



Oakfield Nursery School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY293635
Inspection date	27 June 2006
Inspector	Sheila Iwaskow
Setting Address	Groby Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 1RS
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Registered person	Oakfield Nursery School Ltd
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oakfield Nursery School Limited opened in 1968 and is family owned and managed by Mrs Roisin Moriarity. Children attending have access to 11 playrooms and associated facilities. There is a fully enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery serves the local community and is close to Altrincham town centre and all motorway networks.

There are currently 104 children who attend on a variety of placements; of these 44

receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 08.00 to 18.00. The setting employs 33 staff; of whom 30 work directly with the children. All staff, apart from one, hold an appropriate early years qualification and of these three are qualified teachers. The nursery receives support from the early years advisory teacher in Trafford.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well protected through effective health and hygiene routines which reduce the risks of cross contamination and infection. All areas of the nursery are meticulously cleaned on a regular basis; tables are wiped before lunch and staff implement good hygiene routines and procedures with all toys and equipment. Stringent routines are in place for nappy changes which are consistent throughout the setting. Toddlers are encouraged to gradually accept responsibility for their own health and hygiene needs as they go to find a tissue and learn how to blow their nose or proudly achieve success at potty training. Older children confidently manage their own personal care with the support and encouragement from staff, however, they are not afforded complete privacy when going to the toilet. Daily routines such as cleaning teeth, brushing hair and using their own personal cloths to wash their hands help children understand the importance of good hygiene practices. Dentists and doctors regularly visit the nursery, reinforcing children's awareness of good health. Children benefit from there being a sick child policy securely in place and procedures being shared with their parents. This ensures that children can attend an environment that is healthy and as free from infection as possible. A significant number of staff hold first aid certificates and first aid boxes are strategically placed throughout the nursery, which ensures that children receive appropriate care in the event of an accident or emergency.

Systems are in place to record children's health and dietary needs which are considered when planning menus. Healthy eating is actively promoted within the setting. Meals are cooked daily using fresh ingredients and planned to ensure that children receive five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. A separate dining room is available where older children happily sit and chat together whilst eating their lunch. The nursery recently received a 'Healthy Eating Award' in recognition of the high quality food provided for the children. Menus are clearly displayed, keeping parents fully informed of the food that their children are eating. Children regularly take part in food tasting sessions to develop their sense of taste. They are well hydrated as they have regular access to drinks. Babies and young children's routines with regard to meal and sleep times are respected, providing an environment that is secure and consistent with home. For example, staff notice when children are tired and provide them with cushions to allow them to rest.

Daily access to a good range of indoor and outdoor physical play equipment provides opportunities for young children to make good progress in their physical development. Whilst playing children can ride on wheeled toys, crawl through tunnels and balance on beams. Interactive games such as tennis and basketball encourage children to work as part of a team, learning to follow defined rules. Dance and yoga lessons allow children to experiment with different ways of positioning their bodies whilst having lots of fun.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a building which is extremely well maintained. The setting employs a 'handy man' which ensures that any maintenance issues that affect children's safety are dealt with in a prompt manner. Examples of children's independent art work are attractively displayed throughout the nursery which helps to develop children's sense of belonging within the setting. The area in which babies are cared for is particularly attractive with its murals of cows jumping over the moon, little pigs going to market and of the old woman who lived in a shoe. The sleeping area for babies is well ventilated and dimly lit, creating a restful and peaceful environment.

The nursery is extremely well equipped to promote all areas of children's development. Children access an extensive range of toys which are safe, clean and in good condition. Resources are easily accessible allowing children to make choices and develop their independence. The child-sized furniture is of a very high quality, promoting children's safety and meeting their needs.

Children are protected from hazards due to regular risk assessments carried out by staff and written policies concerning safety. Controlled entrances and close circuit television protect children from unknown persons entering the nursery. Effective procedures are in place for the safe collection of children at the end of the day. Outdoor play rotas and a visitors book further contribute to children's safety. Fire evacuation procedures are clearly displayed on each floor of the nursery and drills are carried out on a regular basis, teaching children to follow defined procedures in the event of a fire or an emergency evacuation. Visits from the fire officer and policeman also contribute to children's awareness of safety. However, an issue has been identified which may compromise children's safety; large patches of ivy in the outdoor play area are accessible to the children.

Children are protected because staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young children are very happy and content within the nursery environment. All staff within the setting share wonderful relationships with the children, ensuring that they are cared for in a harmonious environment in which they thrive. This increases

children's self confidence and helps them to develop a strong sense of self. Staff within the setting confidently follow the Birth to three matters framework to provide children with a range of highly stimulating activities which are very well planned to meet the needs of all the children who attend. Assessments are of a very high standard and are used effectively to monitor children's progress and plan for their next stages of learning.

Babies receive lots of hugs and cuddles and form strong bonds with their carers. Early communication skills are extremely well developed as staff respond enthusiastically to babies' babblings and facial gestures. Resources in plays rooms are laid out inspiringly to encourage young children to grasp and crawl. Young children are beginning to make connections as they push a button, then gaze in wonder and dance excitedly as Tigger bounces up and down in front of them. They are beginning to learn that they are separate from others as staff skilfully encourage children to point to their body parts, make hand prints from clay and gaze at their reflection in the many mirrors that are innovatively placed around all the playrooms within the nursery. Heuristic play is exceptionally well promoted and children enjoy investigating the contents the treasure baskets and exploring materials, such as shaving foam, ice, feathers, shells, stones, jelly and tissue paper. Children particularly enjoy making patterns on the mirrors using yoghurt and grass heads from seeds, sawdust and tights. They become engrossed in role play situations as they play with small world toys and dress up as fire fighters and Bob the Builder. Such opportunities allow children to express their own ideas through play. Fine motor skills are very well developed as children knead dough for a pizza, use a spatula to spread tomato puree on the pizza, manipulate play dough and play musical instruments. An extensive range of creative opportunities allow children to develop their imaginations using a wide range of media.

Children are increasingly becoming aware of the needs of others. For example, an older child helps a toddler balance along the beam by taking his hand and supporting him to prevent him from falling. There is a strong emphasis on self-review with children's opinions particularly valued.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children benefit from being taught by teachers and staff who have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals. Staff have an expert knowledge of children's capabilities. Clear learning points are established at the beginning of the Foundation Stage and staff build on this knowledge. Ongoing and thorough assessments of children's learning are effectively used to inform future planning. There is a superb balance of high quality adult-led and child-initiated activities. Highly motivated staff effectively use open-ended questions to develop and extend children's learning. For example, staff gently ask children when they use an umbrella and subsequently develop this theme by asking them to think about why an umbrella is used. Teaching styles are varied and have a positive effect on children's learning.

Children relish the time they spend at the nursery. They display high levels of confidence and a keen motivation to learn. They are able to sit for sustained periods of times and talk about events that are important to them, such as a recent party and

a holiday at an activity centre. Simple instructions, such as putting hands on cheeks and wiggling fingers are enthusiastically followed. Children are beginning to form friendships and develop good communication skills as they chat to each other as they play. Children enjoy reading for pleasure. They eagerly skip over to the book corner, select a book and pretend to be the teacher reading to the class. Children are beginning to recognise their own name and talk about the initial and final letters of their name and different words. Focused activities and the role play area provide children with opportunities for writing for a purpose as they make appointments at the vet's surgery and a list of things that they can do with their hands. Counting skills are very well developed as children count the number of dinosaurs on the table and children on the carpet. Children love to make snakes using play dough and excitedly tell staff that they want to make them much longer. They concentrate intensely when exploring capacity and enjoy pouring from one container to another. Creative activities such as junk modelling and making funny faces from squares, circles, triangles and rectangles allow children to have fun as they explore the concept of shape. Calculation and problem solving skills are very well promoted as children complete jigsaws, find the number that comes after 13 and make a pattern whilst threading shapes.

Children watch with amazement and wonder as they observe through first hand experience the changes that happen when caterpillars change into butterflies. Walks in the local area and visits to the market and bakery allow children to observe features of the local environment and gain an understanding of the differing roles people have within their society. Weekly French lessons give children an appreciation of languages spoken around the world. Children develop a sense of time as they track the progress of a child that the nursery sponsors in Guatemala. Animals and insects, such as rats, snakes and stickle backs are brought into the nursery and give children an understanding of the range of creatures that live within their world. An extensive range of computer software, programmable toys and the support of an Information Communication and Technology teacher ensures that children make rapid progress in this area of their development. Children thrive as they enjoy an extensive range of physical activities and have regular access to fresh air and exercise. They show an excellent awareness of space as they negotiate the outdoor play area using wheeled vehicles and hoppers. They balance and climb and have opportunities to develop physically through the indoor and outdoor activities on offer. Children benefit from a wide range of tools including pencils, crayons, paint brushes, shakers, glue spreaders and dough cutters to develop their fine motor skills.

Children express their own ideas in their creative work using a variety of media. For example, they have made a variety of Spring pictures using paint, chalks and feathers. Children have excellent opportunities to explore sound through the use of a range of musical instruments. They enjoy various instruments for free expressions and express their ideas and thoughts through drama and role play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All staff appreciate the uniqueness of each child and work well together to make sure

that their needs are exceptionally well met, ensuring that they are fully included in the life of the setting. Cultural diversity is extremely well promoted within the nursery. Children celebrate a wide range of cultural festivals, taste a range of foods from other countries and access a good selection of resources that reflect equality of opportunity. Staff skilfully raise children's awareness of similarities and differences with their society as they openly discuss how men as well as women can be soldiers, nurses and fire fighters. Children work harmoniously with each other as they learn to share and take turns as they play. They are developing a very caring attitude towards others as they show concern for a child who has been hurt and watch with great interest as eggs in the incubator hatch into chicks. Children display a real sense of awe and wonder as they watch snow forming a blanket on the ground. They happily run outside, feeling the texture of the snow and run around excitedly making snowballs. The setting demonstrates the highest regard towards the care of children with learning difficulties, recognising the importance of caring for them in a sharing and inclusive environment and working closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure their needs are totally met. This positive approach helps foster children's spiritual, social and moral development.

Children are delightful and extremely well behaved. They respond well to the positive behaviour management strategies employed by staff who remain calm and consistent at all times. Minor altercations are dealt with in a sensitive manner. Children's contributions are valued and their achievements constantly celebrated which helps to promote their confidence and self esteem. Older children manage their own personal behaviour with great success.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive high quality and detailed levels of information about the education provision through parents evenings, displays of interest, displays, newsletters and notice boards. They are kept fully informed of their children's progress as they are invited into the nursery both formally and informally at frequent points throughout the year to see assessments, profiles and children's work. Written reports at the end of the year also provide a comprehensive and detailed summary of children's achievements. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning. Parents of younger children are very well informed about their daily activities through the use of a daily diary sheet and discussions with key workers at the end of the day. Staff make excellent use of the information requested on admission to meet children's care needs. The high quality of the partnership is further reinforced as parents are asked to appraise the setting and 'suggestion boxes' are available at various points throughout the nursery for parents which to make comments. Discussions with parents and observations of letters and cards received indicate that parents have the highest regard for the service provided. Parents comment on the 'outstanding professional support given by the nursery' and the 'great dedication of the staff'. Close links are developed with local schools to ensure a smooth transition from nursery to school life.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected because staff are appointed through rigorous and robust

employment procedures. A comprehensive induction and probationary period forms a firm basis for staff employment. Staff are dedicated, conscientious, well-qualified and work exceedingly well as part of a team. A key worker system is in place and staffing levels are organised to ensure that children receive high levels of support at all times. Detailed and structured settling in procedures are in place, ensuring that children are confident in their new environment. Children are grouped according to their age and stage of development and space is maximised to its full potential to provide children with a range of inspiring activities which cover all aspects of their learning.

All policies and documentation relating to the continuity of care are in place and are of the very highest standard. However, an omission has been identified; parents do not consistently sign the accident record or always acknowledge medication that has been administered to their children.

The leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. The manager is totally committed to ensuring that all children receive the highest quality nursery education. She actively encourages all staff to review and monitor their practice through regular meetings, planning evaluations and discussions about children's profiles. This ensures that the curriculum and teaching methods take full account of children's individual needs and the diverse ways in which children learn. A high quality training programme is in place to ensure that staff are able to deliver a highly successful early education programme for all children.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

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):

- conduct a risk assessment on the ivy in the outdoor play area and ensure children have complete privacy when they go to the toilet
- ensure that parents always sign accident and medication records.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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