



Overndale School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY311754
Inspection date	04 April 2006
Inspector	Karen Elizabeth Screen
Setting Address	Overndale School, 19 Chapel Lane, Old Sodbury, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, BS37 6NQ
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Registered person	Overndale School Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

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 satisfactory. 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?

Overndale School is a privately owned independent school, established in the 1960's. It was taken over by the present owners in 2000. It is situated in Old Sodbury in South Gloucestershire and generally draws children from within a 10 mile radius.

The school caters for children aged between 3 months and 11 years. Their provision includes a crèche, kindergarten and an out of school club. The crèche is open to children aged between 3 months, and 2 and a half years old. It is open between

08.00 and 18.00 all year round, apart from bank holidays, and for two weeks during the Christmas holidays. The Kindergarten is for children aged between 2 and a half- and 5 years old; and is open between 09.15 and 15.15 during school terms. The out of school club is open in the school holidays from 08.00 to 18.00, but special arrangements can be made to open from 07.30. It also operates during school terms, between 08.00 and 09.00 and from 15.15 to 18.00. Children are offered opportunities to take part in other activities such as French lessons and fitness sessions. A baby weighing service is also provided by qualified health visitor.

There are 86 children enrolled in the crèche and kindergarten. This number includes 35 children who receive funding for nursery education. A total of 23 staff are employed in the crèche, kindergarten and out of school club. The managers of the Kindergarten and the crèche, both hold Level 3 qualifications. A further 5 members of staff are qualified to Level 3. Six members of staff are qualified to Level 2. Of the remaining number, 2 are qualified teachers. Most members of staff are trained in first aid, child protection and food hygiene. The provision supports children with special needs and can support children using English as an additional language. Staff and children are supported by the Local Authority. The setting has recently begun working towards achieving accreditation status for the quality assurance award, For One and All Children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are very independent in their personal care. Younger children who need assistance in completing personal tasks, receive a high level of support. Children know the hygiene routines and wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Medication records are rarely countersigned by the parents when they collect their children; and prior written consent for emergency medical attention is not sought. There are suitable arrangements in place to care for children should they become ill during the session. Staff keep appropriate records of children with particular health requirements and details of any food allergies are known to staff.

Staff monitor the contents of the kindergarten children's lunch boxes to ensure that they receive a balanced meal and enlist children's interest and support in preparing the fresh fruit or biscuits for snack time. The crèche and out of school children's meals are prepared on site and are planned to ensure that they are low in salt. Staff are less successful in ensuring that meals are low in processed sugar.

Children have a positive attitude to exercise and enjoy outside play in all but the worst weather conditions. They make good use of the adjoining fields for short walks to support their learning about the natural environment. Staff make regular provision within their planning to offer a choice of energetic indoor play, such as parachute games and balancing on low 'stomper' stilts.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are interested and want to play with the available toys and resources which are safe, in good condition, and well-organised with appropriate labels. Many items are kept in useful storage solutions, which display resources whilst enabling children to select items for themselves. Babies enjoy playing on the floor exploring their surroundings. Planning and organisation of the environment affords babies few opportunities to practise pulling themselves up, such as on low furniture; or provide them with chances to enjoy prolonged close physical contact, such as that afforded when staff sit in comfortable chairs to feed babies individually.

Staff take positive steps to promote safety, for example they ensure that children are able to move around the floor free from trip hazards. However, they have not identified the unsecured gate leading from the vegetable garden as a potential danger to children, or minimised the risks posed to babies from flaking paint and plaster in the soft play room. In addition, they do not always ensure that visitors identify themselves, or record their presence.

Children are protected by staff who are clear about child protection procedures. Established staff are aware of the possible signs of children at risk and of their responsibility to report their concerns without delay, according to local Area Child Protection Procedures. Newer members of staff are less confident, but are clear that they should speak to a senior member of staff if they have cause for concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and keen to attend; some resist leaving when it is time for them to go home. They make confident choices from the activities provided and are interested and enjoy their play. Children make friends with their peers and develop good relationships with the staff team. They learn to take turns and cooperate very well with others. Children benefit from staff who are interested in what they say and do and who are involved in their activities, such as joining in French skipping in the playground during the lunch break.

Staff are warm and attentive and children respond by smiling when they make eye contact. Babies make their needs known, for example indicating whether they want more food by either pulling the spoon closer, or by pushing it away. They demonstrate that they know how to make contact; listening and paying attention to staff. In turn, staff are alert to their attempts to communicate, for example by moving a toy a little closer when a baby tries to reach it.

The plans and patterns within the day are well established. Children are beginning to predict what will happen next and to extend their skills in a secure environment. Plans are used as a basis for the day, but are not rigid and are subject to change according to the children's interests, needs and other variables, such as the weather. Children are not always grouped appropriately, to develop their listening skills

according to their individual needs. Crèche staff are using the Birth to three matters framework to support their work with young children, but their knowledge and understanding is variable. In addition, they do not use it to the best advantage, as a tool for planning individual children's development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide good opportunities for children to practise and develop in all areas of learning over time. The curriculum provides relevant and stimulating experiences to support all areas of the Foundation Stage, but the balance between opportunities for children to initiate and plan activities, is marginally weighted in favour of an adult-planned programme. Plans clearly show the purpose of the activities and give good examples of the skills and language staff are hoping to encourage. The manager has a secure knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones towards early learning goals in the Foundation Stage. This is evident in planning, observations and assessments, which are used well to support different stages of children's individual development. Although all staff are involved in the planning process and meet at the end of each week to review plans for the week ahead; individual staff have variable knowledge and expertise in their use of the Foundation Stage to promote children's learning. Group size for planned activities is good and allows children to participate fully. Disruption by some children during the lengthy whole kindergarten class sessions on Monday mornings, affects the ability of others to concentrate and learn effectively. This means that some children feel unable to contribute and miss the opportunity to express their feelings about personal or significant events. Good support is available to children with special needs.

Children respond well in a caring environment where they learn to consider other people's needs as well as their own. They learn to be cooperative and work well together, for example a child offers to help a younger child who is struggling with difficult fastenings on her outdoor clothes. Children are confident and show high levels of concentration. They are encouraged to be independent and to persist with difficult tasks. Children are aware of behavioural expectations and stop to listen when staff give instructions to the whole class. They listen intently to stories and confidently answer related questions posed by staff.

Children demonstrate very good speaking skills, for example describing to the group what they have been doing over the weekend. However, they are expected to sit and listen for too long when the whole class meet together. Supportive staff act as good role models and take time to listen to children. Children talk activities through, reflecting and modifying what they are doing. Staff use a variety of effective methods to support children's developing language and ability to communicate, such as prompting children's thinking through involvement in their activities. Children join in with gusto as they follow the correct sequence of events, tracing and retracing the characters' steps in the story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. Children learn to distinguish one sound from another as they say and 'clap out' the syllables of their own names.

Children show a keen interest in numbers and counting. Their understanding of simple calculations is fostered in everyday activities, such as counting out the

number of cups needed for snack time. They enjoy singing number rhymes, learning to subtract by two as they sing 'Ten Fat Sausages'. Older children show confidence as they offer solutions to mathematical problems posed by staff, such as "how many will we have if we take away two more sausages?" correctly answering two. Children benefit from individual attention as they learn about volume, through pouring water into different sized containers and estimating which holds the most.

Children have a good understanding of past, present, future and change over time. They enjoy examining objects and living things to find out more about them, such as noticing how the kindergarten tadpoles have changed in size over the weekend. They are encouraged to find out more about the natural world through direct involvement; and value sharing photographs of frog spawn found in their own ponds. In response to staff asking "how many frogs do you have in your pond" a child replies "twenty-one and a quarter". Staff gently remind him that "mummy says you have fifteen". Children enthusiastically construct with a purpose in mind. For example, they build a 'house made of sticks', from the twigs they have collected from the garden, to support the 'Three Little Pigs' story they are reading together.

Children show increasing awareness of their own bodily needs, for example during snack time, a younger child remarks that she is "still hungry and would like more fruit". Staff model and support the use of a wide range of outdoor resources and equipment. Children are gaining the control over their bodies necessary to jump and land safely on a small target, such as taut elastic set at ankle height for French skipping. Children show respect for each other's personal space, carefully avoiding crashing into each other as they peddle furiously on trikes, and master the skills necessary to control three wheeled scooters around corners.

Children are supported to develop their own ideas as they draw upon their personal experiences and imagination. They play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme, such as pretending to cook a meal for their family. Children respond enthusiastically to planned and spontaneous music, movement and rhythm. They explore the different sounds of instruments with zeal, linking sound and movement through eager participation in music sessions. They enjoy construction for a purpose, for example using plastic construction bricks to build a garage for the cars they have just designed and made. However, there are few materials within easy reach, with which children can build large-scale constructions such as 'dens'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn about the different activities and the people involved in the community, through organised visits from community workers such as fire fighters. However, they take part in few outings to the local community, such as visits to the Post Office to buy stamps and send letters. Staff promote self-confidence and a positive attitude in all children. All children are valued as individuals and the staff work hard to ensure that all children can be involved in any activities on offer. Children learn to value and appreciate each other's similarities and differences. Staff use books and resources especially chosen to reflect diversity and acknowledge

cultural differences. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children are very well behaved. Staff provide excellent role models through their calm and polite manner and have reasonable and realistic expectations of children's behaviour. They set and maintain clear and consistent limits, using positive behaviour strategies. Babies experience and seek closeness through regular routines such as nappy changing, where they mirror the facial expressions of the staff, talk and sing nursery rhymes. Staff have a 'can do' attitude towards finding solutions to any difficulties affecting the inclusion of all children. In addition, they attend special needs training and seek advice and support when appropriate, from the Area Special needs Coordinator.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents speak positively about the settling in procedures and the good relationships enjoyed between staff, parents and children. They value the friendly approachable staff, stimulating activities and good use of outdoor play facilities all year round. Warm relationships between the staff and parents, contribute to the children's confidence in the staff. Parents receive general information about the provision when they register their children. They also receive regular newsletters, half-term reports, prior information about planned activities, and suggestions for items to bring from home in order to support their children's learning. However, they receive little information about the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage of learning; or beneficial explanations about the purpose of the activities and experiences and how these help children to learn. There are effective informal channels of communication. Parents feel able and welcome to discuss their observations of their children's learning at any time, but are unaware that they can add their own comments and observations to their children's files, this means that the records are not quite as full and accurate as they might be and that parent's knowledge of their children is not fully exploited to support and develop the learning opportunities provided.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Personal information is obtained before the children attend. This is regularly up-dated and filed securely for each child. Good organisation of staff rotas and supply cover helps to ensure that the care of the over eights, does not adversely affect the care of the under eights attending the out of school club. Although the management review the quality of their practice and provision, they are less successful in identifying and addressing the areas to improve. Records and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are not always maintained, for example children's attendance records do not accurately reflect their hours of attendance.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff, children and parents have high expectations of the care and education provided in the setting. There is a strong team spirit and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They work very well together to promote good relationships between staff, parents and children.

Regular communication between the owner, managers and staff, such as the monthly staff meetings, helps to ensure the smooth running of the setting. Although all staff are involved in planning the curriculum, the professional development of some does not currently ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of the curriculum.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of the complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- develop secure links between observations, assessments and planning, in order to support individual children to build on what they already know
- ensure all staff have a secure understanding of the curriculum used to support children's learning
- ensure accurate daily records of attendance are maintained
- ensure that medication records are countersigned by parents when they collect their children.

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):

- ensure that children are always grouped appropriately, to develop their listening skills according to their individual needs (also applies to care)
- ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage of children's learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk