



# OAK NURSERY SCHOOL

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 110026  
**Inspection date** 18 October 2005  
**Inspector** Anne Munro

**Setting Address** 11 Long Lane, Holbury, Southampton, Hampshire, SO45 2LF

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**Registered person** JEAN SMITH  
**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](http://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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oak Nursery opened in 1991 and is privately owned. It operates in a house set back from the main road through Holbury. The house has been converted solely for nursery use.

The nursery is registered to accept 30 children, aged from 1 to 5 years of age. There are currently 62 children on roll, including 33 children in receipt of nursery funding. The nursery supports a small number of children with special needs.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round, except for Bank Holidays, from 08:00 to 18:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

Three full-time and five part-time members of staff work with the children. All except one have early years qualifications.

The nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the Hampshire Nursery Network and is working towards accreditation by the National Day Nursery Association. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The children develop very good levels of personal independence, having easy access to the toilet area and learning to wash their hands at an early age. They quickly learn about the importance of cleanliness and are protected from the spread of infection, by the staff's meticulous attention to good hygiene practice. The staff clean and disinfect the equipment regularly and effective procedures are in place for nappy changing. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in force to ensure that sick or injured children are cared for competently. The staff have up to date first aid qualification and maintain accurate records to support the children's welfare. The children learn about a healthy diet, as they eat fruit and drink milk or water at snack times. In addition, they try new foods as part of their learning topics. For example, once they visited a bakery and made their own bread. Their special dietary needs are addressed, as the staff work closely with the parents to ensure that they have all relevant information about allergies or cultural requirements. The young children are able to sleep comfortably on mats or in cots in a quiet room upstairs, where they are regularly monitored.

The children enjoy healthy outdoor play daily. They develop balance and co-ordination using large apparatus in a safe outside play area and learn about space, as they steer ride-on toys between other activities. They join in running games, action songs with enthusiasm and enjoy moving to music. They practise new skills with small equipment such as balls and beanbags, supported by the staff in well planned sessions. The children benefit from a good range of activities that promote their fine motor skills, becoming skilful with pencils and crayons, using scissors and glue, clay and dough and playing with construction toys and small world figures.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The children are exceptionally well cared for in a safe and secure child-friendly environment. The staff carry out thorough risk assessments, including for outings, and check premises and equipment daily to ensure the children's safety. Professional contractors test appliances regularly and the premises are very clean and well maintained. Extensive steps have been taken throughout the nursery to minimise

risks to the children, such as gates fitted to the top and bottom of stairs, smoke alarms and socket covers. The premises are secure with gates bolted and an alarm fitted to the front door. Clear policies and procedures, for example for the arrival and collection of children, are followed conscientiously by all staff and shared with the parents, actively promoting the children's welfare. The children and the staff practise evacuation regularly, so that they are familiar with the routine. The children learn consistent rules for their own safety, for instance in walking up and down stairs and on walks to shops nearby. They enjoy visits from the local police and 'lollipop lady', helping them to understand how to stay safe. The children play with an excellent range of good quality toys and equipment, which is well-maintained and regularly updated. Toys and games are stored in child height units, so that the children are able to make choices and to help in putting resources away and keeping their environment tidy. The children are cared for by experienced and well qualified professionals, who have all undergone rigorous vetting procedures. The children benefit from the staff's excellent range of skills and knowledge, including first aid skills and thorough understanding of child protection procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The children come happily into the nursery and form strong trusting relationships with the staff. They settle quickly into familiar routines and are eager to become involved in the good range of activities on offer. Children of all ages show very good levels of confidence and independence. The children under 3 years old play confidently alongside the older children, sharing many of the same activities. They benefit particularly from exploring a wide range of materials in exciting art work. They also spend group time with children of their own age, listening to stories and rhymes and playing with a good range of appropriate toys and equipment to promote their development. The staff use the Birth to Three Matters framework in planning the programme for younger children, but planning is not as thorough as it is for the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children spend most of their time working purposefully in small groups and concentrate well on planned activities. They are able to sit quietly and listen when appropriate and join in confidently in group discussions. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories and are able to borrow books to read at home. They become skilful in using pencils and crayons and learn to write their names. The staff scribe their captions to their work, so that the children are motivated to use writing for a purpose. The children learn to count and to recognise numerals, as the staff make number work an integral part of activities. Such activities include, for example, counting different shaped leaves found on a nature walk and making a height and weight chart in role play in a doctor's surgery. The children learn about their community, as the staff plan an excellent and imaginative range of topics. These include involving interesting visitors to the group and stimulating outings around the local area. The children learn about their own and other cultures; for example, by learning about weddings when a member of staff was recently married. The children use a computer and other technology to support their learning. For example, they listen to stories on tape; use an overhead projector to

project images of leaves, acorns and feathers on to the wall; participate in an imaginative game, steering a remote controlled car, which takes emergency help to numbered houses. The staff plan exciting role play situations, to enable the children to develop their imagination and act out their experiences. The children use imagination in their play and in an excellent variety of art and craft activities, using a wide range of materials and techniques. They join in songs and rhymes and use musical instruments enthusiastically, to explore sound and rhythm.

The staff have secure understanding of the early learning goals and are skilful in using opportunities to develop the children's learning. All are involved in planning a versatile range of exciting topics, which hold the children's interest and promote their development. They make good use of available space to provide a stimulating learning environment and to enable the children to develop independence. They keep comprehensive records of the children's progress and have thorough knowledge of the children's individual capabilities and needs. The staff encourage conversation with the children, developing their language skills and using praise and encouragement to promote their confidence and to re-enforce their good behaviour. The children with special educational needs are well supported, as the staff work closely with the parents and other professionals, to identify and address individual requirements.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The children show very good levels of confidence and independence and clearly understand what is expected of them in nursery routines. They are treated as individuals and the staff work closely with the parents, to ensure that the children with special needs are included. The children talk about their own families and are introduced to other cultures, playing with a good range of resources that reflect positive images of other cultures and learning about celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Divali and firework night. The children interact confidently with the staff and play successfully alongside other children, learning to take turns and to share. They are generally well behaved and their good behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded. The staff foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

The partnership with parents is good. The parents receive good information about the nursery and about the Foundation Stage curriculum in a comprehensive prospectus and in regular newsletters. They are informed about forthcoming topics and are invited to contribute resources and expertise. The parents are able to talk with the staff at any time and are invited to termly parents' evenings. They receive regular reports about their children's progress and are able to contribute their own observations, but few are actively involved in their children's learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The children benefit from good levels of supervision from well-qualified and committed staff members, who form an excellent team. The proprietor has effective recruitment and employment procedures in place. Leadership and management are good. Rigorous induction and appraisal systems ensure that all staff members are confident about their roles and responsibilities. Training needs are clearly identified and the staff are encouraged and supported in taking up training opportunities. The staff are all involved in the planning and evaluation of activities. Their ideas are used and their practise monitored, so that the nursery continues to develop and improve. Recent developments include changes to the outside area, so that the children are able to plant and watch things grow. Space and resources are well organised, so that the children have plenty of space to play inside and out. They experience a balanced programme of quiet and active play, as well as having comfortable areas for food and rest. Toys and equipment are easily accessible, so that the children are able to make choices and to keep their playrooms tidy. Clear policies and procedures underpin the smooth running of the nursery and support the children's welfare. The staff are conscientious in acquiring information and maintaining accurate records, so that they are able to address the children's individual needs. They have good understanding of the importance of confidentiality and store documentation securely. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Improvement since the last inspection is good. The required amendments to policies have been carried out to support the children's welfare. Points for consideration raised at the education inspection included a suggestion that the children's records could show more clearly their progress through the stepping stones. The staff are now becoming familiar with using the Hampshire County Council record of achievement and competent in assessing the children's progress. The nursery has also addressed the suggestion that the parents should receive more information about the stepping stones, so that they can support their children's learning at home. The early learning goals are explained in the nursery's prospectus and the parents discuss their children's records of achievement with the staff, but they are not given guidance in continuing their children's learning at home and this issue is carried forward.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

#### **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):

- further develop the planning system to promote the development of children under three years old in line with the Birth to Three Matters framework.

##### **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):

- share with parents the next steps for children's development identified in assessment and record keeping, and enable them to play a pro-active role in promoting their 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)