

# OakDin Montessori Kindergarten Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	203835
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sandra Daniels
<b>Setting Address</b>	67 Perry Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 0NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 633055
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Oakdin Montessori Kindergarten Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Sessional 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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oakdin Montessori Kindergarten opened in 1993. It operates from five classrooms in a converted bungalow set back from a main road in a busy residential area, in Billericay. The Pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 11 children on roll. This includes eight funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The setting currently does not have any children attending who have special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The Kindergarten opens five days a week all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas, opening times are from 08:30 to 18:00. Additional holiday schemes are run during the half term, Easter and summer holidays for enrolled and non-enrolled children.

There are currently three members of staff working with the children, all of whom hold Early Years qualifications including NNEB level three and the Montessori international diploma level four. The setting receives support from the Early Years Partnership.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's good health is very well promoted in this setting where children demonstrate a good awareness and understanding of their own personal hygiene. Daily hygiene routines, such as, hand washing before eating and after using the toilet are practiced with enthusiasm by children of all ages. Their independence is promoted as the facilities are child sized, enabling all children to use the toilet and the sink with autonomy. Practitioners take the time to demonstrate effective methods and to explain to children about germs and the risk of spread of infection. Detailed knowledge, gained by the setting on children's individual health needs, ensures that their health and well-being is consistently well supported. Any specific medical need is responded to immediately by confident staff who are qualified in first aid for young children. Parents are informed of any illness within the setting and are, therefore, able to fully protect their children.

Children learn in a clean environment where the risk of cross-infection is effectively minimised because practitioners follow good hygiene routines. For example, staff are positive role-models for children as they can be seen washing their own hands at appropriate times, cleaning tables in preparation for snacks and meals and wearing protective clothing when changing nappies for younger children.

Children who currently stay for lunch bring a packed lunch, although the setting does offer hot meals if required. Children begin to develop a secure appreciation of healthy eating as they discuss with staff which foods are good for them and help them to grow and be strong. Children are encouraged to be independent at meal times. They unpack and clear away their own lunches and help themselves to drinks. All children benefit from a choice of healthy snacks, including fresh fruits, vegetables, cereals, crackers, toast and breadsticks. Fresh drinking water, juice and milk are easily accessible to all children throughout the sessions.

Many opportunities are provided daily for children to engage in physical activities. They frequently play outside, developing skills of control and co-ordination as they use wheeled toys and play in the sand and water under the gazebo. Inside, children enjoy dancing and moving to music. Children are able to rest or be active according to their needs.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the Kindergarten, each receiving a warm, personal greeting from staff. The premises is extremely inviting to children, parents and visitors. Children's work can be seen displayed around the setting, combined with colourful posters, photographs and notices of interest, making the environment a friendly, comfortable and interesting place to be. Children cannot wait to begin to explore the good quality, age appropriate toys and equipment that await them on their arrival. Children's classrooms have been very well planned to facilitate their independent learning. As resources are stored at child-height, children can individually make choices about what they explore with. Space is well organised to promote children's natural curiosity as learners, as they access areas that are dedicated to certain aspects of learning. For example, the sensorial room, quiet room, practical life room, language and cultural room and maths room.

Children understand and take pride in helping to maintain a tidy environment in which they can learn safely, and move around freely. Children learn to put equipment away when they have finished using it, tuck their chairs under the table and know why they should not run around indoors. Children have good opportunities to reinforce their understanding of personal safety. For example, through stories and role play activities.

Staff are extremely vigilant about all safety related issues and promote this through the effective implementation of daily risk assessments and detailed health and safety policies and procedures throughout the setting. Children, therefore, learn in a very safe and secure environment where the risk of them having accidents is minimised. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to achieve a balance between setting safety limits and allowing children the freedom to investigate and explore.

Children's welfare is very well safeguarded by a team who have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding child protection. Practitioners recognise their roles and responsibilities and know how to implement procedures should they have any concerns. Children are protected from people who are not vetted and there is an effective procedure for ensuring children are only released to authorised adults.

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

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in this setting. They look forward to attending and spend their time there having fun whilst learning through play. Children have a positive attitude to learning and are happy, settled and purposefully engaged in an extensive range of challenging activities throughout the sessions. Children are happy in the kindergarten environment because they are warmly welcomed and their parents build good relationships with staff. Staff are sensitive to the needs of the children and support them during their time at the nursery. Their individual learning needs are successfully met through well-planned activities appropriate to their stage and age of development. However, there are some missed opportunities to maximise children's learning, for example, walking in the local community, where children can explore and investigate through first-hand experiences. Children are highly motivated and show considerable levels of interest in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Most indoor activities are presented on single trays which children select independently. Each tray is equipped with a specific activity and any additional tools and materials. For example, a floating and sinking activity with a bowl, jug and various items, such as, corks, shells, stones and small plastic tyres. Children decide whether to explore alone or share with another child as two children demonstrated in this activity. Children take responsibility for packing away the activity and returning the tray so that it is available for other children. Even very young children accomplish this task successfully.

Children are confident in their relationships with each other and are able to express their needs to adults who respond positively. Sensitive and appropriate interactions promote children's self-esteem. Children are eager to participate in the range of activities, which staff set out or help themselves from the toys on the low-level shelves. Children aged three and under make independent choices and some show persistence in completing an activity, for example, a puzzle. Staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and they plan activities accordingly. Children are able to make choices and decisions about what and whom they will explore with. They enjoy learning experiences, which allows them to use their senses to interpret their experiences, such as, food tasting or moving to music. Children benefit from the undivided attention of staff that talk to them and focus on their needs throughout the session.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals because the staff are very knowledgeable about how young children learn and provide them with many opportunities to develop their skills. Children are confident, articulate and able to make independent choices. They have excellent concentration levels because they are encouraged to complete one task before clearing away and moving on to another. Staff make close observations of the children's achievements and use this information, along with information from parents, to plan children's next steps in learning. Highly effective use of time, space and Montessori resources promotes children's learning. Different rooms are dedicated to various areas of learning and, although there is a structured plan for each day, this is flexible and responds to children's interests and ideas.

Children have extremely positive attitudes towards learning. They remain interested, concentrate well and sit quietly when appropriate. They develop high self-esteem and self-confidence as they respond to significant experiences. For example, children speak confidently in the group, relating stories from home and previous experiences with enthusiasm. They become extremely independent in self-care skills as they change outside shoes for comfortable indoor shoes at the beginning of each session. The development of children's communication, language and literacy skills is a strength in the setting. Children can recognise their own names and they are gaining confidence in writing them. Children hold their pencils firmly and sit comfortably to make marks. Tracing letters promote their knowledge of the sounds and the shapes of letters of the alphabet. They are learning many new words and their meanings in topic work and daily discussions with staff over their play and practical activities. For example, they pronounce the names of dinosaurs. They enjoy looking at books of their own choice in the reading area and listen very well at story time participating as they eagerly anticipate what might happen next. Some older, more able children are able to read independently, sounding out unfamiliar words successfully.

Mathematical learning takes place during many different activities; those which focus on mathematics and those from which mathematics can be drawn out. For example, children use mathematical language as they discuss how big their sunflowers are growing, saying "Mine is massive and it keeps growing bigger and bigger." Older children learn the concepts of units as they calculate in tens, hundreds and thousands with growing confidence. Children recognise many shapes, including a pentagon, and use shapes they cut from dough to trace around the edges with their fingers to determine how many sides each shape has. Children develop growing social and cultural awareness and begin to make sense of the world because they are provided with the important skills, knowledge and understanding that are the foundation for later work in history, geography, science and technology. They learn to identify living and non-living objects, talking about living things having a 'bumping' heart-beat. Children experiment to discover things which are soluble in water and those which are not. They investigate which objects sink and which ones float, and older children make educated guesses before placing the items into the water.

Children explore many different media and materials. They use musical instruments to accompany themselves when singing and to make up their own tunes. In role-play scenarios, children act out familiar experiences and routines, for example, in the doctor's surgery. Children use finger puppets to recreate familiar stories, each playing different characters. Children are flourishing in the well-organised and attractively presented nursery environment. They thrive on the opportunities they have to explore, learn and work things out for themselves as the skilled staff team have high expectations of them and encourage them to develop and practise new skills.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Effective relationships with parents ensure the staff know the children very well. Children receive excellent care appropriate to their needs because meticulous arrangements ensure their individual needs are discussed and recorded. Systematic methods ensure both parties are fully informed. For example, through precise documentation, a comprehensive parents information pack and regular meetings. A clear and concise written policy works effectively in practice to promote equal opportunities for all children. Children receive warm cuddles and affection and build trusting relationships with the staff to contribute to their sense of belonging.

None of the children on roll at present has identified learning difficulties. However, staff have developed good links with outside agencies to support them in their work. Staff are fully aware of current legislation including information relating to the Disability Discrimination Act and a detailed written policy reflects strong commitment to ensure the provision of quality care and inclusion for all children. Children develop an acute awareness of the needs of others as they help each other and learn to share and take turns. They play confidently alone and socially and ask for appropriate help if required. Children's behaviour is well managed and they work harmoniously together. Their confidence and self-esteem is nurtured well in the setting. They receive warm praise for being helpful and they learn good manners through the example set by the staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. They are extremely well informed about the activities their children participate in, and how these support their development and learning. They have very good opportunities to exchange information with the staff and to find out how they can extend children's learning at home. The effective communication between staff and parents enables them to work together successfully to plan children's progress and support their learning. Parent's evenings and open days are held and all parents spoken to feel fully informed and involved in every aspect of their children's care and learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. The well established, experienced staff team work together extremely well to provide a bright, welcoming and stimulating environment where children are nurtured and their progress is supported effectively. Staff are all familiar with the nursery's policies and procedures, and implement them consistently to promote children's good health, safety and welfare. Daily routines provide a familiar structure, within which children can learn to be independent and take pride in their achievements. All regulatory documentation is in place, stored appropriately and available for inspection. The management team keep themselves updated with changes to regulatory requirements.

Leadership and management is outstanding. Staff work extremely well as a team under the professional guidance of the manager and have a clear vision for the nursery education. A very strong emphasis on the personal development and achievement of all children enables them to develop considerable levels of independence and self-esteem as staff skilfully provide activities and experiences to encourage them to be self-motivated, active members of the setting. Extremely competent staff work effectively to provide a rich, vibrant environment where children flourish as staff inspire them to reach their full potential. There are many opportunities for practitioners to participate in further training and development.

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

At the last inspection the provider agreed to devise and implement a formal staff appraisal system. This is now in place and working effectively. With regard to the provision of Nursery Education, the provider agreed to provide further opportunities for children to explore media and materials in relation to model making for two and three dimensional shapes. Children enjoy model making using a good variety of materials. They make collages using tissue paper, card, cloth and paint and use recycled materials to create cars and houses.

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

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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**

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 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):

- consider providing opportunities for children to explore the local environment.

#### **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 *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)