



Overstone Park School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY334385
Inspection date	30 November 2006
Inspector	Rachael Mankiewicz
Setting Address	Overstone Park High School, Overstone Park, Overstone, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN6 0DT
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Registered person	Overstone Park School
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Overstone Park School Nursery was registered in 2006. The nursery is part of Overstone Park Independent School which operates from purpose built premises in Overstone, Northamptonshire. The nursery is open between 07:30 and 18:00 each weekday all year round. Children are cared for in five nursery rooms and share access to a securely enclosed outdoor play area plus the extensive school grounds.

The nursery is registered for a total of 40 children from 3 months to under 8 years at any one time. There are currently 14 children on roll with 8 children receiving funding for their nursery education. The setting is able to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Six members of staff work regularly with the children. Four of the staff have early child care qualifications at Level 3 and above, with three of these having Level 6 qualifications. Two staff are working towards relevant qualifications at Level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are developing an awareness of healthy lifestyles as they take part in an excellent range of physical activities in clean, warm, comfortable and child-friendly premises and an exciting outdoor environment. They explore and develop physical control as they enjoy stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences, including regular exploration of the adjacent parkland and nature areas. Children negotiate successfully the challenges of the large static equipment including balance beams, ramps and ladders. They begin to understand that exercise affects their bodies and develop a positive attitude to robust physical activity and to playing and working outside whatever the weather. Opportunities to develop large muscle skills are further developed as they enthusiastically run around and negotiate obstacles on the ride-on toys. Children move spontaneously and with confidence in the available space indoors. Babies through to older children enjoy moving to music and taking part in aerobic exercise. Staff have a good understanding of each child's stage of physical development and are able to encourage the children to gain confidence and new skills. Ballet and gymnastics are experienced with delight by the older children.

Children eagerly learn about healthy eating as they enjoy a range of freshly cooked, nutritious meals and snacks. Interesting and comprehensive menus have been established and are reviewed regularly to ensure that the needs of all children and their parents are met. Children try new tastes, express their enjoyment and use good table manners during the sociable meal times. This is extended during themed festival days and when enthusiastically taking part in cooking activities. This helps them understand about 'good' and 'bad' foods. Babies' dietary needs are well catered for, and they are encouraged to feed themselves and take part in an enjoyable time in their day. The older children proudly help themselves to drinks and regular fluids are encouraged by the staff, particularly in the hot weather.

Children's care is enhanced by the excellent practice of the staff, including highly effective nappy changing procedures and attention to the general cleanliness of the surroundings. Children imitate the staff and share good practice in health and personal care routines. They readily wash their hands after messy play and before snack and meal times. Older children are able to access toilet facilities for themselves and need little reminding to flush the toilets and wash their hands. They are aware that they are helping to prevent the spread of infection as they appropriately dispose of their used tissues. Children show pride in their increasing independence and their understanding of hygiene when they are praised for this behaviour. The children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have up to date knowledge of first aid in the event of any accident, and appropriate procedures are in place if children are unwell.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are safe as a result of the adults' very good awareness of health and safety and because all reasonable steps are taken to reduce the risk of accidents. Comprehensive risk assessments and excellent supervision allow children freedom to choose activities that offer excellent variety and extensive challenge within safe limits. Children are able to access a large item of static equipment or to go for walks in the adjacent parklands only after daily risk assessments have been done by the staff. They understand they need to walk carefully on different surfaces and purposefully learn about road safety as they explore the local environment. Children are reminded of stranger danger and that animals need to be treated with respect. This helps children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge of how to protect themselves from harm. Children learn more about safety as they use high quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development. This helps them begin to take personal responsibility for their safety. For example, they play enthusiastically but safely on the large play equipment and they ride vehicles sensibly. Children safely manipulate tools and implements and develop hand-eye coordination as they eagerly and accurately use shape cutters and rolling pins when playing with plasticine. They experience adult and small-sized utensils and tools as they participate in interesting gardening and cooking activities. Children are well protected because staff have a clear understanding of the local child protection guidelines. Their safety and welfare is further enhanced by staff carefully monitoring access to the premises, checking all equipment and complying with fire requirements.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy at the nursery and play, learn and have fun in the company of friends and adults. All the children, including the babies and younger children, enjoy a good range of activities including art experiences and daily time in the fresh air. They benefit from the care and encouragement of knowledgeable and experienced staff in the welcoming learning environment. Children's needs are generally well met through effective organisation and planning for the progress of all children from babies through to three years of age is in the initial stages of development. Staff are beginning to make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide activities to meet the needs of these younger children. Children begin to develop their independence and learn to play in groups using a range of resources which capture their interest. For example, they all develop their physical skills through planned activities such as ballet and gym for the older children and floor activities for the babies and younger children. Construction activities help develop their hand/eye coordination. Children develop positive relationships as they listen and communicate well with each other and with the adults, with all children contributing to the social activities in the nursery.

Children through the age ranges explore a variety of interesting materials which stimulate their curiosity. For example, babies and young children eagerly develop their senses as they play with paint and sawdust while older children make intricate models and figures with plasticine. Their perseverance to complete activities and their confidence to share feelings develops as they play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children participate enthusiastically in the planned activities on offer. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the world when they participate in activities relating to the environment such as growing and watering plants. In addition they learn about the practices and festivals within cultures different from their own and about the lives of the children sponsored by them through fund raising.

Children count confidently, are beginning to learn the meaning of numbers and can recognise numerals. They count the spots on the giant dice and enjoy maths games. Older children are beginning to develop the use of mathematical ideas to solve problems in planned activities and by participating in many day-to-day domestic routines. They understand how many more children are able to play at the water tray. Children enjoy drawing around different wooden shapes and are able to discuss why the shapes are different.

Creative and imaginative skills are being promoted with a good range of art resources, and the children take pride in their paintings and collages. Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore a variety of materials and discover why things happen and how they work. For example, they enthusiastically build towers with wooden blocks and test how tall and wide they need to make the towers. Children develop mouse skills when using the computer and they enjoy playing other keyboard/activity games.

Children are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses through planned and unplanned activities. Exercise is made fun in gymnastics and ballet sessions. They begin to understand why their hearts pump their blood around more quickly and why they need to move around outside to keep warm in the cold wind. Children develop good relationships with staff and each other, as they take turns and work together well in small and large group activities. They show concern for others as they play, making sure their friends are included in the game. Children interact and chat, showing awareness of the listener and listening well. They understand that print has meaning and make marks freely throughout their activities.

Staff make effective use of time and resources to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. Children are encouraged to make the most of their experiences by the staff's careful consideration of what the child might be able to learn with individual challenge promoted through good questioning and enabling. Generally, they are able to persevere and complete activities and extend their learning within the routines of the day. However, children's interests and opportunities for them to take initiative in their play are limited as they do not access resources easily. Systems for planning for the individual child's progress are good. Observations and assessments of children's progress towards the early learning goals and information gained from the parents are used to inform planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a sense of belonging as they form relationships with staff and their peers. Staff appreciate the individuality of the children and the part they play in the nursery. Children

begin to appreciate the diverse society in which we live through participating in activities about their own and other cultures and beliefs such as Christmas and Chinese New Year. Currently there are no children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or children who speak English as an additional language attending the nursery but staff have past experience and ensure that they work with parents and other professionals to meet each child's needs.

Children make choices about the activities on offer although they do not generally initiate their own play and learning and develop their individual interests further. Older children understand their own needs and begin to respect the needs of others. They make sure their friends are included in the activities and are aware that some children have different needs to themselves. The children behave very well as they are made aware of what is appropriate behaviour. They respond well to the consistent boundaries set them and to the encouragement given by the caring staff. Older children begin to take responsibility and manage their own behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving funding for their nursery education is good. Homework books provide details of topics and suggestions on how parents can support their children at home. Parents are particularly supportive of the home reading scheme. Children's progress is fostered by regular discussions to ensure that parents know how their children are developing and how they can contribute to their children's progress. This includes sharing information at the beginning and end of the day and at more formal opportunities at parents' evenings or appointments. Good relationships with parents throughout the nursery mean that children are well settled with familiar and trusted adults. They separate happily from their parent or carer and are gaining self-assurance and confidence with others. Parents are informed about how the nursery operates and the activities provided through a comprehensive prospectus, written notices, newsletters and displays and information about the care of the children. They are aware of the way to make their concerns known. Parents can be involved further in their children's life at the nursery and school through skill-sharing and fund-raising. Parents complete initial assessments and information about the children's needs on settling in at the nursery, and continue to contribute about their children's achievements at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning are enhanced by the good organisation of the nursery. Space and resources are generally well-organised although staff do not always allow them the time and opportunities to initiate and develop their own play and learning. The indoor space is laid out thoughtfully into different work areas and the outdoor space is prepared for children's use and used whenever possible. Children benefit from the good staff to child ratios and the care given by highly qualified staff, as can be seen through the good supervision and interaction.

All documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is reviewed regularly to ensure that the individual care plans are met and that their welfare and development is safeguarded.

Leadership and management of the nursery is good. There are clear aims for the continued improvement of the quality of care and education for children. The staff team are committed

to continuous improvement and development of the nursery care and education and of their own personal development. There is a clear system for staff recruitment, induction and appraisal. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. Overall, children needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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):

- improve the outcomes for children under three by consolidation of the use of an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to operate independently and take initiative by reviewing their access to resources.

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