



# Oxford Brookes University Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134021
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2007
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<b>Registered person</b>	Oxford Brookes University
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oxford Brookes University Day Nursery has been registered on this site since 1997. It is housed in a purpose built building at the rear of the Morrell site campus and children have access to outdoor play areas. The nursery is owned by Oxford Brookes University and mainly provides day care for staff and students of the university.

The nursery opens for 47 weeks of the year, on weekdays from 08.30 to 17.30 with some flexibility to extend the day, by prior arrangement. A maximum of 60 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 70 children on roll between the ages of seven months and five years. Of these 25 children receive nursery education funding. The nursery provides support for children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 staff to work with the children, 17 of whom have early years qualifications. A total of 16 of the staff are qualified to level three and two are completing training to level four. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a caring attitude towards children if they are unwell and they share any health concerns with parents. Children's individual dietary and health needs are effectively met in the nursery since the staff work closely with parents and respect their wishes. Staff attend first aid training to update their skills, though the monitoring of first aid supplies lacks attention. When children have a special health need the staff are good at obtaining professional advice. Some documentation regarding the administration of medicines to children lacks detail to ensure best practice.

Children are very familiar with routines for hand washing when they visit the toilet or before sitting down to eat. Even the youngest toddlers who are in the process of toilet training know the routine and receive lively encouragement from staff. Staff maintain a clean environment and work through the day to keep areas clean where children play and eat. This care is reflected in other areas of the nursery, for example the installation of a sonic deterrent to keep animals off the outdoor sand pit, or the careful use of separate bedding for babies. There are only occasional lapses in the good procedures for maintaining hygiene when changing children's nappies. Children eat heartily at nursery with a good variety of nutritious snacks and meals. Children of all ages sit with their peers to enjoy sociable meal times and the staff are good at supporting them by sitting alongside them at the table. Children receive encouragement to use cutlery and babies seem to have no difficulty in spoon feeding themselves. Older children freely access drinking water and toddlers can indicate a picture to staff when they want extra fluids. Children are becoming in tune with their own needs.

Outdoor play is a successful feature of the nursery. All children, including the babies, receive positive messages from staff about enjoying the fresh air of the garden. Children are not put off by a cold day and wrap up warm and access the outdoors directly from their base rooms. There is a delightful range of activities for children to enjoy including digging, balancing, climbing and using wheeled toys. New equipment provides challenge for more able children. The older children have organised group activities as part of their daily programme and this provides an excellent opportunity to develop physical skills. They enjoy showing their expertise at yoga positions, forming a 'shark's fin' or 'windmill' with ease, encouraged by the enthusiastic staff. A perceptive child notes in a moment of stillness at the end of the yoga session 'It's very hard doing nothing'. Sleep times provide children with opportunity to rest and recuperate in a quiet room and they can locate their own bed from their photograph that staff place on their mattress. Staff are attentive to the children as they settle to sleep and they monitor sleeping babies on a regular basis.

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

The provision is good.

Children spend their time in comfortable, warm and attractive surroundings in this purpose built nursery. Staff organise the spacious base rooms to provide children with stimulating areas for play and learning. Displays of children's work are on show in all rooms and soft furnishings create an atmosphere resembling a home environment. This is particularly evident in the baby room where rugs and large sofas enable staff to care and play with the babies very well. Equipment in use throughout the nursery is of good quality and children have a wide range of stimulating resources in their reach each day. There is a good emphasis on children experiencing natural materials. Although staff monitor the cleanliness of the toys they do not follow clearly documented routines for such tasks. The children benefit from some carefully chosen new additions, for example a listening station to add to information technology resources for the older ones.

Children play safely since levels of staff supervision are good. Staff pay attention to reducing potential hazards, for example with the use of finger guards on doors or socket covers. Security of the nursery is good and staff collect information from parents to ensure only authorised adults collect children. Staff rely on their day-to-day working practice to conduct risk assessments of areas where children play. For the outdoor area this includes a written tick list for extra vigilance though this good practice does not extend to the indoor areas. Adults are confident with the fire evacuation procedure for the nursery and they have an evacuation bag containing extra clothing to hand in case children have to wait outside in an emergency. This reflects how staff think ahead of what the needs of young children may be.

Children's welfare is of importance to the staff and they have a strong understanding of the area of child protection. Children are in the care of adults who undertake a vetting procedure to ensure they are suitable for the work. Staff make their child protection policy clear to parents and they have all the necessary contacts to hand if they require them. Staff undertake training to ensure they are aware of latest developments in the area of child protection and staff working in base rooms know who to consult if they have concerns.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages in the nursery enjoy excellent levels of staff support in their development. Children each have their named key person who is particularly in tune with their needs and staff sensibly have a 'buddy' system for those times they are away. Babies are flourishing in their spacious but homely room. They have a delightful selection of resources, carefully chosen for their different sensory properties. Babies explore metal, wood and fabric as part of their normal day. They are confident enough with staff to try foot printing and they enthusiastically explore a water tray. When babies are ready they move into 'Little Nursery' with others of toddler age. Here too the children benefit from knowledgeable and caring staff. The children show self-motivation to explore the new set of resources out each day and there is an excellent emphasis on play using the senses. When children explore sand and water staff sometimes provide a helpful commentary to what is happening so that children learn words associated with their actions.

The staff working with children under three years are confident and successful at using the framework of the Birth to three matters. They share information with parents about what the children are doing and they use the aspects of the framework to plan daily activities and monitor the children's development. Each child has a set of individual targets and staff are able to talk knowledgeably about the children in their care. The children have a flexible day which takes into account their needs for sleep and active play. They all enjoy time outside in the fresh air of the nursery garden.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children between three and five years flourish in the stimulating environment of 'Big Nursery' where there is an emphasis on learning through play. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how young children learn. Planning is systematic and provides thorough coverage of all six areas of learning. Staff not only share their plans with parents but also with the children by displaying photographs of where they will be working and the selection of activities. Children know for example who is due to work outdoors so they can alert that member of staff if they are ready to take part in garden play. Children also contribute to forward planning, suggesting for example book titles for a topic on favourite stories. Staff have effective systems in place to monitor the children's successful progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They gather information in a range of ways, from photographs, drawings and observations. They use the information in forward planning to help the children achieve the next steps.

Children show high levels of self-motivation as they choose from a stimulating range of options. They play well together and are building good relationships with staff and others. They play imaginatively and show concentration at tasks since they follow their own interests. Children are developing independence as they look after their belongings in the nursery room. Children are confident speakers and they are learning the shapes and sounds of letters, reinforced by displays and group work. They frequently choose books to look at and the nursery has an extensive selection of reading material for this age group. Children have daily opportunities to use writing materials and activities help them make links to the purpose of writing. They enjoy, for example, bird watching in the garden and using clip boards to record their findings. There is an emphasis on written print around the nursery and this includes many examples of different languages too so that all children can feel at home.

Children confidently use early mathematics as they play. They show a very good awareness of shape as they locate the table they are to sit or select the correct pieces for a construction game. Children follow the numbered sequence of construction cards so that a model soon takes shape and they show interest in a notice that informs them that five can play in an area at one time. Staff are on hand to help but not to dominate the activities. Children can make rapid progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The computer is a popular choice and children are confident in their early technology skills. Displays are a good source of enquiry with children exploring objects linked to winter weather. The free flow play on offer with the outside works very well in providing children with opportunities to explore the natural world first hand. Staff extend topic work to the outdoors to reinforce the children's learning. Children enjoy digging in the herb planter or using binoculars to find birds and squirrels.

Each day children can freely explore an excellent range of musical instruments that includes examples from different cultures. A group time led by staff playing a guitar is lively and enjoyable. Children use areas for story making and show enthusiasm for a newly created 'den' when learning about hibernation. Staff use simple but effective resources to create these areas, adding fabric and puppets linked by a woodland theme to enhance the children's play. Children are free to explore paint, collage or clay developing their co-ordination as they use tools with the materials. Staff are happy to let them enjoy the experiences without necessarily producing an end product. Each morning has a set time for some group work where children share a game or task with their key person. This provides a valuable opportunity for concentration and listening to others. The day is also interspersed with large group times where children experience a different type of activity and interaction. They behave very well at these times and show enjoyment in fun activities like parachute games and yoga. The daily routine has a successful balance between adult-led and child-initiated play.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Staff enthusiastically greet the children when they arrive at nursery and they are adept at comforting children when they separate from their parents. Staff have a number of successful strategies for helping the children to feel secure in the setting, for example with the recent introduction of home visits to build links with new families. Children see their own names and photographs around their rooms and they are confident at finding their own belongings. The key person scheme which links each child to a member of staff works particularly effectively in the nursery and provides significant reassurance for children and their parents. There is an excellent attitude in the nursery to promote equal opportunities and to raise the children's awareness of others. Posters and photographs around the setting successfully depict languages and images of the wider world in a very positive way. Children happily play with resources like cooking utensils from different cultures and staff explain where items come from. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

Staff manage the range of children's behaviour extremely well. They provide excellent role models in the way they talk to each other and to the children. The behaviour policy of the nursery is a comprehensive working document that provides staff with excellent practical advice on how to successfully manage young children's behaviour. The younger children have access to space and plenty of choices to keep frustrations to a minimum. Babies and toddlers respond with claps and giggles when staff praise their achievements. The older children behave well and are at a stage where they can talk about feelings and suggest ideas for good behaviour. Children listen to staff and respond to directions. They sit sensibly at meal times and work together as a group, for example, when they make a parachute rise and fall. Although no children with learning difficulties or disabilities currently attends the setting, the staff are fully trained and experienced in helping to support families should the need arise.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive a comprehensive range of information about the nursery which is attractively on display in the reception areas and base rooms of the setting. Staff make excellent use of photographs to explain to parents details of the educational curriculum and they share planning documents so that parents can involve

themselves in their child's learning. Staff in all areas of the nursery are very attentive to parents and spend time sharing conversations about the children's progress. Many parents speak openly and enthusiastically of the professionalism of the staff and the excellent standards of care that their child receives.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation of this nursery benefits from the strong leadership qualities of managerial and senior staff. The policies and procedures work well overall to promote the outcomes for children, with only a few identified weaknesses. Staff regularly review the policy documents and make them available to parents. Documentation is well organised and stored confidentially. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

There are robust procedures in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff and the nursery benefits from strong links with the human resources department of the university. Staff regularly attend training and use the information to improve opportunities for children. Just one out of many examples is the way babies are gaining from new resources for play due to staff listening to information from other professionals in the field of child care.

The positive attitude to improvement permeates the whole nursery and is particularly helpful for the older children following the Foundation Stage curriculum. The leadership and management of the nursery education are outstanding. The staff are continually adding to the opportunities for children to make progress. Improvements to the outdoor area, for example provide innovative challenges like a wall with climbing grips or ropes for balancing along a log climbing frame. Staff are excellent at self-reflection and have worked together through a quality assurance scheme. Their monitoring of the setting and desire to improve has a direct positive impact on the standards of care and education for the children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection staff were required to make some updates to children's records. They now ask parents to give their written permission for staff to obtain emergency medical treatment for children. Information is also added to records regarding any special religious or cultural observances of the family. Both these issues add to the information held by staff to ensure they meet the children's individual needs and take into account parental wishes.

At the last inspection of the nursery education a point for consideration was to include labels on resources to reflect the languages of the children attending. There are now many examples around the nursery of signs, labels and posters that include several languages. Staff keep a list of useful words in home languages and reminders for children, to wash hands after visiting the toilet for example, are shown in picture and word labels. This improvement has a good impact on children's self esteem and their sense of belonging at the nursery. It also provides positive messages to parents and reflects the welcoming attitude of staff.

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

Since the last inspection 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**

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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):

- ensure that first aid supplies are regularly checked and that parents sign the medical records to acknowledge when medication has been administered
- consider introducing more clearly documented routines for conducting risk assessments and cleaning rotas for equipment

#### **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)