



Oatlands Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122488
Inspection date	17 January 2007
Inspector	Patricia Jane Daniels
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Registered person	Oatlands 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 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?

Oatlands Pre-School has been established since 1970. It is registered to look after a maximum of 36 children aged from two years to five years. The pre-school operates in a large village hall in Oatlands and serves Oatlands village and the surrounding areas. Children have access to two large rooms and a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

Opening times are five mornings per week from 09.15 until 12.00, term time only.

There are currently 53 children on roll, 32 of whom are funded. The setting has procedures in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

Eleven members of staff work with the children on various days, of which seven have recognised early years qualifications. Two members of staff are on a training programme. Five members of staff hold a current first aid certificate.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff follow good hygiene procedures to minimise cross contamination. For example, they maintain the equipment used by children in a clean condition and wipe the tables before snack time. Children learn about personal hygiene by following the routines and through explanations from staff. Some are developing understanding and know that they need to wash their hands before having a snack.

Children have access to appropriate treatment if they have an accident because a member of staff trained to give first aid is at every session. Staff have training to administer invasive medications such as epipens. Written consent ensures that children receive treatment in line with parents' wishes. A suitable sick child policy ensures that children who are contagious are excluded and not a source of infection for others. Parents are informed of contagious illnesses within the group such as chicken pox, so that they can check their children for symptoms.

A jug of water and beakers are presented within children's reach, so that they can help themselves to a drink if they are thirsty. The group provides a healthy snack of assorted fruit and a drink of milk or water during the session. Staff note any allergies to ensure that children's dietary requirements are met.

Children have daily outdoor play sessions when the weather is fine. They enjoy aiming balls into the basketball net and some persist until they score a goal. Children move freely, running around and changing direction to avoid each other. Children use one handed equipment such as scissors and pencils with increasing skill. Some use a pincer grip to hold pencils and can use scissors to cut paper effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a spacious environment that is clean and well maintained. The group has sole use of the hall when it is operating. Two large rooms are used and children spend time in both during the sessions. The outdoor play area is easily accessed by a ramp and features safety flooring for children's protection. The premises are secure and a doorbell entry system ensures that access is suitably monitored by staff.

All equipment used by the children is in good condition. Staff undertake regular risk assessments and potential hazards are minimised or removed to provide a safe environment. Children are supervised at all times and are helped to develop an awareness of safety for themselves. For example, a member of staff explains to a child that he should not go under the table because he might bang his head.

Regular fire drills are held every term and a log is kept for reference. However, the frequency of the drills does not ensure that all staff and children practise them often enough to fully understand the process.

Staff understand their roles in safeguarding children well and know the procedures to take if they have concerns. A designated member of staff has attended training and she holds particular responsibility for ensuring the children's welfare. Parents are informed of the group's policy through information contained in the registration pack. These actions protect the children's welfare effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are provided with a range of interesting play activities and resources that promote their development in all areas. Staff plan and offer different activities and resources every day. This keeps the play provision fresh and interesting, and the children enjoy investigating what is provided. However, the opportunity for children to select independently from other resources is limited.

Staff have a warm and friendly approach to the children and create an atmosphere that promotes their confidence and self-esteem. New children are supported and reassured. Staff are interested in what the children say and do, and involve themselves in their play. The Birth to three matters framework is used to inform the group's planning, but there is not a clear process for using observations to plan the next steps in the children's learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Plans support all areas of children's learning across the Foundation stage, although observations of children's abilities do not clearly inform the next steps in their learning. Children generally make good progress because the activities promote learning in all areas and staff use the opportunities presented within the children's play to support their learning.

Children eagerly explore the activities presented and some spend quite long periods of time investigating. Children work well together, learning the need to take turns and share fairly. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Children are encouraged to trace over their names and some can write their names legibly. Children are confident speakers; they tell other children and adults about their interests and ask questions.

Children have opportunities for counting throughout the session. They identify different shapes and use them to make pictures. They spend time at construction activities and use language to describe sizes.

Staff offer activities such as planting bulbs and themes about Autumn to help children develop knowledge and understanding of the natural world. They routinely provide a laptop so that children learn about technology. Children explore different materials such as clay and paint,

and make collages. They represent their ideas through their drawings, and staff write the children's verbal descriptions onto the pictures so that others can understand and respond.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The group seeks information from parents about their children's needs and preferences. It invites parents to stay for a morning session to help children settle. These actions help the group to provide appropriate care from the start, and help new children to develop confidence and a sense of belonging.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the diversity within our society through resources and activities provided by the group. For example, they have a range of dolls wearing clothes that represent different cultural groups and a variety of different festivals are celebrated throughout the year. People with disabilities are represented in books and small world toys.

The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very well. A designated member of staff has particular responsibility in this area and works with parents and outside agencies to offer maximum support. She is proactive in seeking information and advice that can help staff provide appropriate care. All staff make sure that children can take part in the activities, and are included.

Staff promote respect and consideration for others because they are good role models. They encourage the children to have manners and be considerate. For example, at circle time a child is reminded to be quiet because if he is noisy his friends cannot hear what is happening. This explanation helps the child to learn to manage his behaviour. Staff manage children's behaviour positively and appropriately through praise, explanation and diversion.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a prospectus that includes general information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and they can access displays of the planning. Open mornings are held, when parents meet with their children's key workers to discuss progress. Parents spend time exchanging general information with staff when they drop off and collect their children. A positive relationship is fostered, and the exchange of information promotes continuity of care for the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play in a spacious environment that is organised to meet their needs. The group has an efficient recruitment and checking procedure to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with children. The majority of staff have childcare qualifications and all are encouraged to attend training workshops. This ensures staff have sufficient knowledge of current childcare practices to support the children. Some staff have designated roles and all have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They are well deployed, and a high ratio of staff to children provides good support. Regulatory requirements are met and documentation relating

to the health, safety and welfare of the children are in place and well maintained. The group meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. The committee employ two managers who share the role between them. One has responsibility for administration, the other for the day-to-day running of the setting. This second manager has effectively identified the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and has implemented changes to improve planning and record keeping. She is currently the only member of staff who has training in the Foundation Stage Curriculum. All staff regularly attend meetings, when they discuss the children's progress and plans for delivering the curriculum.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, Ofsted asked the group to consider making wall displays accessible to children. Currently the group is unable to make changes, since the property owner supplies the designated boards for displays.

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.

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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 opportunities for children to make independent choices from resources
- effectively use observations of children's abilities to inform the next steps in their learning (also applies to nursery education).

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):

- improve staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage through training.

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