

Garden House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY421648
Inspection date	15/09/2011
Inspector	Hazel Meadows
Setting address	18a St. Nicholas Street, IPSWICH, IP1 1TJ
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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

Garden House Nursery School was established in 1995 as one of three nurseries privately owned and managed by GHNS Ltd. In 2009 it became an individual company, privately owned by one of the directors. It is situated in the town centre of Ipswich, Suffolk. The nursery operates from three main rooms on the ground and first floors of a rented, listed building. The rooms are on varying levels and there are many steps, therefore, the premises are not fully accessible. Children have access to an enclosed courtyard area for outdoor play.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 50 children, aged from birth to eight years of age, of whom, not more than 24 may be under two years of age, may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 71 children on roll, of whom, 66 are in the early years age range. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. The setting also offers out of school care for children aged five to eight years old, who have previously attended the nursery.

The group is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am until 6pm for 51 weeks of the year, closing on all Bank Holidays and for one week at Christmas. Children can attend for a variety of sessions and come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs a nursery manager plus 13 staff, all of whom, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is qualified to level six and one to level five, who is also enrolled on the Early Years degree. The manager and the majority of the other staff are trained to level three. The group receives support from local authority advisory staff.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Children settle well at the nursery and are generally making good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Committed and competent staff work well as a team and establish positive partnerships with parents and others, ensuring children receive consistent and inclusive care. Comprehensive documentation and procedures mostly work well in practice to ensure children's welfare and ongoing self-evaluation promotes improvement and quality in most areas. However, the specific legal requirements for adult to child ratios are not always maintained, which has a detrimental effect on the safety and welfare of the children.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure that at least the minimum requirements for adult to child ratios, set out in Appendix 2 of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, are maintained at all times. (Suitable People)
With immediate effect 15/09/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the risk assessments to ensure that any potential hazards to children are identified and swiftly rectified (this relates to folders on top heavy shelving, chemicals in low level cupboard and detached hinge guard).

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

At certain times of the day the required adult to child ratios are not maintained. During these periods staffing levels are inadequate to effectively meet the needs of the children and to ensure their welfare and safety, which significantly increases their risk of harm. Failure to maintain this legal requirement has impacted on the overall judgement of the inspection and some of the supplementary judgements. Staff are not always effectively re-deployed to minimise risks to children. Written risk assessments are undertaken for the premises and for outings, to minimise harm to children. They identify most potential hazards, however, a small number have not been rectified. There are effective procedures for emergency evacuation in place, which is regularly practised and recorded. All staff have attended safeguarding children training and have a good awareness and understanding of child protection procedures. All staff have had a Criminal Records Bureau clearance. The group has a thorough written safeguarding policy, plus local safeguarding contact details to refer to, should they have concerns about a child.

There is an established and dedicated staff team who are experienced in early years childcare. Regular team meetings and annual appraisals support ongoing staff development and some staff are undertaking further training to enhance practice. The leadership and staff have comprehensively completed an Ofsted self-evaluation form. Ongoing self-evaluation and reflection on practice contribute greatly to the setting's ability to maintain continuous improvement, however, the issue of understaffing has not been fully addressed by the leadership and management.

The group promotes good inclusive practice, with a positive attitude and approach towards diversity. Staff work closely with parents, liaising with other childcare or health professionals, if required, to ensure each child receives appropriate support

at an early stage. Individual care plans are completed for children if required. One member of staff is undertaking City and Guilds Special Educational Needs Coordinator training. The staff's positive approach is reflected in some of the resources and activities available. All required documentation is in place and very well maintained. Comprehensive details are obtained about each child to support their welfare and signed consents are obtained from parents to ensure children are cared for according to their wishes. All records are securely kept and updated as required. Annually reviewed policies are clear and comprehensive and are made available to parents.

Staff establish positive and trusting partnerships with parents which is conducive to children's welfare and continuity of care. Regular and open communication is promoted. Daily diaries are written for children under three and parents are welcome to see or contribute to their child's Learning Journey at any time. Parents are kept very well informed, through frequent discussions with the staff, well-presented notice boards and newsletters and there are parent evenings at least twice per year. Comments received from parents during the inspection are very positive. They feel well informed and state that their children are happy and settled. The nursery endeavours to establish links with any other settings children attend, although, responses to their efforts have been limited. The group receives support from their local authority advisory staff as required and the manager attends local early years information meetings.

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

Staff are caring and attentive to the children and get to know them very well as individuals. Additional information about each child is gathered from parents through conversation, All About Me sheets and individual care plans if required. Staff use this information, plus their own observations, to develop an insight into each child's individuality and the starting points in their learning. This helps staff to support them accordingly. Babies' and toddlers' individual routines are maintained as much as possible to offer consistent care.

Children form open and trusting relationships with staff and one another and many know each other's names. They are developing positive self-esteem and are confident communicators, freely approaching and talking to staff and visitors. Children's behaviour is generally very good, positive behaviour is acknowledged and praised. They learn to manage their own behaviour through gentle reminders and reinforcement from staff. They are learning to share and patiently wait for their turn at the computer, through the effective use of a sand timer. Staff are positive role models, treating children with kindness and respect, which helps them feel safe and secure.

The experienced staff understand the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage and recognise the importance of children learning through play and first-hand experiences. They offer a variety of creative activities, textures and some natural materials to enable the children to explore and investigate. For example, babies are offered paint and pasta in a tray with a variety of tools, such as,

toothbrushes. Staff play alongside them and mix the paint to try and encourage them to explore the mixture. Staff enter into children's play to help focus their attention and extend their learning but also recognise when it is appropriate to step back and enable the children to learn and discover for themselves. For example, staff support children at the computer when required but give them time and opportunity to work programmes out for themselves. Some children concentrate and persevere for considerable periods with activities which engage them, for example, a child happily sits for a long time cutting up paper and talking to herself about what she is doing.

Children have some opportunities to learn about living things through pets, such as, the African snail and the goldfish. They can also dig in the soil filled troughs in the outdoor area and sometimes help to plant and water flowers and vegetables. Occasionally, they visit local parks where they can gain a broader experience of the natural environment. Most resources are easily accessible in trays and baskets on low-level shelving, enabling children to make their own selections and promoting their independence.

Staff have developed a very effective method of monitoring children's progress towards the early learning goals using Learning Journeys. Relevant observations are clearly linked to an area of learning and often supported with photographs or examples of the child's work. Observations are used well to identify the child's next step. An 'ongoing next steps' sheet is completed by each key person. This ensures a child's next steps are not overlooked and are effectively used to inform weekly planning, which aids each child's individual progression.

Staff are vigilant regarding hygiene, which minimises the risk of cross infection. Good nappy changing practices are followed and children have individual bedding which is washed at least once per week. Children are learning good hygiene practise through regular routines and explanations, such as, hand washing after using the toilet and prior to eating. Staff are caring, watchful and attentive to children who become unwell. They are swift to take appropriate action to ensure the wellbeing of the child, for example, taking temperature, enabling the child to rest or sleep and contacting parents. The setting provides an appealing variety of nutritious meals, which are cooked on the premises, and healthy snacks, promoting children's understanding of healthy eating. Children's skills and independence are encouraged as they feed and serve themselves and pour their own drinks, with adult support as required. Drinks of milk or water are offered at regular intervals to ensure children are well hydrated. Children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise in the outdoor courtyard, where they develop their physical skills and confidence.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	4
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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