



Great Wood Farm Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY102587
Inspection date	15 December 2006
Inspector	Janice Broddle / Katherine Powell
Setting Address	Greatwood Farm, Ponton Road, Boothby Pagnell, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG33 4DH
Telephone number	01476 585584
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Registered person	Kathryn Mary Spence & Julie Margaret Saxty
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?

Great Woods Farm Early Years Centre is a privately owned provision. It opened in 2002 and operates from a spacious portacabin in a rural setting on the outskirts of Boothby Pagnell, near Grantham. There is a large pre-school room with an adjoining quiet room which is used by the out of school club, along with separate rooms for babies, younger toddlers and older toddlers. It has its own small farm where children care for sheep and a pig. There are two safely enclosed outdoor play areas which enables younger children to safely play outdoors at the same time as those who are older. There is a separate playing field with football area for older children. Adjoining woodland is used for walks and nature studies.

The Centre is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00. It is open all year round, closing only for Bank Holidays and for one week between Christmas and New Year. A maximum of 60 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 96 children on roll. Of these, 17

children receive funding for early education. Children attending come from the local and surrounding rural area. There are no children currently attending who have learning difficulties or disabilities and none who speak English as an additional language.

The Centre employs 15 permanent staff who work with the children, of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. There are also an additional three staff employed on a temporary basis. The setting receives support from the early years support team from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and warm environment. Cleaning and hygiene routines along with arrangements for sleeping children and clear procedures relating to children's illness, help to minimise the risk of spreading infection. Good systems for recording accidents and medication records and well-stocked first aid boxes contribute to children's immediate safety and welfare. Most staff have completed first aid training which enables them to effectively deal with children's immediate health needs. There are good systems in place to meet children's individual health needs and changing routines due staff's effective liaison with parents and well considered availability of information.

Children have regular snacks and meals although not all children are able to access drinks outside of meal times which means they are not all able to respond appropriately to their health needs if they are thirsty. Meals are cooked on-site and mainly include fresh ingredients. The varied menu provides children with a variety of different foods and healthy eating is promoted through the provision of fruits and vegetables with most meals. Children with special dietary needs are catered for and babies have feeds in line with home routines and parents' wishes. Staff have a sound knowledge of food hygiene issues which ensures that meals are served at the correct temperatures to minimise the risk of contamination.

Babies have adequate space to move around and crawl to support their increasing physical skills and staff have a sound knowledge of their current routines so that they rest and sleep according to their individual needs. Toddlers enjoy planned physical activities indoors such as playing with quoits and tunnels. All children have regular access to fresh air and exercise and enjoy the physical challenges provided by the range of outdoor equipment. Pre-school children join in enthusiastically during group activities and enjoy playing games with a parachute. They learn to play co-operatively and to listen carefully to instructions. For example, they travel in different directions and follow 'traffic light' cards. They begin to understand the importance of warm up activities before engaging in physical activity and recognise changes which happen to their bodies when they are active. Children are developing good small hand skills through regular use of tools and resources such as construction toys, jigsaws and threading games. Children benefit from regular opportunities to engage in physical exercise both indoors and outdoors and plans clearly show how all aspects of physical development are promoted.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in a secure and welcoming environment. They use good quality toys and play equipment and staff implement sound checking procedures to ensure that they remain in good condition and safe for them to use. Children are cared for in groups according to their level of ability which helps to ensure that play materials are appropriate to their levels of development. Staff present toys so that children can access them safely and independently.

There are some good systems in place which help to support children's safety within the setting and appropriate procedures are in place so that staff can respond effectively in the event of an emergency or unplanned situation. Staff work in teams throughout the nursery, deploying themselves appropriately to ensure that they supervise children in all areas. The building is secure with systems in place to ensure that only known adults can collect children. Risk assessments are in place and most possible hazards have been identified and minimised. However, some possible dangers have been overlooked and daily visual safety checks are not fully effective in identifying possible risks. This means that children are exposed to possible dangers from uncovered electrical sockets in the entrance area, nettles in the garden and from scalding by hot drinks. Children are kept safe on outings and school runs due to clear procedures which are understood and effectively implemented by staff.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted because staff have a sound awareness and understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection. They are fully familiar with the setting's clear policies and procedures and the roles of identified staff. Good procedures and practices ensure that children are protected from adults who have not been vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in their environment. School-age children enjoy their time at the nursery and play co-operatively with one another. They freely select games and activities of interest and enthusiastically join in planned activities such as making Christmas decorations. They particularly enjoy outings and adventures to the local woods where they investigate and explore in the natural environment. Younger children are well supported by staff who demonstrate genuine care and affection for them. Staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are using this well to plan and provide a broad range of interesting activities to promote children's development. Children enjoy planned sessions such as investigating differences and similarities between each other, keeping balls and balloons on the parachute and exploring treasure boxes. Children are beginning to develop their independence as staff encourage self-help skills such as putting on and taking off their own coats for outdoor play, and shoes at sleep time. There are some opportunities for children to select their own resources during free play periods. Staff meet the individual needs of these children by enabling them to eat and sleep according to their own routines. They know the children well and are sensitive to their needs and feelings.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a solid understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn and they are very well supported by the pre-school leader. As a result, children take part in a range of stimulating and relevant activities that help them make good progress towards all the early learning goals. Regular observations and ongoing assessment enable staff to identify the next steps in children's learning and ensure children are sufficiently challenged. However, not all assessment records clearly show the progress that children are making along the stepping stones as they are not consistently completed by staff. Staff carry out baseline assessments when a child begins funding to identify what they already know and can do. As a result, staff are able to effectively build on children's previous knowledge and skills or clearly show the progress a child has made when they transfer to school. All areas of the curriculum are carefully woven into planned topics and the balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities ensures children have enough time to consolidate their learning in their own way and at their own pace. Children have access to a generally good range of play resources and equipment both indoors and outdoors which engage their interest and help to extend their experiences.

Children quickly become absorbed in activities and approach staff confidently for help. They are developing their independence skills by making choices about their play and learning and attending to their own personal needs, such as visiting the toilet and getting tissues to blow their noses. They show pride in their achievements and enjoy showing their finished work to others. They enjoy talking about themselves and their families, especially looking forward to special events such as their birthdays, the Christmas party and starting school. Children are developing their awareness of diversity and the beliefs of others through planned activities. All children spend time mark making and older and more able children form letters and write their own names independently. They listen with interest to stories and enjoy selecting books to read by themselves or share with an adult. Children handle books appropriately and are developing their awareness of reading conventions. Children are articulate and engage easily in conversation with others. They are developing a wide vocabulary and use language well to communicate their ideas. Children count accurately to at least 10 and some children are able to compare two numbers and identify which is larger or smaller. They are developing their awareness of addition and subtraction through practical activities and number rhymes and use a wide range of vocabulary to describe size, shape and position. Children have excellent opportunities to explore the outdoor area and nearby woods to observe the natural world and living things. They carefully watch the changes as plants and seeds grow in the garden and use their senses to describe different herbs. Children have very good opportunities to learn about life cycles and seasonal changes through observing and talking about what happens on the farm. Children have some opportunities to use a computer and they use a range of simple equipment, such as torches, battery operated toys and a tape recorder, to support their understanding of the uses of technology in everyday life. Children play co-operatively with others during role play activities and have opportunities to link these play experiences to their own lives, such as visiting the doctor or going to a shop. At the time of the inspection the role play area had been turned into Santa's grotto and the children took delight in wrapping up toys to deliver to the other children. They enjoy experimenting with musical instruments and join in enthusiastically during group singing times. Children develop their creative skills through a range of activities such as painting, play dough, collage and observational drawings. However, they are not able to access a wide range of tools and materials in the room which restricts their

ability to express their ideas freely and imaginatively and explore different techniques independently.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery as, through effective and ongoing communication with parents, staff have a good understanding of their individual needs. Their sense of belonging is encouraged through planned large group activities where, for example, they look at each other's similarities and differences. They are developing their awareness of the local rural surroundings through regular walks and exploration of the neighbouring woods. Most children are also beginning to develop an awareness of the wider world through the curriculum and the range of resources reflecting positive images of race, gender and disability. There are effective systems in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff create a calm environment, particularly for the younger children; they support them to share and take turns and children respond positively to praise and their reward stickers. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement from the staff which helps to promote their self-esteem. Staff give children clear and consistent boundaries so they are well supported to develop their understanding of right and wrong and, overall, children are generally well behaved.

Younger children settle well because staff work closely with parents to share information about routines such as feeding and sleeping patterns and use of comforters. Staff use daily diaries effectively to ensure they share information about children's routines and there are good systems for information to be kept up to date. Parents receive appropriate information about the setting, and their views are actively sought. Ongoing information is shared through informative notice boards, regular newsletters and open days. This contributes to consistency of care for children. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive Nursery Education funding is good and contributes positively to the well-being of these children. Children benefit from their parents being actively involved in their learning. For example, parents contribute artefacts linked to topic work and have access to activity plans within the setting. Staff suggest activities which parents can do at home with their child to further develop their learning and skills and send home reading books. Staff have developed some written information for parents in the nursery brochure about the Foundation Stage curriculum and they also talk to parents about the six areas of learning when their child starts to receive nursery funding. Although staff regularly share assessment records with parents to keep them informed about children's progress and development, they do not actively seek parents' views and observations of their child's learning at home. Consequently, parents have limited opportunities to contribute to their child's attainment records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's safety and well-being are promoted through comprehensive recruitment procedures, which ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and vetted. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities due to good support systems which include induction, regular

meetings, an appraisal system and their attendance at training. Effective organisation of staff offers stability to all children, particularly the very young ones and ensures that there is a good proportion of qualified and experienced staff working within each area. Staff work well together to ensure children are well supported and that ratios are maintained. All legally required documentation, which contributes to children's welfare, is in place and contains appropriate information. Children access a broad range of activities and staff make particularly good use of the large and well resourced outdoor space. The organisation of daily routines ensures that young children are cared for in line with their individual needs.

Leadership and management of nursery education are good. Staff work well together as a team to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and ensure children achieve well. Staff in the pre-school room are well supported by the owner and pre-school leader and all staff contribute to evaluating the provision and identifying areas for improvement. Effective systems are in place to monitor the provision, such as staff appraisal, accessing support from a teacher advisor and holding regular staff meetings. Staff are actively encouraged to undertake further training which supports them in developing knowledge and skills appropriate to their roles. Appropriate planning and assessment systems have been implemented ensuring all aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently covered. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, one recommendation was raised relating to care. This was to obtain written permission from parents prior to administering any medicines. A new recording system has since been introduced which clearly indicates written parental consent along with details of the administration of the medication and a parental signature to acknowledge the entry. This ensures children's immediate health needs are met.

Nursery Education

At the last nursery education inspection one point for consideration was raised with regard to further developing the evaluation system to demonstrate the outcome of learning objectives and identify the next steps in learning for more and less able children.

Staff evaluate all adult-led and focussed activities to fully identify if learning objectives are achieved with individual children. This enables staff to plan effectively for the next steps in children's learning and ensure children are appropriately challenged and supported according to their individual needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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

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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):

- ensure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- develop the risk assessments to ensure that socket covers in the main entrance area, the nettles in the pre-school play area and hot drinks do not present risks to children.

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):

- improve opportunities for children to freely access a wide range of resources and tools to express themselves creatively and imaginatively
- improve opportunities for parents to contribute their observations of their child's learning and development and ensure all attainment records clearly identify the progress that children are making along the stepping stones.

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