

The Gateway Nursery and Gateway After School and Holiday Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292405
Inspection date	07 September 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Gateway Centre, Perry Road, Harlow, Essex, CM18 7NR
Telephone number	01279 630341
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Registered person	Gateway Christian Fellowship
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 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?

The Gateway Children's Centre is a project of the Gateway Christian Fellowship and comprises a nursery and after school and holiday club. The nursery opened in 2004 and the out of school club in 2005. They operate from purpose built accommodation within the Gateway Centre in Harlow. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 50 weeks a year. Children share access to a secure outdoor play area. The out of school care is open every weekday from 15.00 to 18.00 during term time and from 08.00 to 18.00 during school holidays.

A maximum of 62 children may attend the nursery at any one time and 32 children the out of school care. Currently there are 61 children on roll in the nursery and of these 22 receive funding for nursery education. The centre supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 21 staff employed in the nursery and seven in the out of school care. The majority of staff hold relevant qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well as the nursery and out of school club have appropriate medical procedures in place. Staff request information from parents about children's medical needs. They provide information on exclusion periods for infectious illnesses so as to protect children from infection. Children in the nursery rest or sleep according to their needs to help prevent them from becoming overtired. All children are well taken care of in the event of an accident because staff are qualified in first aid and ensure they have good access to first aid equipment. Records of accidents and administration of medication are well maintained in the nursery. However, staff in the out of school club do not have easy access to a recording system. In the event of parents not being given the appropriate information children's health may be put at risk.

Staff are very attentive to matters of hygiene and ensure that children are cared for in a clean environment. Staff in the nursery have strict guidelines for cleaning, washing and changing children's nappies. Children are aware of the need to wash their hands when necessary. Children in the out of school club wash their hands altogether before meals. The nursery children benefit from particularly child-friendly toilets which encourage them to wash their hands after using the toilet and prior to eating. This awareness of good hygiene contributes to keeping children healthy.

Children are offered a variety of healthy and balanced meals. These are well balanced and offer a variety of choice for children in the out of school club. Children have an increasing awareness of a healthy lifestyle because the menus include a selection of fruits, vegetables and appetising meals. Children with special diets have their needs met well as all staff, including the chef, are made aware of their needs. Children enjoy the social aspect of mealtimes and this helps them to develop social skills. There is good access to drinking water throughout the day in order to prevent children from becoming dehydrated. Overall, children are well nourished.

Children enjoy very good opportunities for physical activity. The nursery has its own well-equipped outdoor play area and children enjoy exploring a range of resources, such as a slide, balancing beam and collection of balls. Staff join them in play, helping them to develop confidence and physical skills. Children have opportunities to extend these skills in play sessions in the large hall. In the out of school club children particularly enjoy the frequent visits to the local park where they can practise their skills on the play equipment or in organised ball games. Overall, children keep fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in rooms which are spacious and have adequate furniture and resources. These are made welcoming with displays of children's work, pictures and notices. The outdoor play area is especially attractive with plants, mobiles and decorative artwork. Children's safety and security is promoted adequately through having various safety measures in place. Regular risk assessments and daily safety checks are carried out by staff. The centre building is secure and the entry doors to the nursery and out of school club are kept locked. Children do not have access to kitchen areas or storage cupboards. However, nursery children have access to the laundry room for nappy changing and the use of potties. As this room is uncomfortably hot at

times, and contains washing equipment, it poses a potential risk to children with regard to their health and safety.

There are good fire precautions in place in the centre. Children practise an evacuation plan so that they know what to do in the event of an emergency. On outings children are very well supervised and there are strict procedures in place to ensure their safety. Nursery children often take walks in the local area and staff maintain high ratios, making use of safety restraints if necessary. Children in the out of school club walk in pairs when visiting the local park, with staff in close attendance counting and checking at various points. Staff have written procedures in place for collecting children from local schools, including vehicle checks and details of which children are to be collected. Their adherence to these procedures helps to keep children safe at all times.

Children are developing an awareness of personal safety. They are reminded how to play safely and to keep safe when crossing roads. At the centre, they use a variety of safe and suitable resources. These are stored so as to be easily accessible to staff and are checked for safety on a regular basis. All toys, games and books are well maintained and interesting for children. These are organised so as to be easily accessible so that children can choose independently. However, in some areas of the nursery, there is too much clutter and this limits children's ability to access resources freely and safely.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. There are effective procedures in place for logging any concerns and staff know who to refer these to within the centre. There is good access to published information which enables staff to seek advice if necessary. Children are only allowed to leave the centre with a known adult. Therefore, children are well protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children show interest in the resources and activities on offer and play happily. Children in the nursery enjoy the involvement of staff as they explore toys, or share books, and this helps them to develop self-confidence. They have opportunities to choose independently and to take part in group activities, such as singing favourite songs. Staff organise activities which support children in their development and learning. They use the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively in planning a range of activities which meet children's needs. They take into account what children enjoy, and what they can achieve, in planning their next steps of learning. Observation records are kept for each child and these are particularly attractive and useful as they link clearly to the 'Birth to three' outcomes.

The planned programme offers nursery children good opportunities to learn to express themselves and explore different objects and materials. Babies especially enjoy treasure baskets and older ones have fun with materials, such as shredded paper and compost. Children learn to use their senses as they explore and staff take every opportunity to promote learning through play. For example, they ask questions, model writing and encourage counting. Children are beginning to use their imagination as they explore mark-making and painting or play with toy animals. They show great delight as they explore paint in different ways, for instance, feeling, brushing and squeezing. Their self-esteem is boosted through much praise from staff. Overall, they have good opportunities for a wide range of learning experiences.

Children in the out of school club are confident and like to choose for themselves, for instance, a model making activity or computer game. They respond positively to staff's suggestions and develop good relationships with each other. They benefit from staff's interaction as they talk with children and support them in their play. However, staff do not always provide a welcoming environment with activities on offer from the outset. Children sometimes have to wait and are not able to settle down immediately to an activity. This has an impact on their ability to make choices independently. Staff help children to develop literacy and numeracy skills in self-chosen activities and assess their development socially, emotionally and intellectually according to set criteria. During the holidays children enjoy extra activities, such as dance lessons and special trips.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide a very stimulating learning environment for children and this encourages them to choose activities within all six areas of learning. The written plans are based around themes and show how activities can be differentiated in order to support and extend children in their learning. Various adult-led activities are planned and evaluated which helps staff to continually meet children's needs. However, staff do not always make full use of the written planning in order to engage and extend children in a range of activities and situations. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is assessed by making detailed observations of their learning and collecting examples of their work. This system is effective in helping staff to work out children's' next steps of learning and thereby guide future planning.

Staff ensure that children have opportunities to learn in a relaxed and fun way. They use group times effectively to reinforce learning, for instance, counting together and discussing ideas. They join with children in play, engaging them in conversation and asking questions to encourage children to think. They follow up children's own interests, for example, joining them in the writing corner to help develop new skills. Creative activities are well organised, allowing children to try things out for themselves within a specific learning situation. Children show much interest in the various activities on offer. They often become engrossed in purposeful play and concentrate well on chosen tasks. As a result they are gaining confidence and independence.

Children have good opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. They explore mark-making using different tools and learn new vocabulary in conversation with staff, for example, the names of various colours. They have an increasing awareness of the sounds and shapes of letters and simple words. When copying words and numbers they build up confidence and control in writing. They are encouraged to count often and learn to match and sort objects, such as coloured bears. In modelling and collage activities, they compare shapes and sizes. Children enjoy the opportunity to express their own ideas creatively using a range of resources. They enjoy role play, music and dancing. Staff encourage children to explore their immediate environment. Children learn to look closely at natural objects, such as shells and record their observations. They make good use of a computer to support their learning in all areas. Overall, children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included in the setting. Children in the nursery are encouraged to develop close friendships and value others' contributions. In the out of school club children get on well with each other, and also with staff, and a happy atmosphere prevails. Children are

helped to develop a sense of belonging through particular attention being paid to settling in. In the nursery and out of school club they get together in groups at various times during the day. Staff are aware of the individual needs of the children and offer them good support. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to develop appropriate skills through a system of key worker support, liaison with other professionals and the setting of targets for individual development.

Children's behaviour is very good and they play harmoniously throughout the setting. They learn to share, and take turns, and respond positively to staff. Issues are dealt with calmly and in a consistent manner. In this way children learn to respect others and negotiate solutions. They are aware of their boundaries as the rules are made clear, children in out of school care being asked to agree to these. There is a Christian ethos within the setting and children are aware of the principles by which staff work. They learn about other cultures and faiths through using resources which reflect diversity and taking part in activities based on various celebrations.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work closely with parents and carers and the ensuing partnership is of benefit to children. Parents are well informed about policies and procedures. They receive daily feedback when collecting children, either verbally, or in the form of a feedback sheet for very young children. There is useful information available on the notice board in the nursery concerning aspects of childcare. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with news of events and workshops. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive funding for nursery education is good. They are provided with detailed information about the Foundation Stage of learning. The written planning is on display and parents are asked to contribute to the topics if possible. They exchange information about their children's progress at regular consultations and this enables them to become more involved in their children's learning while at nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The centre's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote all outcomes for children. The policies are readily available and clear, covering every area of practice. Parents complete registration forms and provide the necessary consents which enable staff to offer appropriate care. The attendance registers are well maintained. Staff ensure confidentiality and all information on children is kept in a secure place. The documentation provides a good framework for childcare in both the nursery and out of school club.

Staff are committed to the ongoing improvement of the provision. There are good induction and appraisal systems in place and staff are encouraged to attend training courses. Staff have attended courses in various areas since the last inspection, including special needs, health and safety, and food hygiene. They have a high regard for the well-being of all children and demonstrate a caring attitude, maintaining good adult child ratios and close supervision. Staff in the nursery follow daily routines and are deployed effectively in each room. They are aware of their responsibilities, although do not always use available space to good effect which results in a cluttered environment. This has an impact on children's freedom of movement and safety within the nursery.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager oversees the system of planning and assessment and is keen to involve staff more in the planning of the programme. Staff's lack of involvement at present has an impact on their ability to use the written planning successfully. The manager meets with staff to monitor the overall programme through discussion. She is aware of areas requiring development, for example, the written planning has recently been altered so that it is more manageable. She has many plans for future development, for instance, an outdoor play project and phonics scheme. Her leadership contributes towards providing an interesting and productive learning environment for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the nursery was asked to update its complaints procedure and to continue the development of their outdoor area. The complaints procedure has been updated appropriately. The outdoor area has been further developed and now provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment for children. The nursery's response has contributed to an improvement in the outcomes for all children.

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 have procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and to keep a record of complaints and their outcome.

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 that parents of children in the out of school club receive written information concerning accidents and administration of medication
- provide a more welcoming environment with a choice of activities for children in the out of school club
- review access to the laundry room in the nursery with respect to children's health and safety
- ensure that children are able to move freely and safely in all areas of the nursery.

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):

- involve all members of staff in the planning of the programme in order that they can engage and extend children more effectively.

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