

Greenacres Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219970
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Inspector	Susan Marriott
Setting Address	Puxley, Potterspury, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 7QS
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Registered person	Margaret Mary Hales
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?

Greenacres Day Nursery opened in 1990 and is privately owned. It operates from a converted bungalow situated in the hamlet of Puxley, near Potterspury, in South Northamptonshire. The nursery serves a wide area.

The nursery opens between 08.00 and 18.00, five days a week all year round except for Bank Holidays and a short break between Christmas and New Year. The nursery is registered to provide care for 27 children aged from birth to under five years. There are currently 41 children on roll and of these, 12 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and is able to support those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 10 staff who work with the children and this includes the owner and her manager. Of these, eight hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives input from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff mostly follow effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection and the premises are maintained in a properly clean state. Tables are regularly sprayed with anti-bacterial spray and the toilets are kept clean and hygienic. However, occasional minor lapses in good practice potentially put children at risk from cross contamination. For example, staff do not always wash their hands between handling soiled tissues and serving food to children. Children receive appropriate treatment in medical emergency because most staff hold current and suitable first aid qualifications and the first aid box is accessible and suitably stocked. Staff conscientiously record all accidents and include the relevant details to protect children's welfare.

Children learn about germs and healthy living through the daily routines because staff remember to promote discussion about the reasons for hand washing. For example, children are encouraged to wash the paint off their hands and are copiously praised for achieving success. Children are able to rest in a comfy book corner, suitably furnished with cushions. Babies are wrapped up warmly and sleep in prams in an outdoor covered area, monitored every 15 minutes by staff.

Children benefit from healthy meals and snacks, cooked on the premises using ingredients free from preservatives and additives. The snack rota is displayed for parents information and includes plenty of fruit. Snack time is being used to good effect as a learning time for children, promoting social skills and increasing development of independence. For example, children learn to wait until everyone at the table has their meal in front of them before beginning to eat and they feed themselves using age-appropriate cutlery, demonstrating competent hand-eye co-ordination. Children do not become thirsty whilst playing because they can ask for an extra drink at any time by pointing to the jug of water and cups.

All the children enjoy daily indoor and outdoor activities which enables them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills through a generally appropriate level of challenge. Children get outside in the fresh air on most days and relish their time in the garden. A vast range of outdoor play equipment provides opportunities for children to climb and balance. Children use the fixed activity frames, bikes, tricycles, rockers and cars. Young children demonstrate a noticeable ability to cope with the varying surfaces, slopes and changes of level as they manoeuvre their toys around the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept very safe in the nursery because staff give excellent priority to security issues. Children's safe arrival and departure is particularly well-monitored and children are very well-supervised at all times. Staff record fire evacuation procedures and carry out drills with suitable frequency to ensure the safety of the children. Staff monitor visitors to the setting by keeping a visitors book. Relevant risk assessments are completed on a daily basis and the garden is thoroughly checked before use. Children have a clear understanding of the areas to which they do not have access without an accompanying adult. For example, they know not to go into the craft room until instructed to do so. Children learn to keep themselves safe in the

setting because staff give good explanations as to why, for example, it is necessary walk rather than run in the playroom.

Children are warmly welcomed and well-cared for in a pleasant, suitably safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. The staff maximise the use of the rural location of the nursery, ensuring children get out in the fresh air every morning and afternoon. The staff have put up posters and pictures to make the rooms attractive for children and there are bright displays of children's work which enhance the environment. Resources are clearly labelled and staff work hard to ensure that children can access resources in the playrooms easily and independently.

Children's welfare is properly safeguarded because they are protected by vigilant and caring, informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Most staff have received suitable training in this field and relevant and current reference information is readily accessible. Information about safeguarding children is shared with parents via the notice board in the entrance hall.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their play and learning because staff are confident, enthusiastic and skilled in their child care practice. Staff provide a broad range of worthwhile activities, both indoor and outdoor, which engage children throughout the nursery in the learning process. Children actively participate in the purposeful activities and clearly enjoy the busy atmosphere. Children feed themselves and manage their own coats competently, but their developing independence is not consistently fostered by some staff, who can be occasionally overly attentive. For example, children are not encouraged to wipe their own noses or to serve themselves at snack or meal times. Children have clear routines to their sessions and follow set procedures for certain activities which help them feel secure. For example, children know that they will sit and listen to a story or have rhyme and song time after meals. Planning and assessment documentation for the two to three-year-olds, known as 'Little Bears', refers to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and shows how the setting takes general heed of the guidance when working with children under the age of three years. Staff provide positive role models for children and give sensitive support to all children. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff, who encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition as they support play. Staff get to know the children very well and skilfully adapt their level of language and questioning to reflect each child's stage of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have a competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a varied programme of play-based activities which provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. Children are happy and settle quickly in the gentle and nurturing environment. They generally display high levels of involvement and gain a sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem through planned and spontaneously chosen activities. Older and more able children maintain their interest in the activities due to the skilful intervention of staff who re-direct their learning appropriately. Staff work together as a very effective and committed team deploying themselves to support children's learning with general sensitivity and respect.

Planning builds appropriately on the Foundation Stage guidance for the children aged three and four years, known as 'Big Bears'. Plans are based upon evaluation of the children's interests. For example, staff observations show that children are asking questions about why the leaves are changing colour and why the leaves are falling off the trees. Therefore the staff decide to look at 'Autumn' and base the forthcoming weekly activities upon this topic. Staff find that because plans are based upon the children's current interests, they are more motivated to learn. Stepping stones are selected and provide learning intentions under the six areas of learning for the week's activities. However, staff do not refer to the full range of stepping stones as they work. The setting is not using the stepping stones in an appropriate way to secure and progress the learning of some children in a consistent manner. There is little differentiation on the planning sheets to address the needs of children who may learn at different rates. This means that children may not always access the appropriate stepping stones which reflect their current stage of development and ability. Conscientious observations of children's learning are made and written monthly. However, there is no coherent assessment system which tracks children's progress through the stepping stones. Examples of work are dated and provide evidence for assessment. Staff evaluate activities effectively and use this information to monitor the quality of the provision. It is not clear that assessment is fully effective in securing children's progression in learning and informing the next steps in the learning programme. The potential impact of weaknesses in the planning and assessment systems on the children is currently minimised by the efficient, practical teaching skills exhibited by the staff team.

Staff use clear and skilled teaching techniques which they confidently adapt to suit the various ages of children at this setting. Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play. Snack time is a generally positive and effective learning time for the children. They learn good manners and courtesy. However, staff miss some opportunities to develop children's independence. For example, through allowing the older children to pour their own drinks or serve their friends with snack. A range of strategies are employed by staff to utilise snack time as a purposeful learning experience.

Appropriate emphasis is given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Children enjoy a wide range of songs and rhymes which support their awareness of language. Staff read lots of stories during the day and the children listen attentively. Children share books with their friends and benefit from being split into age-related groups at some story times. Children learn about numbers, use mathematical language and solve simple problems. For example, children count the diminishing number of fingers held up to represent 'Five little leaves'. Children learn about basic information technology and use the computer to play games with staff. A wide range of construction toys enables children to build and fix pieces together, improving manual dexterity. Children enjoy a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities to promote physical development. They explore paint and print, using their own ideas to create their own pictures and enjoy messy, 'sensorial' play with shaving foam and gloop. Children begin to use imagination playing alongside others in role play situations. Staff extend ideas as needed, model roles they might use, ensure all can join in and that children share resources fairly.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. Children develop their understanding and appreciation of others through simple planned activities that promote a greater awareness of the wider world. Children participate in art and craft activities connected with celebrations

and taste cultural foods. Children who have varying needs receive excellent support. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail. Any special requirements or information are discussed and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. Children's learning difficulties and disabilities are recognised and met sensitively. Children who may have learning difficulties receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision. Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Children are well-behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff and any adverse behaviour is corrected using positive language. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work really hard to develop a positive partnership with parents to support children's progress in learning. Extensive information is available for parents on a daily basis, because the hallway is used extremely well to display a wealth of information. Staff try to encourage a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. Parents are warmly welcomed into the provision and are well-supported by staff during the settling-in process through induction sessions. Staff encourage parents to share information about their children and they are able to see their child's records and regularly contribute to them if they wish. When working well, this arrangement of two-way sharing benefits the child and enhances their learning. This underpins their progress in the nursery and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The established and experienced staff team are well-supported by the owner who oversees the management of the nursery and this safeguards and promotes children's care and welfare. The owner and manager work alongside their staff team and therefore have a 'hands on approach' to every aspect of the nursery operation. Registration systems record the attendance of children and staff to secure their safety. Generous adult to child ratios positively support children's care, learning and play during the bulk of the day. However, records do not clearly demonstrate that these preferential ratios are sustained at the start and the end of the day.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The staff team are well-qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. They are actively involved in planning and decision-making and contribute to the continuous monitoring of the setting through self-evaluation and reflection in line with 'Every Child Matters'. Staff follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children. Staff demonstrate a genuine affinity with children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Documentation is mostly clear and generally accessible. Staff clearly and confidently speak about their procedures to follow in the event of a range of scenarios. Planning and assessment systems continue to evolve, and increasingly secure and progress children's learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation was raised at the last inspection of day care. The nursery was asked to ensure that the child protection procedures are shared with parents. These are now clearly displayed opposite the entrance door in clear view for parents and ensure that parents are

suitably informed about the procedures. The action taken by the nursery has satisfactorily addressed the issue raised and improved the welfare of children.

At the last inspection of nursery education, there were no significant weaknesses to report, but the nursery was asked to give consideration to three aspects of practice. These included the improvement of differentiation within planning documentation; the recording of the information received from parents about their child's progress and achievements and minor amendments to the staff appraisal system. Differentiation on planning continues to be unclear and a recommendation is raised following this inspection to ensure that children can access a suitable range of stepping stones. The nursery continues to develop the staff appraisal system to identify the professional development needs of the staff. Staff are encouraged to attend training courses to update their skills which means that children are cared for by adults who are well-informed and knowledgeable. Information from home is sought from parents at the time of enrolment and positively contributes towards a baseline assessment. Parents are invited to continue to add their own observations to the records to support children's progress and learning. The actions taken have improved the quality and standards of nursery education.

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

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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 staff follow good hygiene practice in order to prevent the spread of infection
- ensure a consistent approach to developing children's independence and self-care skills
- demonstrate that required adult to child ratios are met at all times.

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 planning systems, using the stepping stones in an appropriate way to secure and progress the learning of all children in a consistent manner

- develop assessment systems to ensure that children are consistently assessed and their progress through the stepping stones is tracked effectively. Use the information gained from assessment to identify the next steps in children's learning.

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