



Owl Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127430
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Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott
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Registered person	Owl Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of 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.

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 outstanding. 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?

Owl Pre-School opened in 1976. It operates from two rooms, with a kitchen and toilet facilities in a modular building in Shears Green Infant School grounds in Northfleet, Gravesend. The pre-school serves the local area as well as those from further afield.

There are currently 55 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 48 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with disabilities or learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens weekdays during school term times. Sessions are from 08.45 - 11.45, Monday to Friday and 13.00 - 15.30 Monday to Thursday.

There are 12 staff who work with the children. More than half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level two or three.

The setting receives support from the local authority and other specialists. The setting earned the Kent Quality Kitemark in 2004.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children play in a clean and tidy environment where there are good routines to ensure toys, resources and equipment are clean and hygienic. Children participate in routines, activities and topics that enable them to learn the importance of good hygiene and healthy living. For example, staff encourage children to fetch others to join the snack table and remind them to wash their hands before eating. As a result children's skill in managing their personal hygiene is good.

Children enjoy a choice of snacks that are healthy such as raisins, apples or biscuits, and enjoy the social and learning opportunities that are promoted by staff when they sit down for their snack and drink in small groups. This encourages children to develop healthy eating habits and discuss these in a social situation.

Children enjoy a good range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They move competently when using the stepping stones, climbing frame and pedal bikes or cars. They relish the opportunities to play outside when they choose whether to engage in physical play or quietly explore the natural provision such as the wildlife area. This underpins children's understanding of how to keep healthy and to rest or be active according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a clean, well maintained and attractive environment. The welcoming displays of information for parents, and examples of children's work, such as the painted circle of hands show that staff nurture children's contributions, making them feel valued.

The good organisation of well maintained toys and equipment means children can freely select from an excellent range of age appropriate toys and resources and equipment from tables, trays and boxes at child height. As a result children extend, organise and enjoy their own play. Staff use toys and resources well during planned and free activities: children are encouraged to improvise and use their imagination so they are interested in the opportunities offered.

Children enjoy their play in a very safe, secure environment. Security of premises is very good, ensuring children are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult. Children and staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire because these are regularly practised and logged. Good staff interaction helps develop children's awareness of

safety within the setting; for example, the children requested a zebra crossing when outside playing, revealing their interest in learning about road safety.

Staff have attended child protection training and are aware of the established procedures to follow if there are any concerns. This provides safeguards for children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children who attend the setting are confident and secure. Staff work together effectively, utilising weekly team meetings to get to know the children and to plan for their development effectively. Children have a relaxed relationship with the staff. They benefit from routines and plans which support and are tailored to individual needs as staff carefully observe and assess their development. Staff are skilled at using the Birth to three framework to identify children's development and to construct individual play plans to enable all children to flourish.

Staff have been trained to use the Leuven scale of assessment and children benefit from the promotion of child centred learning and the attention given to their well being while using the facilities. All children benefit from the carefully constructed programme which encourages their active participation and nurtures their contributions.

Nursery Education:

Teaching and learning is outstanding. Children enjoy and learn from a broad and varied range of activities. A weekly plan of activities to cover the six areas of the curriculum offers varied play opportunities for all children during planned and free play. Children's assessments are regular and frequent and cover their progress in all six areas of the curriculum. The staff adapt the planned activities so that these are linked to the assessments of children, meeting individual needs through one to one support, small and large group work.

Children make very good progress because the staff evaluate and monitor their levels of engagement to review their plans constantly. Children also benefit from planned and spontaneous opportunities to encourage their learning. Staff are very good role models and demonstrate very positive attitudes by participating in activities in an enthusiastic manner and allowing children time to explore, investigate and consolidate in order to learn well.

Children are extremely well motivated and enjoy new challenges. They concentrate well at self-chosen activities because they receive excellent recognition and support from staff to promote their independence. Children's behaviour is exemplary: they respond to all requests because they understand the need to cooperate. This means that they play harmoniously with other children.

Children speak very confidently to peers and adults as staff encourage them to share their ideas, feelings and experiences. Children are competent writers and purposefully name work as well as writing and posting cards and letters in the postbox.

Children count confidently and recognise numbers that are important to them. They enjoy singing number rhymes and songs and are able to use counting skills to perform simple sums. They succeed in using appropriate mathematical language during free play activities.

Children are able to freely explore everyday items and learn through practical play; for example, with sand and when investigating the outdoor environment with binoculars and telescopes. Children enthusiastically learn about their community and culture through a variety of activities and opportunities, such as tasting different types of foods.

Children relish the opportunities to play outside when they choose whether they wish to engage in physical play or quietly explore the natural provision such as the wildlife area. They enjoy opportunities to perform action songs. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. For example, they benefit from using a selection of varied sizes of paintbrushes in everyday activities.

Children play imaginatively with each other, pretending to be monsters in the outdoor play area; staff actively promote these self chosen roles skilfully. For example, staff help children to organise a zebra crossing when requested, enabling children to practise road safety through role play. This excellent support enables all children to experience relevant learning and build on their skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children experience good opportunities to develop their awareness of differences, which enables them to feel valued as individuals. They develop a positive attitude to others and gain a balanced view of society and their community through celebrating festivals, tasting food from a variety of cultures and having access to a good range of play resources which show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Excellent arrangements are in place to support the individual needs of all children who attend. The setting has made very good arrangements to care for children with learning difficulties or disabilities and frequently liaise with various specialist agencies to support those who attend. As a consequence, children feel secure and enjoy their experiences at the setting as they are all included. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children develop confidence and their self-esteem is promoted as they receive praise and recognition for their efforts. Their behaviour is exceedingly positive and they play together harmoniously because the staff effectively model by example, enabling children to understand right and wrong. This means that children feel secure and potential conflicts are rare. Children learn to take turns and share, for example, when using the computer.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit from parents' involvement in their learning as their play plans are shared with parents who can, and do, contribute towards these individual plans. Parents are given information on the planned activities and routines and receive information on the Foundation Stage curriculum so that they can support their children's learning. The parents benefit from effective communication through newsletters and frequent verbal feedback on progress of their children. There are regular consultations with

parents who are confident about their relationships with keyworkers and feel well informed. This enables staff and parents work together so that children make exceptionally good progress and thrive.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children share very good relationships with staff that have been thoroughly vetted for their suitability to work with young children because there are secure procedures for vetting and employing appropriately qualified staff. Children's welfare and individual needs are well met by the group who have extensive records in place to support their understanding of each child.

Children are protected from harm because staff have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures that the group uses in emergency situations, such as the Fire evacuation procedure. Children enjoy the security provided by the group's ethos, policies and procedures which are well understood by staff. For example, the management of behaviour is successfully promoted through staff modelling techniques.

Management and Leadership are outstanding.

Staff have a sound awareness of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development. They have successfully integrated their use of the Birth to three framework to enable progression to the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This has a beneficial effect on the children's development, enabling them to learn from a secure base. Staff are continually reviewing the provision and achieve quality assurance through the use of questionnaires. Observations and evaluations are regularly used to monitor the effect of changes and assess the effect on the children.

The comprehensive range of planning enables staff to focus activities towards all the children's needs with a high degree of skill. The provision is managed and monitored in a systematic and thorough manner: all staff are encouraged to evaluate the curriculum to identify strengths and areas for improvement which are implemented after discussion and later reviewed. This has considerable benefits for the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspections of care and nursery education the group had a total of two recommendations set. Both of these recommendations have been successfully addressed.

Staff have attended Child Protection training in 2005, cascading information to staff and incorporating a variety of up to date information in their policies and procedures. The outdoor play area has been developed into a play area offering various types of play experiences to children.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

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