

Oakfield Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337417
Inspection date	08 March 2007
Inspector	Susan Jennifer Scott
Setting Address	Oakfield Cp Junior School, Oakfield Lane, DARTFORD, DA1 2SW
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Registered person	YMCA Thames Gateway (South) Ltd
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?

The Out of Mischief Day Nursery is located in a purpose built building within the Oakfield Children's Centre in the grounds of Oakfield School in Dartford, Kent. It is managed by the YMCA, in partnership with Surestart.

The children are cared for in two main rooms. One room is for babies and toddlers aged from three months to two years and the other is for children aged two to five years. The younger children's room has a separate nappy changing area and a milk preparation area. Both rooms have their own outside play areas which are fully enclosed. The nursery also has use of a fully fitted kitchen, a staff room, a utility room that includes laundry facilities, a disabled toilet, a further changing area and toilet with hand washing facilities.

A maximum of 25 children aged under five years may attend the nursery at any one time, and of these not more than nine may be under two years. At present, there are 23 children on the register and three of these are funded. The nursery is open for 51 weeks of the year. The baby room is open on Mondays to Fridays from 08:30 until 17:30 and the two to five room is open from 08:00 until 18:00. There is a part time manager of the education programme and a

supervisor who manages the care provision and acts as manager in her absence. There is also a deputy manager and six additional members of staff. All staff have appropriate education and childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and tidy environment where there are written routines to ensure toys, resources and equipment are clean and hygienic. Children benefit from clear routines and activities that enable them to learn the importance of good hygiene and healthy living. For example, staff encourage hand washing before eating and after they use the toilets through conversations with children. As a result, children's understanding of hygiene is good.

Five staff hold a current first aid certificate and are able to administer first aid in the event of an accident. This ensures children's welfare in the event of an accident when emergency treatment may be required.

Children benefit from frequent choices of healthy food and drink at snack and meal times when they enjoy a variety of vegetables, fruits, yogurts and freshly prepared meals. They enjoy the social opportunities offered to them at snack times when they can choose what they like to eat or drink at the small, communal table. Staff provide plates and bowls for snacks to reinforce children's understanding of healthy eating habits. Many children are encouraged to peel fruit or pour themselves a drink during this routine and can help themselves to water whenever they feel thirsty. This encourages children to develop healthy habits and promotes their independence. Staff use safe systems to ensure that all food and drink complies with parental instructions and children's preferences, enabling them to have confidence in the choices offered.

Children explore the interesting play and learning opportunities in the outdoor environment. This provides them with access to fresh air and vigorous physical play on a regular basis. They enjoy opportunities to use the climbing equipment and show good co-ordination when steering the bikes. The outside environment is used imaginatively to support children's understanding of their topic when appropriate. For example, children visit the garden centre nearby to learn about growing plants.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and mostly settle well. They enjoy their play in a warm and welcoming environment with attractive displays of their work showing that staff value children's contributions. Children are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult as security of the premises is very good.

Children benefit from playing in an attractive and well organised environment. This allows them to move around and play safely. They have easy and safe access to a varied range of suitable, safe toys and resources which are carefully selected to stimulate them. Resources are skilfully used to enable the children to initiate their own play and all children are well occupied because staff support their play effectively most of the time. There are sufficient numbers of child sized chairs, tables and bed mats to allow children to play and rest in flexible groups, although there is limited domestic style seating to encourage them to sit and rest cosily.

Regular risk assessments, indoors and outdoors, ensure children's safety. Children and staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire because these are regularly practised. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure the safety of the children and are vigilant at all times, they supervise the children effectively and ensure they are aware of how to move around safely, encouraging them to tidy away toys.

Staff keep good records and have a clear understanding of the procedures to be followed if they have concerns about child protection issues. This safeguards children's welfare in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The organisation of the day is good, providing a good balance of individual choices, small group and whole group activities. The routines provide appropriate rest, active play and outside play times for all the children. There are some opportunities to experience activities and visits outside the setting in the local community for the older children who attend.

Children take part in varied activities throughout the session. Babies and toddlers are mostly confident in the setting and in their relationships with the staff. They play happily with each other and staff, learning to take turns and respond to others as they experience art activities and games. Staff awareness and use of the Birth to three matters framework is successfully building upon children's achievements and enabling their progress.

Children enjoy a varied range of activities and are very happy in the nursery. They express their enjoyment through the conversations they have with staff which effectively boost their confidence, develop their understanding and encouraging them to develop their skills. For example, children have excellent opportunities to play imaginatively because staff participate in this, making good comments and suggestions to extend their ideas.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children's assessments are regular and frequent and cover their progress in all six areas of the curriculum. The staff ensure that children are assessed during planned and spontaneous activities. They adapt the planned activities so that these are linked to the assessments of children. Children make good progress because the staff provide a variety of interesting opportunities for them to play and learn through adult led and child initiated play. However, some of the staff are still developing their confidence in identifying the learning opportunities that arise during child initiated play.

Children extend their understanding of their environment, family events and outings because staff effectively promote good conversations during activities and routines such as snacks and meals. As a result of the good interactions with staff throughout the day, children are making good progress in their social and emotional development. For example, they are keen to share information about their home lives with staff who encourage their understanding of cultures through the use of good questions.

Staff skilfully use questioning to enable children to build their speaking and communication skills. Children are becoming confident speakers who enjoy listening to stories when they share

books with staff and are encouraged to handle books during their play. This results in children's confidence in using books for enjoyment.

Children practise their use of number and show a good understanding of size, colour and pattern. They enjoy counting how many children are present and are beginning to understand and use terms such as more or how much. Children are making good progress developing their understanding of nature through topic work about growth and use investigations and technical equipment to explore and investigate. For instance, they enthusiastically examine growing plants under a microscope, using the computer.

Children enjoy frequent exercise outside as well as interesting activities that require dexterity such as using pencils and scissors without fear of failure. They pour water for drinks and have fun cutting paper, card, dough and spaghetti which enables them to practise and make good progress in tasks requiring dexterity.

Children develop their imagination effectively through good quality role play which is prompted well by staff playing alongside them. Music, songs and rhymes are a regular feature of the programme and children are keen to participate in the weekly melody maker session.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a range of resources reflecting positive images such as posters, pictures, toys and books. These promote a balanced view of society and reflect the identity of the community. Staff are fully aware of the individual needs and preferences of all the children and work hard to cater for these.

Staff use strategies to enable individual children to feel secure and confident. They take positive steps to promote the welfare and development of all the children at the setting and work in partnership with parents, as well as a variety of relevant professional parties. For example, children have individual play plans to identify their targets. However, there are times when children are not effectively supported and this occasionally has a negative impact on the provision for children.

Children play harmoniously together and respond positively to staff. They have good relationships with staff who have clear expectations of behaviour and make their expectations explicit. For example, children are encouraged to understand the rules and treat each other with respect. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are welcomed into the setting and given information on the activities and on the Foundation Stage curriculum and funding. They have opportunities to discuss their children's progress with the staff and they know their child's keyworker. Relevant information is gathered on the registration form to ensure children are cared for according to parents' wishes although there is not an initial assessment of children's development completed with staff. Parents are encouraged to express their views on the provision informally at present and it is intended that they will be able to participate in consultations focussing on their children's development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from good organisation of the provision. Induction training, policies and procedures are well thought through and effective in keeping children healthy, safeguarding their welfare and effectively promoting their learning. There are systems in place for checking and cleaning but some details of these are occasionally neglected by staff. The documentation is clear, helpful to staff and users of the service, and well organised. However, the system to complete the registration sheet used for both rooms lacks clarity and may not be reliable.

Children's welfare and individual needs are well met by the group who have appropriate records in place to support their understanding of each child. Most records are kept confidentially maintaining the child's privacy. However, brief reminders used by staff which name children are displayed.

Management and Leadership is good.

Staff work well as a team, there are clear aims for the provision and staff are committed to improving the quality of care and education. The senior staff team are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, providing very good support for the staff and children. There are secure systems in place for interviewing, assessing and employing new staff. A very good range of staff training is accessed by staff; this is linked to appraisals and professional development to meet identified needs. Effective measures are in place to develop and improve the provision. For example, the manager of the nursery education monitors the provision to identify possible improvements.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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 can be seen 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):

- provide some domestic style seating so that children can sit and rest comfortably
- continue to develop procedures, staff deployment and support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities so that they can engage appropriately in activities and routines
- ensure that routines and rota duties for cleaning and checking on arrival are consistently adhered to
- ensure that confidentiality is preserved for all children when displaying information.

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):

- continue developing systems to observe, assess and plan for children's education

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