



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 101783

DfES Number: 596864

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 19/05/2004
Inspector Name Pamela Edna Friling

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Gardners Lane Early Years Centre
Setting Address Gardners Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 9JW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Gloucestershire County Council

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Gloucestershire County Council
Address Shire Hall, Westgate Street
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 2TG

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Gardners Lane Early Years Centre is attached to Gardners Lane Primary School, which is located in a residential area of Cheltenham. It has achieved national recognition as a Centre of Early Excellence. The centre serves the local community.

The centre is funded and managed by Gloucestershire County Council Education Department and has 93 children on roll. It operates during school terms for pre-school care and education, and during the school holidays for family play schemes. The centre offers a range of integrated services for families and children. These include crèche facilities, pre-nursery and nursery education, special needs support, training opportunities, advice, education and support for families, drop-in play sessions, developmental assessment, home-based support and family holiday play schemes.

The registration covers the Crèche, Tiny Tots, Family Work and Nursery Groups. These groups cater for children from birth to five years of age. All groups have their own base rooms with toilet and changing facilities but also have shared use of the dining room, soft play room and outdoor areas. The Crèche offers care for children whilst their carers attend courses at the centre. The Family Work Group runs for one day each week and offers activities aimed at encouraging the personal, social and emotional development of the small group of children who attend. Tiny Tots offers care for pre-nursery children whilst the Nursery offers pre-school education to children aged 2-years-9-months to 5 years. Funded education places are available for children aged 3 and 4 years of age and at present there are 37 3-year-olds and 41 4-year-olds in receipt of funding. Support is available for 23 children with special educational needs and for 6 children with English as an additional language.

The centre employs 36 staff. All key personnel hold early years teaching, learning support or social work qualifications at level 3 or above.

How good is the Day Care?

Gardners Lane Early Years Centre provides good quality care for the children who attend.

The detailed operational plan works well in practice and is regularly reviewed. All changes are shared with parents and staff.

The premises provide excellent accommodation which is safe, secure, bright and welcoming for parents, children and staff. Toys and equipment are very good quality, clean and well maintained. They are stored in clearly labelled, easily accessible, boxes to encourage children to develop independent skills as they choose and tidy away their activities. Sleep facilities for children are limited.

The staff are well trained, motivated and experienced. They plan and evaluate a wide range of stimulating activities and experiences for the children to encourage their all round development. Children are observed and assessed, as they play, to ensure future plans extend and reinforce skills. Staff use age-appropriate strategies to promote the good behaviour of the children. Children behave well and are involved in deciding what behaviour is acceptable. They form good relationships with the staff who offer praise and encouragement at every opportunity. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual special needs and support them well as they join in all activities.

Partnership with parents is excellent. They are provided with good quality information about the setting and services available to them and have an active voice in policy decisions. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress through daily opportunities to discuss progress with their child's key worker as well as through more formal meetings and written progress reports.

Documentation meets the requirements of registration. Records are easily accessible but stored securely to protect confidentiality. The centre has clear procedures for informing the local authority of significant events but is less systematic in keeping Ofsted informed.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- The operational plan is clear and detailed.
- Staff are well trained and enthusiastic. They are deployed effectively to support and supervise children as they play. They plan and evaluate a good range of activities during which children are observed and assessed systematically and the results used to target children for reinforcement or extension of skills.
- Partnership with parents is excellent. They are well informed regarding their child's progress, and take an active role in the centre.
- The premises are excellent. They are safe and secure and provide a bright, cheerful environment. Space is well used and the wide range of good quality, clean and well-maintained toys and equipment are clearly labelled to encourage children to choose and tidy away activities.

- Staff use effective strategies to promote the good behaviour of the children.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

Partnership with parents is outstanding. The centre keeps parents very well informed regarding their children's progress and activities and courses available on the premises. Parental views about how the centre runs, and what it offers, are highly valued. Parents have opportunities to attend courses run by the centre which are designed to enhance their parenting skills and extend their understanding of child development and education.

What needs to be improved?

- sleep facilities for all children
- procedure for ensuring Ofsted is informed of all significant matters.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
1	Ensure Ofsted is informed of all significant matters.
5	Further develop sleep facilities for all children.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Children attending Gardners Lane Early Years Centre are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

Teaching is very good and staff support the children effectively as they play and learn. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the stepping stones and provide a broad and balanced range of activities, with clear learning objectives, to motivate all children. Staff know the children well and use this knowledge to ensure they are all challenged to build on what they know. Written observations clearly identify next steps of learning for all children.

Children are encouraged to be independent and have easy access to resources. Staff allow time and space for children to develop their own ideas in role play, music and art-and-craft. Children have appropriate resources to practise emerging writing and mathematical skills as they play. They use computers confidently to support their learning. Children learn about the world around them as they observe nature as part of their topic about 'Growing'. Children have free access to play activities indoors and outside. Planned further development of the outdoor area will enhance daily opportunities for children to develop climbing skills.

Leadership and management of the centre is very good. There is close co-operation between the staff team with clearly defined roles. The centre uses effective measures to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their educational provision. All are committed to maintaining the high standards that they have attained.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are provided with clear information that allows them to be involved with their child's education and aware of progress made. They share information with the school before their child begins through home visits and completion of an information form regarding their child's likes, dislikes and abilities. They also contribute to ongoing assessment through discussion and information slips.

What is being done well?

- The centre is organised effectively and has a strong, knowledgeable staff team who teach and assess the children well.
- Children are motivated and enthusiastic. They form good relationships with both staff and each other showing care, helpfulness, good behaviour and manners.
- Children have well-developed, self-help skills demonstrated as they choose activities and take care of their personal needs.
- The children communicate confidently using their language to explain discuss and organise their play. Children's language and thinking is extended through

Careful questioning by staff.

- Children show clear understanding of shape, size and position. Opportunities within the daily routine and planned group activities, such as the fishing game, are well utilised to encourage practise of counting skills.
- Children investigate, explore and record findings through well-planned topics provided by staff. The children observe change in tadpoles and the growth of sunflowers.
- Children use information technology effectively and independently to support their learning.

What needs to be improved?

- further extend opportunities for children to develop climbing skills.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Progress since the last inspection has been very good. The centre was asked to include desirable learning outcomes on daily plans, provide children with further opportunities to recognise and write their own names and to provide activities to help children to associate sounds with patterns in rhymes and with syllables in words.

Planning now has clear learning objectives linked to the stepping stones and divided into the six areas of learning. Planning also shows differences for different ages and abilities and ensures individual children build on prior knowledge.

Children have many opportunities to recognise their names as part of daily routines, such as snack time and clearly labelled displays. They are encouraged to attempt to write their names on pictures and art work and in different media such as sand.

Children's knowledge of letter sounds is developing through appropriate computer programmes, familiar rhymes and effective staff questioning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested and motivated. They settle quickly to familiar daily routines. They are able to sit quietly and patiently during whole group activities. Children are encouraged to make decisions and choices regarding their activities. They are independent as they manage their own needs, assist with daily routines and help others. They share resources very well as they play and show persistence for their chosen tasks. Children behave well and interact well with staff and each other.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Staff provide many opportunities for children to communicate and express themselves. Children in the centre use language well as they discuss, describe and talk about what they are doing. They are encouraged, through careful open-ended questioning, to think and problem solve. Writing skills are developing well with many opportunities to consolidate emerging skills as they play in imaginative scenarios such as the shop and garden centre. Children use books well for both stories and reference.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Staff utilise opportunities very well for the children to count and perform simple practical calculations during daily routines such as snack time and planned group activities. Children join in enthusiastically with number rhymes and songs. They recognise shapes, position, size and quantity with increasing confidence. Children practise their developing understanding as they play. Staff encourage mathematical thinking through careful questioning about number, position and shape.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy many opportunities to explore, investigate and observe through well-planned and resourced topics such as 'Growing' where the children monitors the growth of tadpoles and sunflowers. Children are confident designers as they select and join easily accessible resources. Children control the computer confidently as they 'open', 'run' and 'close' appropriate programmes to support their learning. They are developing a good understanding of other cultures and disabilities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move carefully and competently. Staff provide daily access to a range of large and small equipment to support children's physical development. Climbing skills are less well supported at present. Children manoeuvre wheeled toys with control as they negotiate obstacle courses. Control of tools and small equipment is developing well with easy access to resources that encourage practise of skills such as construction and pencil control. Understanding of healthy eating is encouraged.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use their imagination very well. Staff support learning with excellent questioning and resources to extend ideas during child-initiated play in the 'vegetable shop', 'garden centre' and 'home corner'. Children use their creativity well when combining play dough with natural resources to produce models. Children sing simple songs from memory and are able to match appropriate actions to the words. They explore music independently as they play with instruments in the outdoor area.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to the following:
- further extend opportunities for children to develop climbing skills.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.