



Our Lady & St Oswald's Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY232143
Inspection date	23 May 2006
Inspector	Juliette Jennings
Setting Address	Upper Brook Street, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 2TG
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Registered person	Our Lady & St. Oswald's Pre School Committee
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns, Our Lady & St Oswald's Pre-School opened in 2002. It is situated in the grounds of Our Lady & St Oswald's Primary School, in the town of Oswestry and operates from the old school building.

The setting is open each weekday from 08:30 to 15:30, term time only. Children can attend flexible sessions within this time frame. In addition there is a flexible lunch club facility. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children aged from two years to five years on roll, of whom 23 are funded three and four year olds. The setting serves the local community.

There are three members of staff working with the children. All the staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Education Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children choose from and enjoy a good range of healthy snacks, for example apple, banana, oranges and toast. They can choose milk or water as a drink at snack times. Dietary requirements are accommodated and staff are aware of children's individual likes and dislikes. Staff preparing snacks have completed food hygiene training and hold a nutrition qualification, thus helping to ensure that the food that children eat is prepared properly and nutritious. The setting have recently taken part in a project which is designed to improve children's knowledge and understanding of healthy eating and planned activities have been threaded through themework in order to reinforce this learning.

Children are cared for within an environment which is clean and hygienic, supported by clear policies and procedures in place which all staff are aware of and adhere to. Children can access toilets independently and know to wash their hands after activities and prior to snacks, thus developing an understanding of the importance of hygiene through consistent daily routines. Documentation is in place in order to record children's accidents, in line with requirements. However, written permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is not in place for all children. In addition, medication records do not detail a signature from parents to acknowledge that medication has been administered.

There are opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, both indoors and outdoors. They enjoy the climbing equipment located in the grassed area to the rear of the school and take the opportunity to run around this large, open space. This kind of activity helps them develop their physical skills such as balance, climbing ability and awareness of space. In addition, they use resources such as the wheeled toys and balls to help them to develop their co-ordination. There is an action plan in place to develop the outdoor area directly adjacent to the pre-school building.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children access a colourful, stimulating and bright space where they are busily occupied and comfortable. Staff are aware of the security of children and there are efficient and effective procedures in place for ensuring that children are secure within the setting. Examples include a secure entry system, a visitor record and appropriate supervision at all times. Policies and procedures are in place which allow children to

be cared for in a largely safe environment. The kitchen is accessible to children, although they did not enter the kitchen during the inspection. The arrangements for keeping children safe in the event of an emergency are clearly displayed for staff to see.

The systems in place for ensuring that children's welfare is promoted are sound. There is a child protection policy in place which outlines the duties of staff. However, this procedure does not detail what would happen if an allegation of abuse was made against a member of staff. Child protection training is updated regularly and information from these courses are disseminated so that all staff are aware of current procedures in protecting children. In addition, current national procedures are readily available and displayed so that staff know what to do if they have a concern about any child. Some staff hold up-to-date first aid qualifications, thus trained in dealing with emergencies in relation to the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children aged under three years are content and occupied with a suitable range of activities which are planned by staff, or that they can access in child-initiated play. They have plenty of time to enjoy their favourite activities in free play, in particular the role play area, the construction toys and table top activities. They enjoy sound relationships with staff and mix reasonably well with the older children within this free play environment. Staff are currently attending training sessions on the 'Birth to three matters' framework to improve and develop this aspect of the provision.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children aged three and four years are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. They are sufficiently confident and content to work and play independently or in groups. They have satisfactory levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration and use their senses to explore a sufficient range of experiences. Activities such as role play, creative activities, sand play, construction toys and outdoor activities are enjoyed and children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. They have good opportunities to make choices about what they want to do and they have independence within routine activities. In addition, the opportunities for children to self-select is good, with lots of resources available at low-level.

Staff interact appropriately with children, listening to what they have to say and engaging with them. They provide a comfortable environment for children to learn and develop. However, the impact of some unacceptable and disruptive behaviour is having an impact on the learning and development of the children taken as a whole. This is particularly evident at large group times and to a limited extent throughout the routine. Staff continue to look at ways of dealing with this and remain calm and quietly consistent in their manner. Children, in general, do not always show sufficient respect, kindness and sensitivity for others and often squabble or do not listen.

The planning system shows the overall learning goal and weekly plans highlight the stepping stone objective for children. Staff are able to adapt structured activities to suit the individual stages of the children. However, plans are not consistently evaluated in order to inform assessments and future plans. The assessment system does not clearly show children's progression through the stepping stones, with observations infrequently recorded. The tracking sheets for recording children's development through the stepping stones are available for completion but they are not maintained on a regular basis and so do not show where children are in their stage of development.

The partnership with parents of three and four year olds is good. Parents receive a detailed prospectus about the setting which gives an overview of the educational and care provision and there is also an extensive policy that gives an outline of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Activities are encouraged which allow them to be involved in their child's learning and there are formal procedures in place for parents to share what they know about their child during initial visits, regular open days and through daily contact. Additional information, for example, written reports, notices, newsletters and home-link books make sure that parents are informed about their child's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are largely content and happy in the setting. Behaviour is generally sound, although there are issues around some disruptive and unacceptable behaviours impacting on the learning of others. Children do not always show kindness, respect and sensitivity for others. Staff are calm and consistent in their approach and use positive techniques to try support and encourage good behaviour or deal with unwanted behaviour. Children are not always able to negotiate and solve problems without adult support.

Themework, activities and a sufficient range of resources ensure that children are beginning to develop an understanding of diversity. Children have good independence and have opportunities to make choices about what they want to do within a routine which gives plenty of time for child-initiated play. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with specific needs and English as an additional language, with staff maintaining positive relationships with outside agencies and working closely with parents. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is a relaxed and supportive feel to the setting and staff discuss issues with parents on a regular basis and obtain information from them to ensure consistency of care. They benefit from regular verbal feedback and an open-door policy where they are welcome to attend the session for as long as they wish. Various information is available for parents through notice-boards, letters that go home and a home and nursery link book, so that parents can be involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Regular meetings and recent introduction of a formal appraisal and supervision system means that staff are able to talk about any issues. Staff are being supported to develop an effective team and given opportunities to develop their skills, for example attending training in various aspects of early years childcare and education, including the 'Birth to three matters' framework. There is an action plan for improving the provision of education for the children aged under three years and also to improve the outdoor area as a learning space.

Policies and procedures are available and are detailed and specific to the setting, generally outlining how the pre-school operates in practice. However, these have not been reviewed in some time and do not reflect recent committee or staffing changes. In particular, the assessment policy and the child protection procedure require some update.

Staffing levels are good, with all staff having appropriate qualifications. The organisation of the environment is good and allows children to have access to a broad range of activities. Children benefit from ongoing development of links with the school. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the setting were asked to address a number of issues were raised in order to meet the National Standards. All of these issues have been addressed with the exception of ensuring that medication records detail a parental signature to acknowledge that medication has been administered. This has been raised as a recommendation at this inspection.

In addition, the setting was asked to address two issues in relation to the nursery education. The first, which has been addressed, requested that more opportunities be provided for children to move in different ways, solve simple number problems, access mark-making materials, sing songs and explore sound. This is reflected in planning and in day to day activities.

The second issue was in relation to continuing to develop the observations and assessments of the children and linking these into the future planning. This has not been sufficiently met and is raised as a recommendation at this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

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. There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- make sure that the kitchen is inaccessible to children at all times other than during a supervised activity
- make sure that written parental permission is obtained for all children in order to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. In addition, make sure that parents sign the medication record to acknowledge that medication has been administered to their child
- continue to develop knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and consider how this will impact on the care for children aged three years and under
- review the policies and procedures to reflect recent staffing and committee changes and to ensure that they continue to work in practice, in particular the assessment policy and the child protection policy, the latter of which should include a statement about what would happen if an allegation of abuse was made against a member of staff

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):

- organise large group times so that children are encouraged to sit and listen, minimising disruptive behaviour and allowing children who wish to listen to develop and extend their learning
- develop children's understanding of respect, kindness and sensitivity to others and ensure that behaviour issues are addressed promptly, therefore reducing the impact on other children's learning
- develop the assessment system so that it tracks children's development and progress through the stepping stones and so that it can be used effectively to inform future planning, using an evaluation facility to assist this.

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