

# Great Wood Farm Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY102587  
**Inspection date** 05/02/2011  
**Inspector** Margaret Barnsley

**Setting address** Greatwood Farm, Ponton Road, Boothby Pagnell,  
Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG33 4DH  
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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## Description of the setting

Greatwood Farm Early Years Centre is privately owned and opened in 2002. It operates from a spacious porta cabin in a rural, farm and woodland setting on the outskirts of the village. There is a large pre-school room with an adjoining quiet room and separate rooms for the toddlers and babies. The out of school club uses another porta cabin. The early years centre serves the surrounding rural area and provides ample car parking. The two large gardens for outdoor play and farmland and woodland walks for nature studies and organised activities. The centre also provides Forest School facilities for children in addition to their nursery environment.

The centre is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to provide care for 78 children under eight years. There are currently 139 children on roll of whom 96 are in the early years age group and 41 are receiving nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The centre represents children with special educational needs, learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens daily throughout the year. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm.

The centre have 17 members of staff, with various levels of early years qualifications. Three of these have achieved Early Years Professional Status.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This is a highly stimulating, warm and welcoming environment. The innovative use of space and resources and the expertise of the staff enable children to make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. Children are fully safeguarded through robust procedures. Dynamic and effective partnerships promote an integrated, exceptional approach to children's care and learning. The high aspirations of the staff translate effectively into a well targeted and continuous improvement plan.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- progressing the introduction of the new home environment for babies by completing the sleep room and including their dining area in this development.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the staff at all levels, all of whom receive regular training on safeguarding. Exemplary practices and procedures are in place to safeguard children. For example, robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures help to ensure the suitability of the staff and safeguarding policies are followed to the highest standards. The setting is also securely maintained, with potential hazards identified and minimised through meticulously detailed risk assessment procedures. The organisation of the premises is exceptional and creates a safe and innovative environment of awe and wonder where children learn through nature and extensive outdoor activities. Staff are extremely attentive to the needs of all children and provide them with vigilant, yet highly sensitive, supervision where children learn to assess risk and take responsibility for their safety through the choices they make. As a result, children develop an excellent understanding of safety.

Managers have high aspirations for quality through ongoing improvement and a strong commitment to equality and diversity. They are highly successful in inspiring the staff team to work towards sustaining ambitious targets. All staff are highly qualified and they continue to develop their knowledge through their exceptional commitment to ongoing training and development. They have high standards, which are embedded across all areas of practice. Morale is very high and belief in the setting's success runs through all levels. Rigorous and extensive monitoring, analysis and self-challenge enable the setting to devise exceptionally well targeted plans. Self evaluation is highly reflective and this supports continuous improvements that staff, children and parents have been involved in developing and taking forward. Actions taken by the setting are implemented with precision and managed thoroughly.

Since the last inspection, the recommendations that were raised have been successfully met. Further to this, significant developments have taken place to both the indoor and outdoor environments. Some work is still taking place with the area that the babies use. To date the lounge has been completed and the bedroom is in the process of being decorated with finishing touches, such as lights and photographs. The dining room had not been considered in this plan, however, it has been recognised that improving the resources in this area will contribute to improved social learning and add to the quality of providing a home-from-home environment for very young children. Changes have been made to many areas of practice and monitoring systems, including the introduction of new teaching initiatives and observation systems, which impact positively on the outcomes for children and fully promote equality of opportunity. The high calibre of staff with their diverse skills and expertise significantly contributes to the rapid progress children make in this nursery. As a result, outcomes in children's achievement and well-being for all children are extremely high.

All children's needs are exceptionally well met through highly effective partnerships between staff, parents and their children, other settings that children attend and external agencies. The excellent partnership working that takes place and the well

established channels of communication ensure all persons who are involved with children contribute to their full range of experiences so that every child receives high levels of support at an early age. Their transition from home to nursery, as they move through the nursery and then finally on to school is fully prepared for by staff so that children and parents are supported and know what to expect. Staff have an exceptional knowledge about each child's background and needs. All staff gain excellent information from parents and carers, which enable children to make very rapid progress from their specific starting points. Excellent systems are in place to keep parents up-to-date with their children's progress and development and parents are also actively encouraged to contribute to their children's observation and rigorous assessment records. Parents are actively involved in this nursery and attend many functions that include speakers about focussed topics, fun days, such as, Easter egg hunts in the forest, digging and planting days and frequent parent evenings. The promotion of equality and diversity is at the heart of all work in the setting and the aspirations are understood and acted upon by all of the staff team. They focus fully on each child's individual needs and uniqueness and recognise parents as their child's primary educator, whose contribution is vital to the success of how well children learn and develop.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

This is a highly stimulating and welcoming environment, which fully reflects children's backgrounds and the wider community. The exceptional organisation of activities through meaningful observations and individualised planning reflect rich and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of children very well. Highly effective monitoring of children's progress ensures that any gaps in their learning are identified at an early stage and acted on. Staff have expert knowledge of the learning and development requirements and are extremely highly qualified and well trained. Three staff have achieved Early Years Professional Status. They have and a full understanding of how young children learn and develop at every stage and are extremely skilled at engaging them so that they are active participants in all that they do. All areas of learning are covered extremely well in many different ways, which consolidates learning for each child in ways that best suit their individual needs and preferred learning styles. Children are confident communicators, proficient with technology and excellent problem solvers. Significant focus is placed on learning in the outdoor environment through nature and through the provision of a wide range of natural resources that children use in innovative ways. The outdoor environment is a hive of industry for all age groups and is organised with the greatest attention to detail. Relationships are excellent and the effective teaching strategies and warm interaction from staff ensure that children feel valued, safe and secure with the adults who care for them. Children's behaviour is exemplary because staff ensure that they have a consistent routine each day, which enables them to develop a strong sense of belonging. Children know what is expected of them, what is going to happen and when it is going to happen. This enables them to contribute extremely well to their day as they organise their play and make choices and decisions.

This is a rich, vibrant learning environment where children thrive and make rapid

progress towards the early learning goals in all age groups. The nursery is on a farm, with open fields, large woods and farm animals, such as, a pig, sheep, lambs and hens. Children help with the animals and bottle feed the lambs and collect eggs from the hens. They have a great affection for Bubbles the pig and he, in turn, really enjoys their company and is very friendly. Children grow and harvest vegetables, which are used in their home-cooked meals and they have recently planted an orchard along with help from their parents and staff. Indoors and outdoors are resourced extremely well and organised in ways that enable children to make choices and learn through their own interests. Children especially enjoy the outdoors where they have limitless opportunities to enjoy themselves and engage in meaningful and memorable experiences. Children are outside for most of their time through their own choice and the learning that takes place is exceptional. Two outdoor areas are available, one for the babies and toddlers and another for the preschool children and older children. Both are equipped to an excellent standard and provide children with the same opportunities for exploration in their play, but with differences taken into account for their stages of development and safety. For example, the preschool children have a large trampoline with safety netting and the toddlers have a large trampoline that has been set into a sunken pit so that they can bounce safely at ground level. Children all have Wellington boots and rain suits and the nursery has spare clothing available because the focus at this setting is for children to explore the natural world without inhibitions. They have appropriate clothing to do this and if children get muddy or wet it does not matter. Children enjoy mud and stick painting on large rolls of paper. They like dropping rocks, that are used to weight the paper, into large buckets of water and letting it splash up all over them. They climb and swing from apparatus using ropes, they make dens out of crates and camouflage netting and they particularly enjoy using natural resources to blend and stir together in the 'potion-making' stations, which are dotted around the setting. Children play in the extremely well resourced outdoor classroom and large playhouse and they pedal and steer the large 'Go Karts' around the track with precision. The nursery has developed their forest into a Forest School setting and has a highly qualified Forest School expert on their staff team. She brings magic to children's learning and promotes their all round learning to the most exceptional standard. Before children set off for the forest the staff go alone and do a full safety check and take the daily drinking water up to the shelter. Children are then responsible for loading up their trolley with their provisions and walking up to the forest where they have a meeting about what is going to take place. Children have quests and missions to achieve, such as, being archaeologists and looking for footprints and bones that staff have hidden for them to dig for. They make dens and grottos with sticks, branches and twine when they role play fairies and goblins. Staff hide toy owls in the trees and other toys in the bushes. Children have to work out how to get the owl out of the tree. The staff have set the scene for an ongoing tale about Eric the dinosaur who lives in their office and keeps escaping up to the forest. They tell the children that Eric has got out of the window again and children go on a search and rescue mission looking for Eric. Deeper into the forest children have a second base camp where they have tree stumps positioned around an open fire pit. This area has tarpaulin over it, which can be rolled back in fine weather or opened up and attached to stakes in wet weather, making a second wet shelter. Children have made a brick and clay oven and they bake their own cakes in it which they cook inside scooped out oranges.

They sit around the fire pit and cook pots of food over the grates. Children learn to whittle sticks with knives and have made musical instruments and mobiles from natural woodland resources. Children bring things of interest back from their woodland experiences and have wonderful nature tables around the nursery. They use reference books extremely well in their studies and they have a seasonal learning tree in the garden on which hangs all kinds of photos and literature about that current season. During the inspection, the children went on a nature trail to look for certain spring objects which were on their laminated topic sheets. They had a story and discussion first about the seasons to prepare them and their contributions to this were extremely positive. They asked relevant questions and were very capable at working out the answers between themselves. They used marker pens well to tick off an object when they found it and they really enjoyed the competition of who could find things first. Children knew exactly what to do and where to look for things. They turned over tree stumps to look underneath for ladybirds and beetles. They listened quietly for birds singing and they looked very carefully on the path and at the edges of the path for wild flowers that were on their sheet. Children learn exceptionally well about sustainability and recycling. They visit the recycling centre in town and bring back all manner of things to use for crafts and for a problem solving activities. Staff ask them to work in groups and set them challenges which they have to solve using only the available materials. Children learn about history and the wider community when they visit a nearby derelict manor house and learn how people used to live. They go to the Victorian centre where they dress up in Victorian costumes and learn how different life was then. The children in this setting are extremely articulate, mature and knowledgeable children. They are exceptionally happy and eager children who have a love of learning that is to be commended. The staff in this setting not only have exceptional knowledge, skills and ability, but they bring learning to life for children because they remember what it is like to be a child and how important it is to make learning a magical experience.

Children's health and well-being is promoted extremely well. All children show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines. They show an excellent understanding of healthy eating and enjoy a wide range of home-cooked, nutritious meals and snacks. Children have innovative opportunities to engage in many different physical activities, both indoors and outdoors and they gain an excellent understanding of the importance of regular exercise and a positive disposition towards this as part of a healthy lifestyle. Children have ownership of their health and well-being and demonstrate that they are well informed about healthy living. Babies and very young children are extremely content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met to an exceptional standard. The high quality staff interaction and exemplarily organisation of routines help babies and children to gain an exceptionally strong sense of security. Staff follow their home routines until such time as these naturally start to change. The close consultation with parents that subsequently takes place as children's developing and changing needs emerge ensure that children have consistency and continuity with their care needs. Children show an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour are expected and apply these in order to keep themselves and others safe. They use a wide range of tools and equipment safely and show respect towards their resources, staff and each other. Children are responsive to staff and receptive to

new ideas. They listen well and understand that actions have consequences. They show a mature response to taking responsibility about their own and other's safety. Children are very well equipped when they leave this setting with the skills they need to move on to a school environment.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met