gotherington Primary School and accepts other children under twelve years of age. The staff have experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language.

Eight adults work with children in the nursery school. Of these, one has early years professional status and is Montessori trained, two have teaching qualifications and five have appropriate early years qualifications. One is working towards a further qualification. The setting has close links with the local school. It is a member of the Association Montessori International and of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to understand about hygiene as they see adults following cleaning routines. They learn to contribute to the cleanliness of the building by thoroughly wiping their shoes. They know to wash after toileting and before eating, though do not regularly discuss the reasons. Younger ones do not always use the available soap and may touch the floor and their shoes as they look at books before eating. Children are protected from the spread of infection through the clear policy about sick children that staff share with parents. Parents sign the record of accidents and are told about any administered medication so the children's care is satisfactorily consistent.

The children benefit from regular healthy drinks at snack and meal times and fresh drinking water is available so they do not become thirsty. The group takes appropriate account of parents' wishes to provide nutritious snacks. Foods, such as apple and cheese appeal to children and meet their dietary needs. Parents receive a reminder about the need for a healthy eating programme if this is needed.

Children benefit from daily fresh air, for example, on walks around the field. They have effective opportunities for exercise as they swing, climb and slide on the playground and during weekly, energetic Forest School activities. They competently use small tools, for example, to paint, cut and write. Children confidently develop self-help skills in dressing, care of their own belongings and management of their lunch boxes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children play in premises that are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. Staff keep the building at an appropriate temperature to ensure children's safety and comfort. Children use a suitable range of resources that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. They can safely reach the toys and equipment that are accessible to them.

Children move safely within the nursery environment as staff are watchful and take appropriate steps to minimise potential hazards on the premises and in the woodland area. They participate in termly practices to leave the building in an emergency; a basic log is completed and fire procedures are posted for adults to follow to promote the children's safety. Children effectively learn to be aware of their own safety as staff remind them of potential risks within their play. In Forest School sessions, they tell each other the rules and regularly take small risks in controlled circumstances so they have good experience of keeping themselves safe.

The children's welfare and safety is promoted through the staff's knowledge and understanding of relevant issues and procedures. For example, they hold current first aid and child protection

certificates and have a sound knowledge of the local child protection procedures to effectively respond to any concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, forming attachments to staff and each other, gaining confidence and enjoying themselves as they play together. They benefit as the routine is flexible and includes active and quiet times, as well as provision for their care needs. As nursery numbers have increased, the organisation of groups and changes of routine require adaptation to fully support children's concentration. The range and balance of activities helps children to make good progress in all areas of their development as daily planning is based around their needs and the 'Birth to three matters' and Foundation Stage frameworks as required. Staff are developing the system to observe and record what children do to help them plan their next steps based on their interests. Some nursery resources, such as a night-time display with attractive sparkling equipment, are attractively organised for children's maximum independent choice and learning. Children are involved in free choice of a range of activities and in challenging additional sessions for music, French and Forest School experiences. At the out-of-school club, children gain confidence, independence and self-esteem. They engage in a range of activities and play opportunities that are appropriate to their interests and relaxation needs. This is because resources are open-ended to encourage their imagination and ingenuity, for example, to set up an area for table tennis.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards early learning goals in the six areas of learning, for example, in communication, language and literacy. They listen well to others talking about their play and to instructions. Children have very good opportunities to practise speaking skills. They negotiate with others, describe their ideas and tell simple stories, for example, about making 'hot chocolate' from mud. Many new words are practised, including sounds of fireworks. Children enjoy rhymes, suggest rhyming words and learn letters in familiar words, including their names. They eagerly 'read' books to themselves and are keen to 'write' using well-formed letters, for example, in the toy dog's diary. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points, for example, in mathematical development. There is very good emphasis on mathematical language and counting in play and number songs. Children confidently count to ten and beyond. They easily recognise figures on jigsaws and create complex, repeated patterns with coloured cubes. They are interested in number problems and know how to add one more, for example, when drawing several pictures. Young children recognise shapes of puzzle pieces and competently use size words, such as 'biggest' and 'taller' as they build towers.

Children enjoy meeting with new ideas and skills so they extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. They often discuss past and present events, such as firework night and Diwali celebrations. They gain a good sense of the world making maps and welcoming visitors from the community, including the fire brigade. Everyday technology is used in listening to stories and music and children skilfully operate favourite computer programs. Children focus on differences and changes as they go 'bug hunting' and enjoy mixing wet and dry ingredients to make star-shaped scones. There are no differences in learning between different groups as, for example, each child's creativity is valued. Children explore colour through printing and focus on different textures, such as rough shells in smooth sand. Individual responses to music with actions and imaginative role play, for example, based on the care of pets, are well supported

by enthusiastic adults. Children are also increasingly responsive to group activities, including acting out songs such as 'Five little stars'.

Staff have, overall, a good understanding of the Foundation Stage so children are individually well challenged. This is because adults effectively use their awareness of children's activities to carefully phrase comments and questions that offer appropriate extension to each child. Planning is, increasingly, being linked to assessment of children's needs and interests through relevant notes on their achievements, individual learning plans and illustrated records of progress. The planning of how space is used and resources presented varies in support children's play and learning. Children make good use of the long period of freely-chosen play, though changes of routine are not always smooth and participation in whole group activities is varied. Children benefit from many good teaching methods, including support to think through whole processes. For example, they learn about different aspects of pet care and find an appropriate recipe for a dog's cake. They hugely benefit from weekly, outdoor, 'forest' experiences when they are fully involved in appreciating the wildlife, exploring their own ideas and finding uses for the wealth of natural materials available.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle well into the nursery school and gain good self-esteem as their special differences are acknowledged and highly valued. Children have equal access to activities and effectively make decision. For example, their play ideas are woven into group activities, including music. Children with additional needs are very well included and supported in close liaison with their parents and other professionals. The staff have effective regard to children's individual backgrounds and ensure that the resources positively represent those who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children are effectively supported to behave. Younger children learn about taking turns through the use of puppets and older ones remind their friends about ground rules they have adopted as a group. Staff work closely with families so the support for children's behaviour is consistent.

Partnership with parents is good. The families are provided with much clear information about the nursery school and the curriculum and are well informed about the children's progress. Parents are being increasingly involved in the recording of children's development and learning. Their wishes are closely listened to regarding the support of their children. Parents say that the staff are approachable and flexible, for example, over younger children's care and out-of-school arrangements.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The nursery school has robust systems in place to vet new staff and to check their ongoing suitability to care for children. People who are not vetted are never left alone with children as, for example, ample cover is available. Children are cared for by teams of familiar adults that include qualified and experienced staff. The hands-on managers support staff so that children feel settled and secure. Generous ratios of staff ensure that children receive personal care, though keyworkers are not appointed as soon as families join the group.

The operational plan includes policies that are recently updated to foster the children's well-being. However, organisation of the premises and the larger grouping of children lack planning for children's independence and full involvement. All required documents are in place, though procedures for medication are not fully developed to consistently support children's health. The setting has sheets to set up a log for any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. Daily registers are, mostly, completed to show the children's hours of attendance and adults are asked to sign the visitor's book at some time during their visit.

Leadership and management are good. The leadership is strong, and working relationships between staff and management are close with enhanced teamwork being developed. The nursery school openly shares its clear aims with families. All staff have sound induction and their professional development is strongly encouraged. The setting has good ability to assess its own strengths and aspects to develop and to monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education. Management and staff engage in meaningful discussion about the provision and are highly committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved procedures to obtain proof that families have been informed about their children's health. Parents are now informed of accidents and medication given to children though they are not always asked to sign the record of medication. This has satisfactorily improved the consistency of the care for the children's health.

In the previous education inspection, no significant weaknesses were noted. The nursery school was asked to further consider staff knowledge of the stepping stones and their use in assessment, and an aspect of the partnership with parents. Staff have successfully developed their knowledge of the stepping stones and use these to record each child's progress. The children's developmental records are now regularly shared with parents during their time at the nursery school, for example, in the displayed learning journeys. As a result, children's learning is well supported.

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.

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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):

- ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing for younger children
- review the organisation of group activities so that children's positive participation is managed more effectively (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that parents sign the written record of medication administered as proof that they have been informed about the children's health.

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):

- review the presentation and accessibility of resources and the use of available space so that children's play and learning are more effectively supported. (also applies to care)

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