

Oakfield Montessori Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118622
Inspection date	13 July 2007
Inspector	Toni Hanson
Setting Address	27 Heath Park Road, Gidea Park, Romford, Essex, RM2 5UB
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Registered person	Kerrie Malandreniotis
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?

Oakfield Montessori Day Nursery is a privately owned nursery. It opened in 1991 and is situated in a residential area of Gidea Park, in the London Borough of Havering. The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 for 48 weeks of the year. Children may attend all day or for a variety of sessions. They come from a wide catchment area, as many parents travel into the area for work. The nursery premises consists of a converted house with an enclosed outdoor play area. Montessori teaching methods and equipment are used throughout the nursery.

A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 44 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. The nursery welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language, although there are currently none attending.

The owner employs a qualified manager to be responsible for the day to day running of the nursery. In addition there are nine staff who work directly with the children, all of whom are qualified to National Vocational Level 2 or 3. Of these, three members of staff are currently

working towards an early years qualification. Oakfield Montessori Day Nursery has been accredited by the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA) for the provision of quality education and care in accordance with the PSLA guidelines for good practice for children aged two to five years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, hygienic and well-organised environment. They benefit from the nursery's effective hygiene procedures designed to minimise the risk of infection, such as the cleansing of tables before children eat. All staff have completed relevant paediatric first aid training and implement procedures such as the recording of accidents and administration of medication appropriately to promote children's good health. Children are learning about the importance of personal care. Pictures of a child hand washing displayed in the children's bathroom are used to remind children of this important hygiene routine. They know they must wash their hands before eating lunch and dispose of paper hand drying towels hygienically.

Children's menus are healthy and contain lots of fresh fruit, salad and vegetable options. Although most main meals meet the nutritional needs of children, the dishes provided for vegetarian children are not always balanced. For example, some meals do not include a portion of protein. Also, an alternative dessert option is not consistently available for children who do not like the one provided. Children's understanding of healthy eating is promoted well. They help choose, prepare and serve snacks of pear and kiwi and pour drinks of water and milk. Children talk about foods that are good for us as they make 'healthy soup', part of a cooking activity. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children's individual dietary requirements are catered for.

Children have good opportunities to practise and improve their physical skills. They use a wide range of small equipment and tools with increasing confidence and control including pencils, scissors, glue sticks and cutlery. They learn to move their bodies in different ways during music and movement sessions. Children lie quietly and still, pretending to be 'little sleeping snakes', then stomp energetically around the room like 'munching zebras'. They use a broad range of large equipment safely and with control, such as the scooters and balancing beams in the outdoor area. They develop a positive attitude to exercise as they enjoy vigorous exercise and being active. Children join in with lively dances to the 'Bob the builder' song and use umbrellas to magically 'fly' (run as fast as they can) around the outdoor area. They learn about the positive effect exercise has on their bodies as they put their hands on their chests and feel their hearts beat quickly and strongly after active play. Appropriate arrangements are made to make sure children can rest quietly or sleep when they are tired.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in an inviting, safe and secure learning environment. The nursery is made bright and welcoming through the use of colourful posters, pictures and displays of the children's work. Many of these are placed at children's eye level, so they can easily see and enjoy them. Their sense of self-esteem is enhanced as they notice their own creative work displayed. Staff work hard to make the nursery environment pleasant for children, for example vases of flowers and table cloths are used to decorate the children's tables at lunch time. Daily risk assessments

are completed to ensure risks and hazards are minimised and children's safety is promoted. Good security systems are in place to keep children safe. The building is secure. Visitors are monitored and supervised and appropriate procedures are in place to ensure staff are vetted and suitable to work with children.

Children have easy access to a very good range of play equipment and resources, much of which is presented at low level, in labelled boxes and resource drawers. This enhances children's learning and increases opportunities for them to be independent. Nursery equipment is checked and cleansed regularly to ensure it remains in good condition. Children benefit from a broad range of safety measures, for example socket covers, an emergency evacuation procedure and a secure outdoor play area. Children have ample space to play and move around the premises confidently and safely.

Children learn simple rules that keep them safe when playing, such as ensuring they walk rather than run indoors. They respond to gentle reminders about safety issues, including why they should not put pencils in their mouths. Children learn about road safety as they take part in outings to the local shops. Staff have clear policies and procedures to follow if they are worried or concerned about a child's well-being. They attend local authority and in-house child protection training to develop their knowledge and understanding of relevant issues. This supports children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff create a calm, caring environment where children are happy, confident, keen to develop new skills and enjoy their play. Settling in procedures work well. Staff work closely with parents to make sure that children are settled gradually according to their individual needs. This important process helps children to feel secure, build trusting relationships with staff and work out what the new experience of attending nursery is all about. Staff know children well and talk to them about their family and what they have been doing at home. This interaction, and the implementation of a successful key worker system, helps to build positive relationships between children and staff.

Staff use their observations of children and the Birth to three framework effectively to ensure children aged under three enjoy a broad range of well planned, interesting activities. These help them make progress in all areas of their development and develop at their own pace. Each age group has free access to good quality, age appropriate play materials and resources. These are carefully presented to help children develop independence and confidence, as they choose the resources they need. Children enjoy and learn from a wide range of practical activities that encourage them to use their senses to explore and investigate. They play musical instruments such as the drums, triangles, bells and tambourines with gusto, experimenting with sound and volume. Children press, cut, shape and squeeze dough to make pretend food in their play kitchen.

Staff are skilled at encouraging young children's developing language skills. Children are listened to carefully and given sufficient time and opportunity to talk about things that interest them. Staff share the fun of discovering new language with children, as they talk about 'sticky, icky' glue and 'soft, fluffy' fur while making collage teddy bears pictures. Children happily snuggle up to staff to share a favourite book, confidently pointing out and naming their favourite characters. They then take the book and copy the adult story teller by showing their friends the pictures and telling them about the story. Opportunities for children to be creative are

good. They use interesting resources including sponges and twigs to paint beautiful pink blossom tree paintings. They discover that soapy water added to paint enables them to create colourful bubble prints. Young children enjoy listening to music and create lively dances to song tapes.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Three and four-year-old children make good individual progress due to the staff team's secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. The use of regular observations and assessments mean that staff know the children well and ably build on their interests, supporting them well to extend their learning. Although staff record regular observations of children to help them monitor the progress they are making in their learning, these are not always fully evaluated. Staff use clear and open questioning techniques which take into account children's age and stage of learning, helping children to think for themselves. Children have access to an exciting range of activities and experiences to help them make progress in each area of learning. A good balance of child and adult initiated activities are planned and provided.

Children are eager to learn and concentrate well, showing good perseverance as they grapple with challenging activities such as learning to ride a two-wheeler scooter. They co-operate and negotiate, for example when wanting to play with the same toy. Children listen with interest and pleasure to stories. They enjoy independently accessing and looking at books, handling them carefully and turning the pages correctly. Most children confidently recognise their own name cards at group time, older children are often able to identify the name cards belonging to their friends. Children are developing their listening and speaking skills well. They happily chat to staff and each other and are keen to share their views and experiences in large group discussions. Children enjoy talking about recent events in their lives that are important to them, including an exciting holiday trip to a dinosaur theme park. Children independently use a range of tools and materials and freely access a variety of resources from the mark-making area, which they use to draw and write their own names on their work. They further learn about the important purpose of writing, as they help staff devise a shopping list before they walk to the local shops to buy food items for snack time.

Children gain confidence in using numbers as they count objects within their play and recognise numerals around the nursery. They compare volume, weight and size of objects as they fill containers in sand and water play and work out how many spoons of rice fit in small silver pots. Children use mathematical language naturally and appropriately, for example as they talk about 'big' and 'very small' shells when playing at the sea life water activity. They begin to explore the concept of calculation as they help staff solve number problems, such as working out if there are enough cups, spoons and forks for each child at lunch time. Children enjoy painting, drawing and taking part in a wide range of art and craft activities. They use the computer with skill and proficiency and enjoy creating and building their own designs using construction kits. Children learn about the natural world through discussion and topic work, such as growing and taking care of Busy Lizzies and other plants planted in garden containers in the outdoor area. Children explore their local community as they go for walks to the local shops and enjoy visitors to the group, including a fire officer. They are engaged purposefully throughout their time at nursery and have very good opportunities to learn, develop new skills and have fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and included fully in the life of the nursery. They are treated with care and respect and have good opportunities to explore the world they live in. A strength of this outcome is that children's self-confidence is extremely well promoted because staff are highly effective in the way they manage children's behaviour. In response children's behaviour is very good. Children's confidence and social skills are developing well. Good manners are valued, children often say 'please' and 'thank you' naturally and receive praise for this. Staff are good role models and encourage care and concern for others. They use positive methods to encourage children to behave well, including explanations for rules and boundaries, a smiley face behaviour chart and rewards of praise and attention. Staff have implemented effective tactics and systems to help the three and four-year-old children learn to work as part of a group. Children set an egg timer to let them know when their turn on the computer has ended. Children understand responsible behaviour as they proudly take on roles and responsibilities within the group, such as being the lunch time 'monitor'. This involves sitting on a special monitor's chair and assisting staff with the organisation of mealtimes, giving out cups, cutlery and helping to serve meals. Children are encouraged to take care of resources and their environment. They help sort and put away toys to keep the nursery tidy and respond to gentle reminders to hang up art aprons after painting activities.

Children become aware of their own and other's needs through discussions with staff and themed activities about themselves and the wider society. They display photos of their family members and talk about different types of housing as part of their 'where do you live' topic. Children learn about a variety of cultures and different traditions through discussion and themed topics. They discover other languages through dual language posters. Children explore their local community on outings to the local shops. Many children live locally and are able to tell staff about landmarks such as the 'big' school they will be moving to soon. The nursery's positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Staff are committed to providing an inclusive environment for all children. An appropriately qualified and experienced Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises with parents, staff and other professionals to ensure children receive the support they need. Children's individual health requirements are known and met. Staff work closely with parents and health professionals to ensure children's medical needs are understood by the staff team and any necessary action taken to keep children healthy and well.

Children benefit from staff's commitment to working closely with parents. The effective key worker system ensures children are settled and secure and parents are kept up-to-date with their child's care and progress. Daily reports keep parents informed about activities children have enjoyed and the food they have eaten. Appropriate formal and informal systems are in place for parents and staff to exchange information regularly, including newsletters, parent meetings and discussions with key workers when parents collect children. These systems help provide children with consistent care between nursery and home. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive useful information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning when their child starts nursery. Parents are well informed about the activities and experiences their children are involved in each day. Curriculum plans are displayed to ensure parents can see them easily. Children's achievements are discussed at parent meetings and parents can access their child's records at any time. Home link planner letters help parents further support their child's learning, by suggesting activities they can provide at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. Children benefit from the enthusiastic and professional management team, which is highly motivated and well-organised. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. As a result, the children's day runs smoothly. The nursery's policies and procedures are known and implemented well, this promotes children's care and well-being. Although healthy eating is promoted, children's menus do not always meet the needs of all children. Children have a wonderful time at nursery and enjoy a wide range of interesting and fun play experiences, these enable them to make progress in all areas of their development and learning. All the required documentation, which is required for the efficient and safe management of the nursery, is well organised, comprehensive and stored securely. Consequently, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff ensure they have appropriate qualifications, childcare experience, are secure in their knowledge of child development and suitable to work with children. Adults who have not yet been fully vetted are never left unsupervised with children. Good systems are in place to ensure staff receive the support they need, including daily discussions, staff meetings and appraisals. These are used effectively to ensure staff have regular opportunities to further develop their childcare knowledge and teaching skills through training. All staff contribute to the planning of the curriculum and use their individual knowledge of children to enable each child to develop at their own pace. Secure links between home and nursery, and good relationships with parents, help to ensure children are happy, valued as individuals and enjoy the time they spend at Oakfield Montessori Nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, nursery documentation relating to children's health has improved. Staff now ensure that written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained for each child. This ensures staff have clear information to use if a child becomes ill or is injured and a parent cannot be contacted.

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 good.

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 the planning of children's menus, to ensure these meet the nutritional needs of all children

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):

- further improve the information recorded in children's assessments.

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