

Great Totham Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	404897
Inspection date	02 October 2007
Inspector	Lynn Amelia Hartigan

Setting Address	Great Totham Village Hall, Colchester Road, Great Totham, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8ED
Telephone number	07960947931 or 01621 891064
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Registered person	Great Totham Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 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 Totham Nursery is managed by a committee and a manager. It opened in 2000 and operates from a large village hall in Great Totham, near Maldon. The nursery is open five days a week during term time. Morning sessions are from 09.45 until 12.15 Monday to Friday, offering a lunch club until 13.45 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 13.15 on Tuesday and Thursday. Afternoon sessions are from 13.30 until 16.00 on a Tuesday and Thursday.

There are currently 64 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 48 receive funding for early education. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery currently employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well as staff follow their sound and consistent procedures. Children are beginning to learn how to stay healthy and about their own personal hygiene as they are encouraged to independently use the bathroom. They are provided with bright potties, steps and toilet seats, and a prompt poster to remind them to wash their hands. Staff are always at hand to assist. A satisfactory nappy changing procedure is in place and would ensure the children are protected from cross-infection. Children's accidents are minimised as staff complete daily risk assessments. Most of the staff hold current first aid certificates and are trained to administer specific medication if required. Good policies supporting their practice are in place.

Children have their dietary needs met and increase their understanding of healthy living as the staff educate them about healthy choices. They are appropriately nourished and have opportunities to learn about healthy eating through the snacks provided and themed activities. The nursery are beginning to offer healthy snacks and provide children with regular drinks. The nursery offer a successful rolling snack time and children are able to decide when they want to eat. They select their name from the self-registration butterfly, so staff can monitor who has eaten. Children are reminded to wash their hands. They enjoy buttering their toast and some pour their own drinks with skill. Parents are informed by the weekly snack menu as to what the snack is and are aware that the nursery are promoting healthy choices. Parents are also encouraged to provide healthy choices within the children's lunch boxes. Lunch club is popular, children are not rushed and are able to finish their lunch at their own pace.

Children appear to have good spatial awareness and move around indoors safely and carefully. They play in one large hall. They occasionally have the opportunity to free-flow from indoors and outdoors, vigilant staff ensuring that children's safety is maintained. Children's physical health is supported with regard to large motor development, as a varied range of opportunities are provided for children to develop their large physical skills. For example, a small climbing apparatus and slide is available daily within the hall; children learn to balance and climb, supervised well by staff. Bikes and scooters are available both indoors and out. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise most days and have fun playing outdoors with hoops, footballs and bean bags. They enjoy the parachute indoors. Children handle tools, such as scissors, safely and with some skill. They understand scissors must be used with care. These are also available within the dough to assist children with their cutting skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm welcoming environment that is safe and well maintained as the staff ensure the premises are welcoming to both children and their parents. There is limited space for notice boards within the main playroom, however a notice area within the entrance is used to ensure parents have access to information regarding the running of the nursery. Staff display the children's art work with skill, using the limited space to create a welcoming environment.

Children have access to one large playroom. Some free-flow in and out of the room into the outdoor play area provided, mainly during the warmer weather. There are cosy and defined areas, such as a book corner and imaginative play areas, within the main hall. Children are kept

safe as the staff ensure all visitors provide identification documents and use a visitors book and badge. A secure front door is locked once parents have left and is monitored by several staff members on arrival and departure. This ensures the premises remain secure.

Children use a balanced range of safe and suitable equipment. Some resources are stored at a low level, promoting children's independence and enabling them to self-select toys. The resources are of a good quality and well maintained, and there is a broad range available to the children to assist their play and learning. The staff are committed in providing safe and secure play space for children, this is achieved by vigilant management of children. All staff are aware of their roles and where they should be deployed. A daily staff meeting before children arrive confirms the staff roles for the day, staff support each other well and as a result the sessions run smoothly. Children are safeguarded from harm and children's well being is cared for as all staff are aware of their responsibilities towards child protection. A written policy in place underpins their practice, however this contains minor inaccuracies and needs reviewing to ensure they are up to date with current practice. The children's safety is given priority and the management are fully aware of their responsibilities to ensure all staff are suitably vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children appear busy, happy and confident. They ask lots of questions and respond to new challenges by questioning and using their own initiative. Staff management of new children attending for the first day ensures they are managed well, enabling them to settle quickly. All staff are sensitive to their needs and caring. Children's individual needs are met well as the staff are informed following consultation with their parents. They complete an 'All about me' booklet before they start nursery, giving staff lots of details regarding their likes and dislikes.

Children are able to make choices from a good range of resources available to them and ask for toys that they cannot access independently. For example, children requiring a push chair for their doll are provided for promptly by a member of staff. Some well organised and attractive activities are prepared ready for the children's arrival. Children settle quickly to their chosen activity. Children enjoy focus activities, such as copying numbers and letters, within their key worker and 'rising 5's' books.

A doctors surgery set up within the imaginative play area is well used. Staff sit with the children and explain what the different instruments are for and how they would be used, nurses outfits are provided. A reception area where appointments are made and a waiting room invite children to chat and make early attempts at mark-making. Staff are able to support young children well. Planning takes into account the under three's and is beginning to be implemented effectively.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The nursery introduces a sound and a number each week and children bring items into the nursery from home relating to the sound. Group times assist in developing communication skills, for example, children are encouraged to share experiences and are interactive at story time, predicting the endings of stories. Children can independently use the computer but staff are on hand to assist as required at these sessions.

Children are developing competencies well across the four aspects of communication and literacy. Staff ask appropriate questions to encourage the children to think, such as 'what does the rice feel like' within the tray of rice provided, and 'what happens when it is cooked' children

speak confidently in response. They enjoy singing favourite songs that use simple math subtraction and addition. Children are able to recognise numerals and put them in sequence, they count to ten and beyond and even younger children are very competent in their math work, sorting and comparing. They measure using large scales and the rice, and they learn about weight in their cooking activities.

Planning for funded children is good. Staff are able to discuss the children's stage of development with you. Short term plans have evaluation and are mostly linked to assessment. The children's achievements are monitored through adult-focused activities and written observations relate to the areas of learning. These are then plotted on their stepping stones stepped documents. All aspects of each area of learning are planned for and are covered regularly; differentiation is considered and recorded.

Children enjoy messy activities, such as string painting using black and white paint and several types of string. Children's creativity is encouraged and supported well as staff offer a wide range of experiences, such as dough and cutting, and dressing up using many props including hats and bags. A good range of musical instruments are also regularly available. Children move around indoors very carefully. They play in one large room and are able to negotiate space well. They are able occasionally to free-flow from indoors and outdoors. Children's physical health is supported with regard to large motor development as opportunities are provided for children to develop their large physical skills. Children enjoy being outdoors, playing football, playing with hoops and catching and throwing bean bags and balls.

Children handle tools, such as scissors and malleable materials, effectively, safely and with control. They are offered a wide range of materials for creative play. Children cooperate well together when tidying up, making a construction model together or inventing a game of police officers and prisoners.

Some visitors to the nursery enrich the children's learning and experiences. Some traditional days and festivals are acknowledged, such as Christmas, where the children proudly act out the nativity, and Chinese New Year. Some resources provided support their learning and understanding of a diverse world. Children experience some opportunity to grow plants, or go for nature walks collecting leaves for their collage work. They do not have many opportunities to spontaneously explore, observe or discover for themselves, as outdoor play is limited and activities indoors, although of good quality are also limited regarding knowledge and understanding of the world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are effective in helping children make a positive contribution and children are developing good relationships with the staff and other children in the setting. It is evident that the staff work closely with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are fully included in the life of the nursery. Children develop a sense of belonging, they work well with others and make choices and decisions. This contributes to children developing self-esteem and respect for others. For example, children negotiate with each other when using the climbing frame, deciding to use it as a prison or police station, they discuss and agree who will be the prisoner and who is the police officer.

Children are able to access some resources that are in place, such as small world figures of different cultures, disabilities and there are some books and traditional dressing up clothes

that reflect a diverse community and help children learn and understand about individuality. Children learn about some traditional days, such as Mothers Day, and festivals, such as Diwali, as these are included within the curriculum planning.

Children's needs are supported as the staff follow their written policy regarding special needs. The nursery special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has completed SENCO training and has experience working with children who require additional support. Planning of the days activities ensures inclusion. All children are able to participate in all the activities.

Children understand responsible behaviour and learn about boundaries as staff are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour. Staff deal with behaviour consistently that is proportionate to the child's level of understanding and maturity. The staff create an environment that encourages children to behave well. Every member of staff speaks calmly, quietly and with respect to the children. For example, children who persistently use the slide the wrong way are reminded calmly that it is dangerous to walk up the slide. Staff suggest a better way and children are then praised when using the equipment properly. A well written policy is shared and understood by all staff and available to parents. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others by learning social skills, such as helping each other to dress up or tidy away. Staff encourage children to participate and discuss what they have been doing. They sit patiently and listen whilst their friends explain what they have bought from home to put in the 'sound box'.

Parents are given clear information in a variety of formats which include newsletters, topic sheets and verbally. Children receive good care and are supported well as the staff ensure the parents are informed regarding their day at nursery. All the staff members are friendly and approachable and discussions with parents suggest they are very pleased with the nursery, all feedback was very positive.

Children settle well as an effective settling in process is in place. Several new children staying for the first time appeared happy and occupied. Anxious children returning after a break are comforted and soon engage in the activities. Comforters are encouraged if this will assist the children. A complaints policy and file is in place for parents and displayed on the notice board. This has been reviewed to include accurately the revision within the standards, however, there are some inaccuracies within the main body of the policy that will need addressing and has not been updated.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with some good information about all aspects of their children's learning. The Foundation Stage, stepping stones and 'Birth to three matters' framework are mentioned within the prospectus, and some information is displayed within the entrance for parents. The main themes are detailed and activities are displayed on a notice board, and parents are welcome to view the planning that is made available daily. Some suggestions of how parents could support their children at home are made and this continues to develop as the staff try new approaches.

Staff discuss the children's development on an informal basis daily and a good key worker system is now in place. All parents speak positively about the setting and how their children are developing and learning well. Staff talk about how to encourage more links between nursery and parents, to support the children's learning as this is an area for development. Staff are able to offer sensitive suggestions to parents on how to facilitate learning at home. An open week is planned annually, where parents can visit, speak to their child's key worker and experience the activities provided for their child.

Social, moral spiritual and cultural development is fostered as children are settled well including new arrivals, content and comfortable with each other. Children are beginning to learn about other countries and people's beliefs through festivals and some positive images provided in resources and displays challenge the children's thinking. Children clearly know the difference from what is right and wrong and their behaviour is generally very good as the staff are good role models and clearly value all children and their individuality.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Nursery children benefit from a manager and a staff team who offer stability and consistency. There have been changes within the staff in the past year but all staff members are committed in providing quality care and endeavour to keep up to date with current practice through training. They are a strong team who support each other well.

Children are cared for by qualified staff. Satisfactory procedures are in place with regard to recruitment, and vetting. An induction programme is in place for students but not available for staff. Attention is given to the deployment of staff at all sessions and it is evident that staff are fully aware of what is expected from them, they clearly support each other which contributes to the smooth running of the sessions. Every morning after set up, the team sit down to run through the expectations of the session and confirmation of everyone's duties. All staff demonstrate a good standard of professionalism at all times, are friendly and approachable. Maintained attendance records are in place detailing the arrival and departure times of children. Appropriate documents, as required, are all in place. The operational plan has now recently been sectioned into the 'outcomes for children' and most policies and procedures are under review. The operational plan is offered to the parents.

Leadership and management is good. The manager is hands on and is very much part of the team. Three new members of staff have joined the team, including the deputy, and the manager has worked hard to ensure the staff feel valued, part of a team and support each other so that these changes have not impacted on the children. This has been a priority for the manager as she endeavours to provide consistent care for the children. Along with her staff, the manager attends workshops and training courses to ensure they are able to provide the children with a good standard of care. The manager is committed to ensure staff can attend training and provides opportunities and supports for staff, such as a mentor system. An effective appraisal system is in place, staff training needs and personal development are discussed formally at these meetings. Regular staff meetings and meetings with the committee are held and minutes taken. Staff are involved and consulted with regard to changes and suggestions made.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to review the hand washing procedure. Children are able to independently access the bathroom to wash their hands; soap, steps and paper towels are provided. In addition, baby wipes are also used before and after snack time. The provider was also asked to ensure planning detailed a clear indication of children's individual learning and provided challenge. Also, to ensure opportunities for outdoor activities and outings were included within the plans. Planning records now detail the next stages of learning for children and provides some challenge. The provider and her staff visited local nurseries to observe their planning, attended training and cluster groups, and have implemented a new

assessment model to ensure progression and development for all children. The nursery incorporate some play and activities outdoors into the planning and have increased numbers of staff to help facilitate spontaneous play outdoors.

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 complaint 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):

- ensure policies are reviewed and updated regularly (this refers to complaints, staff induction and child protection)

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to observe, explore and discover their local environment. Provide regular activities outdoors throughout the year.

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