

Oaklands PDN

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY272673
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Inspector	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott

Setting Address	Liverpool Road, Neston, Merseyside, CH64 3RH
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Registered person	Treetops Nurseries Limited
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oaklands Day Nursery is owned and managed by Treetops Nurseries Limited, a national chain of nurseries providing childcare throughout the country. The nursery is located in Neston at the south of the Wirral peninsular and is registered to provide care for up to 65 children aged under five, of whom no more than 24 may be aged under two. All children are accommodated on the ground floor, with staff facilities on the first floor. There are four separate group rooms, one for each age group and two outdoor play areas.

The nursery operates from 08.00 to 18.00 on Monday to Friday throughout the year. There are currently 81 children on roll of whom 26 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery offers support to children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are currently 14 staff who care for children and a manager who is supernumerary. The nursery employs a cook. The staff delivering nursery education are supported by an Early Years advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff make sure that they adhere to their nappy changing policies, as they wash their hands, use disposable gloves and aprons and dispose of nappies appropriately, to minimise the risk of cross infection. Children eat their meals at tables which are well cleaned and disinfected before use. They have separate flannels with warm water to thoroughly wipe their faces and hands after eating. However, older children are not always encouraged to wash their hands before eating, so are not learning good hygiene practices.

Baby room staff recognise the signs of tiredness in babies and young children and they act on this knowledge to plan and support appropriate periods of rest and activity. Some children are cuddled and rocked by staff until they fall asleep, whilst other children are very happy to be put in a cot with their comforter. Staff respect the fact that sleep is taken in line with parent's wishes and children's own routines.

Children's nutritional needs are considered at snack times, they regularly access healthy snacks such as, fresh fruit. At lunch times children are provided with a two course meal, prepared on the premises by a qualified cook. They enjoy a varied range of meals, which are prepared each day by a designated cook, using mainly fresh ingredients. Individual dietary requirements are complied with which ensures children remain healthy. Drinking water is always available to children promoting their overall health.

All children enjoy physical activity every day, make good use of the outdoor areas and benefit positively from fresh air and exercise. Older children are learning how to keep themselves healthy as they access planned activities for physical exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery areas are bright and welcoming with children's work and photographs displayed. The busy environment has been prepared in advance so that no time is wasted and children can go directly to play. Children are cared for in a generally safe, secure environment. However older children's privacy is not respected as the toilet cubicles do not have doors.

The storage of resources allows children to make choices in their play. Their requests for toys stored in cupboards are met by staff. They are involved in the clearing away of the toys at the end of each session. This helps them to feel involved and respect their toys. Younger children have a range of good quality safe toys to choose from, but older children's choices are limited. Throughout the nursery there are only limited resources to help children to learn about diversity in society.

Staff ensure that the main door is securely locked and children's arrival and departure is closely monitored to keep them safe. Keypad entry systems further protect children and fencing and gates are securely bolted and well maintained to ensure children's outdoor safety. The procedure for signing in visitors is effectively monitored to make sure children are not at risk from unauthorised adults. Risks of accidental injury to children are generally minimised. This is achieved because the staff are vigilant and some potential risks have been identified. However, some equipment particularly in the outdoor area is not safe, posing risks to children. Children

are learning how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are involved in practising the fire drill on a regular basis.

Children's welfare is generally safeguarded by staff who have a working knowledge of abuse and neglect. However, not all staff are aware of the correct procedures to be followed should they have a concern about a child. This compromises children's safety. There is a child protection policy in place which is easily accessed by parents and visitors.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the nursery are generally confident and have built good relationships with the staff. The younger children receive cuddles and have secure bonds with their carers, which increases their sense of wellbeing. They benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home. Staff actively incorporate the 'Birth to three matters' framework in young children's learning. They plan activities for stimulating play and effectively monitor their development. Children are supported well by staff in their play, they are gently encouraged to be involved. Therefore, they feel at ease and confident in their surroundings.

Warm and caring relationships are formed between children and staff as they talk and laugh together whilst playing. Staff know the children well, and are aware of their needs, supporting those who find separation a little emotional. As a result, children's emotional well-being is fostered, aiding their personal, social and emotional development.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the areas of learning is acceptable, but, without training in its use, this is not yet effective in maximising children's learning. Staff plan a range of activities which cover most aspects of the curriculum, but children are not challenged effectively because there are no plans for the next steps in their learning. The detailed planning often doesn't relate to the stepping stones and although staff observe and record children's play regularly, the observations are not focused on any particular area. Although staff demonstrate acceptable knowledge of the Foundation Stage, their planning systems do not show clear links to the stepping stones or include sufficient evidence of differentiation and planned challenges for more and less able children.

Children are making progress because staff support children in their activities and help them persist but this is not maximised effectively.

Relationships are good at all levels, and children are learning to play cooperatively together, to share and take turns. Children are becoming self sufficient as they put on their coats for outdoor play and wash their own hands after messy play but systems at lunch and snack time do not effectively promote their independence. Children are interested in numbers and counting and recognise low numerals on the wall but they miss out on some opportunities to count because staff do not encourage this frequently enough. Similarly, children do not access sufficient everyday activities where they are able to learn about simple number problems.

Most children persist with small group activities, but find concentration difficult in larger group activity. For example, at story time the large group of 16 children find it difficult to concentrate and become restless. Some older and more able children are beginning to form recognisable

letters as they begin to write their name. Opportunities for mark making are limited as pencils and paper are not provided in the role play area to extend children's learning. They have good Information and Technology (IT) skills and easily complete simple programmes on the computer. Children discuss the weather and play with snow brought in from outside. They are learning about life cycles and watch patiently as their tadpoles turn into frogs.

Children engage in imaginative role play based on their own first hand experiences. They enjoy painting, playing with dough and baking. They explore with corks and fir cones during craft activities and are able to build and construct with a range of materials and can make simple models with a purpose in mind. They are enthusiastic in music making as they choose from a selection of musical instruments including those which they have made.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective communication between staff and parents ensures that all children's individual needs are consistently met. Parents receive good, well-presented information, such as policies and a regular newsletter. Children have opportunities to learn about differences in cultures. They are introduced to a variety of cultural traditions which helps to develop a positive attitude and respect for others. Some children learn French and are confident using some French words to communicate with the teacher.

Children's self-esteem is fostered when staff praise them and recognise their achievements, such as when they tidy up or complete a task. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are usually well behaved and work harmoniously with each other in response to the realistic boundaries and expectations of staff. However, on some occasions children's behaviour deteriorates but this is more about the organisation of the session than poor behaviour.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from positive informal relationships between staff and parents. Children's progress is discussed informally and systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Parents are informed about topics through the planning which is displayed outside the room giving details of the daily activities their child is involved in, but they are not encouraged to extend their learning in the home, giving opportunities for them to contribute to their child's learning in meaningful ways. Parents are not well informed about the six areas of learning and are not clear about how and what children are being taught. Some parents are confused and feel that the nursery provides play and social interaction and their children attend other settings for their education. Parents evenings are used to share children's progress and allow parents to look at their work. Parents are not involved in completing the achievement records.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All staff commit to a robust vetting procedure to ensure their suitability to work with children. They have each attended several relevant workshops and short courses, which increases their knowledge and understanding in many areas. Above half the staff are qualified in childcare at various levels and ratios of adults to children are consistently maintained, which ensures a good level of individual care and attention. Adults are well deployed to supervise all children effectively; they always inform each other if they are leaving the room for any reason which ensures children's safety.

The records, policies and procedures in the setting are well written, reviewed and generally implemented in practice. However, some staff are not familiar with all the policies and procedures.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. There is a commitment to develop the provision and the newly appointed manager has clear aims for future improvements. Staff are competent within their roles and have a secure knowledge of child development in order to help children progress. Staff are supported in their work and ongoing training is actively encouraged. Regular meetings take place to keep staff informed of pertinent childcare issues. The systems for monitoring nursery education are not sufficiently effective to ensure that children receive a balance of activities and that gaps are identified. This means that some areas of children's learning are not maximised.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to make sure good hygiene practices were in place regarding hand washing and ensure that the kitchen was appropriately maintained. Older children do wash their hands regularly after meals and messy play but are not always encouraged to hand wash before meals. The main kitchen is due for some refurbishment but overall is adequately maintained. The provider was also asked to ensure that the premises are adequately maintained. There are plans for some exterior painting and new flooring to be laid but again overall all areas are satisfactory. The last recommendation about providing a suitable range of toys and activities for older children, ensuring cleanliness and safety has not been met. This remains an area for improvement.

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):

- provide resources to help children appreciate and value similarities and differences of culture, gender and disability and ensure that all toys and equipment are clean, well maintained and safe
- improve staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues
- ensure children's dignity and privacy is respected during toileting
- ensure all staff have an adequate knowledge of the settings policies and procedures and are able to implement them into their daily practice.

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 to develop staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage including teaching methods, to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for children, and provide opportunities for children to increase their independence
- improve the systems for monitoring nursery education to ensure that children receive a balance of activities and that gaps are identified
- ensure that the evaluations of activities and identification of next steps in learning for individual children are used effectively to inform future planning to complete the observation, assessment and planning cycle
- ensure that staff exploit everyday opportunities to develop children's counting skills and provide chances for children to write or make marks for a purpose
- improve the partnership with parents and carers by ensuring that information about the nursery education provision is shared.

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