



Oak Tree Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133089
Inspection date	16 January 2007
Inspector	Sue Vernon
Setting Address	Newton Park, Newton St. Loe, Bath, Avon, BA2 9BN
Telephone number	01225 875590
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Registered person	Bath Spa University
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?

Oak Tree Day Nursery was established in 1995 and operates from two adjoining houses in the parkland grounds of the Bath Spa University, Newton Park, Bath. It is a full day-care nursery offering both full and part-time places for the children of college staff and students as well as the local community.

Children use upstairs and downstairs rooms offering separate play space for babies, toddlers and pre-school children. There is an enclosed garden shared by all the children. The nursery is open from 8.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday throughout the year. The nursery is registered to care for 27 children from three months to under five years. There are currently 39 children on roll, of whom 10 receive funding for early education.

There are 10 staff of whom eight are qualified and one is working towards an additional level in her childcare qualification. The nursery is supported by the local authority early years team. The nursery holds 'Investors in People' status.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Effective measures are in place to promote children's health and wellbeing. Staff follow good hygiene routines such as using aprons and gloves when changing nappies and cleaning tables and equipment regularly with anti-bacterial spray. Children know why they wash hands before eating and after outside play. They enjoy independently using liquid soap and paper towels and know about germs after using an ultra-violet light box to look at the cleanliness of their hands during a topic on healthy living. The nursery has a clear written sickness policy explaining why they do not take children who may be infectious. This is shared with all parents so they understand that this protects children from possible cross-infections.

The nursery staff work closely with parents to establish if children have any special dietary or medical needs such as allergies. Staff plan carefully how to support them by providing appropriate menus and checking any food provided. This helps children and their parents feel secure. Children's health is well supported through healthy snacks such as selections of fresh fruit including pear and apple slices. Drinks of milk or water are offered with snacks and lunch but are not always freely available during the sessions. Nutritious menus are planned with support from a nutritionist and include vegetarian options, fish and salads.

Children develop their physical skills well through daily play in the enclosed garden areas. They enjoy peddling small tricycles and negotiate around each other well. They hop and jump across hoops and practice hand to eye co-ordination through throwing and catching balls. Balancing skills are promoted through indoor obstacle courses using balancing beams and parachute games. Children enjoy regular opportunities to develop their small muscle skills. They make models from a variety of construction kits by joining units together and use pens and paint brushes confidently in craft work.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where risks have been effectively addressed and minimised. Staff perform a daily check of all rooms and the outdoor play area before use. This ensures that all children can move around safely during play activities and within the routine of the day such as when using either the carpeted area or the art and craft space. Staff encourage children to be aware of safety guidelines and take responsibility for their own safety which builds children's independence. For example, children learn how to use the outdoor tricycles and scooters safely.

All rooms in the nursery are bright, attractive and welcoming to both parents and children. Information such as staff details, menus, and whiteboards showing what toys the children have

played with are available for parents in both nursery houses. Toys and play activities are set out ready in each base room which enables children to move smoothly into play when separating from parents or carers. All rooms have areas for messy play and craftwork with carpeted areas and soft cushions for quiet play and rest. Babies have a separate sleep room to ensure they can rest away from play activities. This ensures that all children's play and care needs are met. Both equipment and resources are well-maintained, and are safe and suitable for the ages of the children attending. Toys are attractively presented in low-level storage which enables children to make independent choices safely in their play. This builds their confidence and self-esteem. For example, toddlers enjoy selecting push-and-go cars or shape-sorters from low shelves.

Children's welfare is safeguarded effectively by the staff's good awareness of child protection issues and the required procedures to be followed should any concerns arise. A written child protection policy outlining the nursery's responsibilities is made available to parents which builds their awareness.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and relaxed in the nursery's welcoming environment. All ages are interested in their play as the staff have planned and prepared well before children arrive and they ensure resources are to hand during play sessions. Age-appropriate activities are offered for each age group which builds children's confidence. Activities ensure children in all the age rooms are suitably challenged, for example all ages access sand and water play and creative play with a variety of painting opportunities. Children under two enjoy self-selection of books, push-along toys and planned sessions such as home play with dolls, clothes and play food. Children in the two years and over room enjoy a variety of craft work such as junk model making, as well as singing familiar action songs and enjoying books.

An effective key-worker system is used for all ages which ensures good relationships are formed with the children and their families. This helps children settle quickly and feel secure. Staff give consistent praise for children's efforts, for example when using construction kits which builds their enjoyment and self-esteem. Children confidently seek help from staff such as when putting on their shoes for outdoor play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The staff team have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning and use this to plan an interesting range of learning opportunities for funded children. The staff understand how children learn and are skilful in prompting children's thinking with open questions. This encourages children's motivation and extends their concentration. For example, staff encourage children using a variety of coloured sand to glue on a picture. They ask questions about texture, colours and what might happen next. Observations of children's play are made and linked to children's profile records in order to monitor children's learning progress. However, any specific learning needs are not linked back into short-term planning.

Children are confident and enjoy learning through play. They develop their independence through selecting resources to extend their play. Children have good relationships with each other and enjoy working together, such as when tidying away toys. They enjoy good relationships with the staff team which encourages them to confidently contribute their comments about their experiences at circle and story time. Children enjoy a print rich environment and value books. Many children recognise their name cards and identify letters and phonic sounds accurately. Mark-making opportunities are offered, with children attempting to write their names on pictures.

Children count confidently within activities such as circle time and use fingers to try simple adding and subtraction when staff ask 'how many is that if we have two more?'. Simple mathematical language is used by the children as they describe adding more sand to make a large pile. Staff help children consider size and mathematical problem solving as they work out why a large box of farm animals will not fit on a smaller tray. Children learn about the world around them as they grow daffodils and sunflowers outside in the garden area and cress indoors. Their curiosity is encouraged as they use bug-boxes and magnifying glasses to examine insects and worms from the garden. Children enjoy use of the outdoor area daily though sharing this time with younger children limits the full learning potential.

Children explore a variety of creative play opportunities. They try different types of painting such as watercolours, marble and roller painting. Different textures such as wet and dry sand, foam and clay are offered and children make free-choice pictures from dry pasta shapes. Children reflect well on time and place as they look at photographs and descriptions of when they took 'Freddie the Teddy' home with them for the weekend. They learn about technology as they take photographs of his adventures with a disposable camera as he stays overnight at Granny's house or visits the park or seaside with them. Children enjoy repeating familiar songs and rhymes and expressing themselves with musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and staff ensure they are aware of each child's needs and routines which they support. For example, babies' sleep and feeding routines are respected. All children are included in the range of play activities which promotes inclusion. For example, both boys and girls enjoy dressing-up and home play. A good selection of resources that promote children's understanding of the value of diversity are available including posters, books, dolls and play figures. Staff work with parents over any concerns about developmental issues and are happy to follow the advice of professionals such as speech therapists. This supports each child's individual progress.

Established settling-in procedures and good methods for giving feedback are used to build effective relationships with parents. This builds consistency of care for the children. Parents are greeted warmly and know their child's key worker well. Staff display information on both menus and play activities as well as giving written daily diaries for younger children which builds good links with home. Information about the nursery's policies and procedures are given to all parents though some small detail around the complaints procedure is not included. Notice boards and regular newsletters keep parents up-to date with information.

Children behave well and learn to work harmoniously together. The staff teams use positive, sensitive strategies for managing behaviour and are good role models. Consistent praise and encouragement is given, such as when children are encouraged to join in putting toys away. This helps children understand behaviour boundaries and builds their self-esteem. Children learn to share and take turns, for example when waiting for their go on a scooter.

The partnership with parents who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation stage and the six areas of learning with the nursery's leaflets. Displays in the children's room shows what topic the children are doing and parents are encouraged to ask for ideas for home activities that link-in. This builds opportunities for them to feel involved. Parents know that they can discuss their child's record of progress at any time as well at the parent's evenings. The nursery fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Older children enjoy taking small responsibilities when acting as helpers each day and feel secure when sharing information from home about their weekend during circle time. They learn about their own culture when celebrating birthdays and Christmas. Children learn to respect each other, such as when listening to each other in circle play or at meal times.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective recruitment and appointment procedures are in place to ensure staff working with children are appropriately cleared and have suitable qualifications. Most staff hold early years qualifications and the required first aid certificate. The management's support for continuing training ensures that all the age-ranges of children attending benefit from well-planned play experiences and good quality care. Staff ratios are maintained which ensures children are suitably supervised and supported. All staff are encouraged to attend a variety of training sessions on such topics as behaviour management, creative play and child protection. They contribute their ideas on good practice and any areas for development. This ensures that the nursery is continuously evaluating it's quality.

Use of the areas is well-planned in order to provide a good variety of play opportunities and ensure children's care needs are met. Records such as those recording accidents and medication administration are in place and shared appropriately with parents. Policies and procedures are in place and shared with staff during their induction period which builds consistency in the well-established staff team.

Leadership and Management for nursery education is good.

Children receiving a funded place benefit from the very positive ethos of the management who strongly support good quality education. The staff team are supported in working together. They hold regular discussions and team meetings and their appraisal system links to training needs. The development of staff skills is valued. Staff review their practice and all contribute to observations and records which helps them monitor children's progress.

The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the nursery was asked to use observations to monitor children's progress and develop opportunities for parents to comment on children's progress and have access to children's records. Parents now meet key workers both informally and at parent's evenings when they can review and comment on children's records. Younger children have daily diaries which also asks for home comments. All age rooms make regular observations of children's activities and use them to monitor their progress. This supports children's development effectively and improves relationships with parents.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to develop opportunities for creative play. They now have daily opportunities to explore several messy play and creative activities including clay, sand and water play and different types of painting.

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):

- share updated details of the complaints procedure with parents and extend opportunities for access to drinking water.

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):

- strengthen the links between areas for development in children's profiles and short-term planning and further develop learning opportunities using the outdoor areas.

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