

Gwendolen House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY272177
Inspection date	05 February 2008
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	39 Gwendolen Avenue, Putney, London, SW15 6EP
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Registered person	Gwendolen House Nursery School Limited
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Gwendolen House Nursery is run by a private limited company. It opened in 2004 and operates from seven main rooms in a converted house in Putney, London. A maximum of 69 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday throughout the year and offers full day care and sessional care within the core opening times of 07:30 to 19:00. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 96 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the local area and commuters. It is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 42 members of staff. Of these, 37 hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical development is well promoted as they are offered a wide variety of activities. The thoughtful planning of the outdoor area means that they are able to develop control of their bodies and improve skills such as co-ordination, control and balance as they run, climb, swing and jump on the static equipment. They also enjoy regular structured sessions such as ballet, yoga, music and movement and action rhymes. Children are also offered good opportunities to develop finer skills and physical movements through their involvement in a creative range of activities. For example, they sort and select buttons, place small craft items and select and manipulate small construction pieces.

Children's health is consistently promoted because there are good daily hygiene procedures in place which minimise the spread of infection. For example, staff wear appropriate protective clothing when changing nappies and when serving snacks and meals. Children are gaining a thorough understanding of the relevance of good personal hygiene and the importance of healthy lifestyles as they participate in discussions and associated topic work. Their health in an emergency situation is promoted because the majority of staff members hold appropriate first aid qualifications. The spread of infection is further minimised because there is clear guidance regarding action to be taken should a child become ill whilst at the setting and also covering the exclusion of children who are unwell. This area is further supported because all staff receive health and hygiene training and basic first aid training.

Children's health and development is further promoted as they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. These are prepared daily on the premises, using fresh organic ingredients wherever possible. Menus are displayed for parents to see and show that children are offered a balanced range of all food types. Snack and meal times provide additional learning opportunities, where children are able to gain valuable social skills. They help set the table, sit in small groups, serve their drinks and help clear away. However, their independence is not consistently promoted as they are not fully involved in all routines, such as serving their food. Allergies and special diets are clearly recorded and staff ensure that children are only offered the correct food and drinks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure, welcoming environment. There are colourful displays of their work and resources are appealingly arranged and easily accessible, helping children to feel valued and comfortable. Their safety is prioritised and staff carry out daily safety checks to identify potential hazards, taking appropriate steps to minimise these. This helps to ensure that children are able to play and move around safely, freely and independently. Comprehensive staff induction and training and the daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety. For example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised regularly to enable children to become familiar with the routine. This area is further supported by additional safety information and the regular checking of all safety appliances.

Children are gaining a good understanding about keeping themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff to enable them to understand this area, for example, they

understand why it is important to take turns when using equipment. Children have access to a wide range of toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. These are well-organised, accessible and clearly labelled so that children are able to make choices about their play. Children's welfare is well promoted because staff have attended additional training and have a good understanding of issues regarding safeguarding children. They have ensured that they have up-to-date information regarding current procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns. This area is further supported by a wealth of additional information for staff to refer to.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and secure. They separate well from their parents and carers at the beginning of the sessions and eagerly explore the resources and activities. They are able to feel valued and welcome at the setting because staff show them that they genuinely appreciate their company. For example, they readily join in with children's play and conversations and take time to get to know each child. This promotes a positive and caring environment, where children can play confidently and are consistently offered appropriate support.

Babies and new children settle well and quickly build secure relationships with staff. This is enhanced because staff ensure that they have details of children's normal routines, aiming to observe to these as much as possible. Thoughtful daily planning and a thorough understanding of child development ensure that children are encouraged in taking the next developmental step. For example, young children are gently encouraged to sit independently, to stand and to begin to walk. Children are able to participate in all activities because they are well-supported by staff. For example, a small group of young children laugh and giggle as they join in with the chorus and actions to a story, ably supported by two additional staff members.

Children's individual development is promoted and they are consistently offered appropriate activities because staff know them well and make good use of daily observations and assessments to inform activity planning. This area is further supported because weekly planning is very flexible and is adjusted to include additional activities to promote children's current individual needs and development. Weekly planning is also adapted to include a plan for each child, ensuring their balanced development in all areas. Children's development is further promoted because staff are skilled in extending their play and learning. For example, staff members participating in a hospital role play scenario encourage children to 'write' prescriptions and details of symptoms, extending this role play to include discussions about the various emergency services and how to call these.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children have an excellent attitude to learning and are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. Their overall development is consistently promoted because staff have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, utilising this in all planning and assessments. The highly appropriate praise and support offered by staff ensures that children's confidence is sensitively nurtured throughout their time at the setting. This in turn enables children to respond to new activities and challenges with curiosity, interest and enthusiasm.

Children show great enjoyment as they participate in the extensive, well-balanced range of activities and play opportunities. An exceptionally flexible, child-centred approach to planning

ensures that children are able to learn at their own pace. This is further enhanced and children feel valued and respected because they are able to play an active role in the planning of activities. For example, they provide feedback through formal questionnaires and simple daily evaluations of activities and routines. These are then used to directly inform the planning of future activities and the review of daily routines and procedures.

Children's knowledge and learning are consistently extended because staff are exceptionally skilled in their ongoing evaluation of activities, using these evaluations to provide thoughtful and inspiring extensions to activities. For example, when covering a topic related to patterns, staff introduced Kandinsky's 'Counter-Gravitation'. Children thoroughly enjoyed studying this illustration and produced creative commentary on their personal interpretations of this.

The setting offers children excellent opportunities to develop the attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. For example, children show high levels of independence as they competently choose their activities throughout the day. The excellent teaching methods, thorough staff training and thoughtful provision of stimulating resources ensure that children's natural curiosity is promoted and they eagerly explore, experiment and contribute to activities and discussions. For example, children exploring in the nature house eagerly describe different types of frogs, using magnifying glasses to examine model frogs and describe the differences. They are highly motivated by this activity and are inspired to find other creatures and research these further, using the available reference books and posters. Children have a strong sense of self and are skilled in expressing themselves. They have covered topic work on 'feelings' and have made their own displays, describing feelings such as happy, sad, shy and angry.

Children interact exceptionally well with others, listening carefully and taking turns in conversations. They fully understand that print carries meaning, showing a great interest in stories and books. For example, they enjoy listening to stories and re-telling them, often producing their own illustrations. They also enjoy making their own books and have written scripts for their nativity plays. Children confidently use writing for a range of purposes and understand that it can be used as a form of communication. For example, they have made their own labels for different areas of the room and resources. Children show an excellent awareness of mathematical concepts and are able to use skills such as problem-solving on a daily basis. For example, when additional children join a table, they work out how many more pens and pieces of paper are needed. They naturally incorporate mathematical language and concepts into their daily play. For example, when painting a picture of the nursery, children represented each room with a window, calculating how many staff worked in each room and producing a tally sheet to record this and calculate the total number of staff.

The thoughtful, detailed attention paid to activity planning and the environment mean that children have daily opportunities to observe, explore, question, and be curious in an extensive range of activities that form the foundation of their later learning in subjects such as history, geography, science and technology. They are positively encouraged to explore their environment and enthusiastically describe the flowers and vegetables they have grown and the different types of hens kept at the setting. Children are extremely confident in the use of information and communication technology equipment, understanding its uses and handling it with care. For example, they are able to choose computer programmes, complete these and print out their work.

Children participate in an extensive range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills. For example, they enjoy regular music and movement sessions, ballet

classes and yoga sessions. Excellent planning and presentation of activities ensures that children have fun but are also able to learn new skills and concepts. For example, they learn about spatial awareness through practical exercises and discussions. They are developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and a growing awareness of how it can help them to stay healthy. For example, during yoga sessions they discuss the importance of exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They are also gaining an excellent understanding of the role of a healthy diet, discussing this at mealtimes and during cookery sessions and participating in associated topic work.

Children enjoy numerous creative opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form, for example, through activities such as large-scale junk modelling, making displays, still life painting and exploring substances such as corn flour, oats and foam. They express themselves creatively in discussions, role play and activities. For example, they write scripts for their own plays and often act out songs and stories.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued as individuals and are consistently offered a wealth of opportunities. They are offered appropriate support from skilled, caring staff, ensuring that all children are able to participate meaningfully and develop to their full potential. Children have a high self-esteem because their views are respected and they play a full and active part in the setting. For example, they are encouraged to participate in activity planning through their evaluations of daily routines and activities. This area is further enhanced by staff's excellent understanding of the concept of equality of opportunity. This ensures that they are able to work fairly with all children and promote their overall development and learning.

Children demonstrate a mature understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is exceptional. They competently and confidently choose their activities and organise turn-taking and sharing. They are polite and kind, showing genuine care and concern for each other. For example, they readily apologise when they accidentally bump into each other. Staff demonstrate excellent skills in managing children's behaviour. They always offer relevant explanations so that children are able to understand their behaviour and begin to take responsibility for this. This area is further enhanced as children have participated in setting the ground rules, making books and displays to illustrate these. Staff act as excellent role models, remaining calm and showing equal concern and attention to all. Children observe this behaviour and mirror it in their daily play and interactions, creating a calm yet busy environment.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are offered a creative range of play opportunities and activities which promote their understanding of both the local community and of the wider diversities of society. They have daily access to a vast array of toys and resources which give positive images and information about other cultures and ways of life. These include reference books, play figures, posters, dressing-up clothes, maps and globes. They are gaining an excellent and realistic awareness of differences and other cultures as staff present these issues in a meaningful way. For example, they involve children's families in presenting information about their countries and cultures; children thoroughly enjoy these sessions where they learn key words, songs and dances, dress up and taste traditional foods. Children also enjoy learning other languages and often sing songs and rhymes in languages such as French and Polish.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs clearly identified and met and there are highly appropriate procedures and plans to ensure that their development is always promoted. Staff are skilled and experienced, working sensitively with children, parents and other professionals to ensure that appropriate care is consistently offered. High staff ratios and excellent organisation ensure that children are very well supported and are able to participate in all activities, play opportunities and daily routines.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The nursery provides comprehensive information on all practical issues. This ensures that parents are fully aware of all policies and procedures, enabling them to feel confident in the setting, and in turn, passing this confidence on to their children. Excellent use is made of notice boards throughout the setting. These display a wealth of information on a wide range of topics. There is also comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage and the Early Years Foundation Stage, clearly showing how these link with children's play and development. This is further supported because parents are given written weekly activity plans for their child.

Parents are offered sensitive, practical support that extends to a range of issues. For example, the setting organises training in paediatric first aid, dietary information sessions and presentations about children moving on to school. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's activities and progress through monthly newsletters, daily discussions with staff, updated notice boards in each room, parents' evenings and written reports. The continuous review of this area ensures that parents are provided with an accurate picture of their child's progress and the routines of the setting. This is further supported by regular meetings between staff and the 'Parent Nursery Association', ensuring that parents views are sought and are an active part of the review process.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, children's needs are met. They benefit daily from the care provided by well-supported, dedicated and highly-skilled staff. Their enjoyment of their time at the setting is significantly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and the thoughtful attention paid to all details relating to their comfort, development and well-being. Their ongoing safety and welfare are consistently promoted through the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures. These are continuously reviewed and are individual to the setting, fully supporting and enhancing their excellent childcare practice. This area is further supported by a highly supportive staff induction procedure which ensures that all staff are fully aware of the setting's procedures and are able to work appropriately with children at all times.

Children are offered an extensive range of activities and play opportunities and their varying needs are consistently met due to the excellent organisation of space. This ensures that children are able to move safely and independently from one area to another, confidently initiating their own play and learning. Base rooms are exceptionally well planned in order to ensure that they are stimulating and to positively encourage children to explore the resources whilst still being able to concentrate on their chosen activities. For example, children are able to sit comfortably and quietly to read, undisturbed by other children involved in more active pursuits such as crafts or construction activities. The excellent organisation of the outdoor play area means that children are offered a wealth of additional activities and play opportunities. This area is well laid out with static resources such as seating areas, climbing apparatus and a nature house. Continuously changing resources, such as painting easels, ride-on toys and sand and water play, further enhance the opportunities offered in this area.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The registered person, manager and senior staff are fully committed to ensuring that children receive the highest quality of care and education. The setting's capacity to improve is very strong and they are always striving to improve the service and their practice. They have an excellent attitude to self-evaluation, gaining feedback from a number of sources. This is used to formulate plans for further improvements. A 'Good Practice Workbook' has been produced and this is a true working document, with action plans that are constantly reviewed. Staff are actively encouraged to evaluate their daily practice and assess all activities and routines. This ensures that activity planning always takes full account of children's diverse individual needs and learning patterns.

The setting's excellent commitment to staff training and support means that staff feel valued, are up-to-date with current practice and can provide consistent and appropriate care for all children. The registered person and manager act as excellent role models, passing on their genuine enthusiasm for their daily work with children. This creates an exceptionally positive environment in which children feel secure, valued and motivated to play and learn.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the setting was asked to ensure that first floor windows are safe. New safety catches have now been fitted, thus promoting children's safety. They were also asked to ensure that the systems for recording medication, accidents and incidents include all relevant detail and signatures, the procedure for uncollected children is clarified and updated child protection procedures are obtained. All records have been reviewed and now contain relevant information and are signed by staff and parents. The procedure for uncollected children has also been reviewed and contains appropriate information. Details of current procedures regarding safeguarding children are in place. These measures further promote children's welfare, health and safety.

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 outstanding.

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):

- continue to develop opportunities to promote children's independence.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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