



Grange Tiny Hands Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	146473
Inspection date	02 November 2006
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
Setting Address	Middlefields, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, SG6 4NG
Telephone number	01462 627333 (preschool hrs)
E-mail	01462 676289 (nominated persons home no.)
Registered person	Stephanie Head
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?

Grange Tiny Hands Pre-School operates from a community centre on the Grange estate in Letchworth. It was registered in May 1999 but opened in 1966. The group serves the local and wider area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 60 children from two to under five years on roll including funded three and four year olds. All children have access to the outdoor play area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00 during term time only. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:30 daily and from 12:30 until 15:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There is also a lunch club which runs from 11:30 to 12:30 every day. The lunch club is registered for 16 children

only. The full day care provision caters for children to attend a morning session and the lunch club, or for children to attend the lunch club and an afternoon session.

There are nine staff directly working with the children, including the manager, and five hold recognised early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment where there is plenty of space and separate areas to offer a wide range of activities. Children's immediate safety, health and welfare is well promoted because staff understand and support children's good health. Children have some encouragement to begin to care for their own health needs as staff offer sound role models and give clear explanations. However opportunities for children to understand personal health and take responsibility for their physical needs are not being promoted consistently and need to be addressed.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious foods, including a broad range of fresh fruit and vegetables. They participate in a range of creative activities such as food tasting sessions, where they have further opportunities to learn about different foods, finding out which ones are healthy and how they affect their development. Children discuss why they need to enjoy regular food and drink during the day, making links between energy and the intake that they need. They note the effect that exercise has on their body and are encouraged to help themselves to water regularly. Children take part in planting and growing seeds and follow the growth with interest exploring the links between food, water and healthy development.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities. These include daily movement to 'sticky kids' tape sessions and activities planned according to the 'top start' programme. Children move freely between indoors and outside being given numerous opportunities to explore a wide range of physical movement. Children use small equipment such as pencils, glue spreaders and small construction pieces which aid their development of fine manipulative skills. Younger children are developing their independence physically and emotionally. They are active and becoming increasingly independent, acquiring control over their bodies and new physical skills. They are learning to express their needs and are beginning to meet those needs independently for example, by being able to access water for themselves.

Children's general health and safety is supported by all relevant paperwork and records. Children's medical needs, both ongoing or of an emergency nature, are dealt with through clearly outlined procedures carried out by qualified staff. Clear procedures and methods of recording underpin all aspects of physical care. These stringent, well-executed measures ensure that children's health can be promoted at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given a high priority and risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Policies, procedures and paperwork in this area are very well planned and reviewed. Children benefit from additional safety measures installed in the premises such as 'circuit-breaker' alarms on all exits, this measure greatly improves safety. Staff carry out daily safety checks, repeating these throughout the sessions to ensure continuing safety. They inform each other when they are moving around the areas of the premises at all times. In this way they ensure that the supervision of children is thorough and maintained.

Children have a firm understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves, and others, safe as they take part in regular emergency drills. They are given explanations by staff and understand the importance of listening to instructions in order to prevent accidents. Children have opportunities to learn about road safety as they participate in regular local excursions to observe the changing seasons or visit the Post Office. However children's safety is compromised at present due to a lack of procedures covering outings in order to deal with unexpected emergencies.

Children are cared for in a welcoming setting where their work is creatively displayed, although this is on limited available areas. Continuous monitoring of the environment and staff's constant attention to all details ensures that children's access to play materials reaches a high standard of safety. This is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly-sized slides, play houses and climbing frame. Children are very well protected because staff understand child protection issues and the appropriate steps to follow. There are robust procedures for induction of suitable staff and their ongoing suitability whilst employed by the group.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They are eager to attend and participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. They settle eagerly to play areas, anticipating what they may be about to do each day. Children enjoy bringing parents, carers and grandparents into the setting showing them their play areas and telling staff what they play when at home showing confidence in their surroundings. Children are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff, participating in discussions and initiating conversations. Children and staff engage in discussions about a variety of topics, for example, planning their play and trips to the zoo or cinema during sessions, exploring the interest table and sharing their feelings about being sad because of something that happened at home. Their personal development and self-esteem are consistently promoted through sensitive support and interaction from experienced, caring staff.

Children show developing levels of independence as they choose resources and activities set out for them throughout the sessions. They have extensive opportunities to develop creative choices and have control over their own activities and independent learning. This is because

staff equip creative areas imaginatively fostering creativity through good resources and extending activities for able children. For example, the creation of tissue flowers developed into a detailed sketching activity for able children. Children are also recognised as individuals with different rates of development and interest. Children with little interest in mark-making or crafts are encouraged, through the provision of 'pencil toolkits', to move around the activities with writing for a purpose chosen by them and through large group craft structure-making such as space rockets in the role play area.

Assessment of children's progress is detailed and purposeful, staff are skilled in using a variety of methods. They ensure that assessments are always fed into planning so that all children are offered challenging opportunities and activities which are adapted to suit individuals needs. This helps to ensure that children are able to realise their full potential. All staff make good use of open questions, taking opportunities to extend children's learning through natural world activities. Examples are the exploration of the natural world where children have enjoyed walks to observe seasons, looking for frogs, snails and bugs, collecting items and returning them to their environment at the end of sessions.

Children settle quickly due to the staff's care, understanding and planning. They ensure that they have all necessary information about children, including their likes and dislikes. Early profiles, drawn from parental experience of children, assists both the separation process and the initial developmental support for children in their play. Younger children's learning and development is promoted because staff have a very good understanding of child development, staff have attended extended training for the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have worked out the practicalities of implementing this well. Assessment and developmental progress books are thorough and assist the ongoing support to children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and recognise how children learn most effectively. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing them, making use of the information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered. Methods include annotated general observations, specific target observations for all children, time-sampling and tracking, and large group activities with an aim.

Children show great enjoyment as they participate in the extensive, well-balanced range of activities. These include opportunities to engage in imaginative role play scenarios, exploration of natural substances, and a wide variety of crafts and construction. Children show skill in handling small tools and implements such as scissors, paint brushes and dough cutters and persist at activities showing satisfaction for their own end product. Children have access to free creative materials and enjoy large scale modelling such as railway engines, space rockets and role play areas over which they have control and are encouraged to decide what they need and how to create it.

Children are given numerous opportunities to explore language with support, for example when looking at and experiencing the snacks on offer and when exploring festivals or celebrations

including bonfire night. They extend and develop new language to describe what they are experiencing through their senses. They participate in negotiating turns with help and ask prolific questions gaining knowledge of their developing skill with language. Children enjoy stories and books and have opportunities to access books for enjoyment independently. There are opportunities for writing through planned activities and the accessibility of mark-making materials of all kinds is extended to offer all children opportunities to participate whenever and wherever they choose.

Children count confidently and access construction resources at all sessions encouraging them to build and create with blocks and other substances. For example, they compare and group objects by size, shape and colour, recognise patterns and symmetry, and recreate and design patterns with a variety of materials. However there is insufficient use made within daily activities and routines to develop children's calculation skills, and use of mathematical language and concepts. There needs to be an increase of the opportunities for children to use problem-solving on a daily basis.

Children are highly motivated and fully engaged in their play and activities. They demonstrate a growing appreciation of making relationships with others, for example, they show excitement and enjoy making jokes with each other. Children are gaining a comprehensive knowledge of their community and the wider world through the provision of a range of resources and innovative activities. They have opportunities to learn about the local environment through walks, shopping, and visits to nurseries and schools. Children are beginning to understand the concept of time, they discuss past and future events as well as making some prediction about the length of time remaining at sessions. Children have access to keyboards and calculators but the computer is used infrequently. Children do not yet have sufficient access to find out about the uses of everyday technology or use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning and this needs to be addressed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full and active part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of their local society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include taking part in celebrations such as Divali and St Georges day. Children explore the local community regularly, they visit the shops and post office to make use of local facilities making links with others in the community. Participation in realistic role-play such as 'Doctors and Hospitals' enables children to gain a clear, meaningful knowledge of these issues.

The provision fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Children's needs are well documented and met, and their welfare consistently promoted to a high standard because of staff's excellent relationship with parents and the quality information about the provision given. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. They are encouraged to think about each others feelings and readily discuss the 'courtesy tree' used by the group, which reflects on considerate behaviour. Children enjoy the 'happy helper' system and explain to each other what it means, they enjoy allowing others to take part in their role

and can be seen cooperating and sharing tasks. Their behaviour is generally good throughout the sessions as they take part in activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. However there are some inconsistencies of approach and children are not always enabled to self-manage as staff do not always follow the positive behaviour management policy. Children are able to feel secure as staff make efforts to understand significant events in their lives and anticipate the possible disruption these may bring.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this. Staff ensure that they work with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines. Children for whom English is not the first language receive appropriate support as staff work hard to establish working relationships with parents and extended family.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. There is a strong commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress through regular newsletters, consultation meetings with staff and open access to their children's files and assessment records. Specific play plans for all children are developed in partnership with parents and carers and reviewed regularly. Parents have opportunities to provide feedback to continue developing this aspect of care through questionnaires. The children's daily activity, with observations, is linked to progress and development. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the care provided by experienced and skilled staff. Their daily comfort and enjoyment is enhanced by the quality of organisation and the attention to all details relating to their care and well-being. Children's varying needs are consistently met and they are offered a broad, planned range of activities and a wealth of play opportunities. Topic webs are identified and adapted according to the children attending rather than rotating regular themes, this enables specific interests to be catered for and children become self-motivated learners. The well-organised environment means that children have good opportunities to develop the dispositions and attitudes that enable them to achieve in their learning.

Children's welfare and safety are promoted through the setting's clearly defined policies and procedures and the staff's practical knowledge and daily implementation of these. There is an excellent induction process for new staff, providing information and support. This continues through the staff assessment and appraisal system, which ensures that all training needs are identified and staff are able to work appropriately with all children.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the very good understanding that the play leaders have of their role and responsibilities. They ensure that they are aware of all regulations, carrying out research and reviews to implement any changes and carefully studying the implications of

these to both children and staff. For example adopting new clearance procedures easily and implementing the change to regulations regarding complaints and concerns into practice.

The play leaders act as excellent role models and staff are highly motivated, acquiring qualifications and regularly attending additional training. All daily pre-school sessions are very well planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the day. Staff pay attention to what children are doing and ensure that they are always given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks. Staff meet regularly to plan future work, and thereby ensure that the needs of individual children are met, the development of all children is promoted and the setting continues to provide high quality care. This is reflected in the assessment and achievements of children shown in their personal files.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to improve safety and supervision with regard to specified areas of the premises, to address aspects of documentation for registration and behaviour management, and to provide fresh drinking water.

Since that time they have extended risk assessments to include those identified areas, reassessed documentation to ensure accurate recording of attendance, and fitted alarms to exterior doors which has improved safety for children. They have reviewed the policy for behaviour management to further develop positive behaviour management. Fresh drinking water has been made available for children to support their awareness of managing their personal health.

At the last inspection for nursery education the provider was asked to organise the resources to allow for a greater independence and choice for children.

Since that time they have developed both access to creative resources, extended children's access to reading matter, and continued to expand interest tables offering children greater choice and access to facilities.

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):

- develop opportunities for children to understand personal health and take responsibility for their physical needs
- develop procedures to ensure that children are safe when participating in outings. Ensure that any vehicle used complies with regulations
- ensure that the statement on behaviour management is fully understood and followed by all staff to enable children to begin to self-manage their behaviour.

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):

- use daily activities and routines to develop children's counting skills and use of mathematical language and concepts. Increase the opportunities for children to use problem-solving on a daily basis
- improve opportunities for children to find out about the uses of every day technology, and use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their 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