



Oakley Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Susan Marriott

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Registered person Oakley pre-school playgroup committee
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

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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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oakley Pre -School is a voluntary committee run group. It opened in 1968 and operates from three separate base rooms in the Methodist Church Hall complex in the village of Oakley, to the north of the county town of Bedford. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre school is open school term times only from 09.15 to 15.30 on Tuesday and Thursday, split into two sessions, 09.15 until 11.45 on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. A lunch club

operates between 11.45 and 12.45 enabling younger children to socialise and older children to stay all day. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 40 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 29 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre school serves the village of Oakley but may take children from the surrounding villages when space is available. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special needs, and there are systems in place to support children who have English as an additional language.

The setting employs four suitably qualified members of staff, including a qualified teacher. Three members of staff work each session with the assistance of parent helpers.

The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and holds a certificate of accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and stay healthy because practitioners all work together and effectively adhere to clear, extremely well structured health and safety procedures, which are consistently applied. The staff thoroughly cleanse changing mats and tables with bacterial spray after each use and clean toilets scrupulously throughout the day. This prevents the spread of infection and supports exceptionally high levels of cleanliness within the pre-school environment.

The exceptional adult support and guidance helps children to gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, children learn about germs as they talk about washing their hands prior to a pizza cooking activity. They eagerly relish the opportunity to help to scrub the tables clean with hand held dish wash brushes and talk about 'getting rid of the dirt' and 'making the table all nice and clean'. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through very well-planned daily routines which fully support learning. They know for example, that it is important to wash their hands prior to eating and after using the toilet because 'germs might make their tummies poorly'. They routinely access tissues independently to wipe their noses and discard used tissues appropriately. Staff are aware of the Birth to three matters guidance and actively support growing independence in young children.

Children benefit from an exceptionally nutritious and healthy diet. The pre-school provides them with a highly varied choice for snacks and these comply with all special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Snack time is a highly effective integrated learning experience for the children. Staff create time to discuss options so that young children really do have choices. Children independently pour drinks, share the snack and chat about 'apple and cheese being good for you' with

staff, who point out that cheese contains 'calcium' which makes bones grow strong. The setting encourages parents to supply a healthy lunch for children staying to the lunch club. Children access drinking water regularly, supplied via an accessible tray of covered jug and cups to prevent themselves from becoming thirsty. Participation in 'Healthy Eating', topic work and discussion about 'good ' and 'bad' foods and drinking lots of water contribute significantly to children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences which promote their well-being because staff ensure that all children take part in energetic activities. Staff support the under threes particularly well, becoming involved as children try out their developing skills. For example, staff show a two-year-old how to pedal a tricycle. This has a positive effect on encouraging children to set their own challenges and acquire new skills. Older children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and delight in the challenges of a versatile range of activities. For instance, children tackle obstacle courses enthusiastically. Children enjoy and relish a good range of physical activities including indoor and outdoor play, together with more structured skills lessons, music, movement and dance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

This well run and effectively monitored pre-school gives high priority to children's safety and welfare. Security systems are robust and practitioners help keep children safe in the pre-school and on outings because they fully understand and comply with health and safety requirements. Supervision is exemplary. For example, generous adult to child ratios allow flexibility in preparing and organising activities and the environment. Before outside play, the staff fully prepare the garden for the children and complete their risk assessment. This ensures that children can move from one activity to another without having to wait. Children demonstrate a keen understanding of staying safe as they prepare themselves appropriately before going into the garden. Older children learn to fetch their sun hats, and children learn the reason behind the routine procedures. Staff support children well and meet their individual needs. Staff know what to do in the event of an emergency and children practise their evacuation plan with suitable frequency.

Children use a versatile range of safe, good quality, stimulating resources which are well organised in child height furniture to encourage independent access. Practitioners explain safe practices in a skilful manner, such as the need to pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall or hurt themselves. This helps children of all ages to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe.

Child protection procedures are robust and children remain well protected. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this well organised and managed setting. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting

concerns appropriately to senior staff. Open relationships between home and nursery ensure that children's needs remain the single important factor. The child protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and make sustained progress in learning, leisure and personal development because practitioners are confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. Children enjoy their time at pre-school and have lots of fun. Children make excellent progress in the development of their language skills because of the positive interaction and staff engagement in conversations. Staff make competent baseline assessments when children enter the pre-school and this information provides a clear starting point upon which assessment can be based. However, they have yet to implement appropriate assessment between the ages of two-and-a-half years and three-years-old. Although staff are aware of the Birth to three matters guidance and incorporate this effectively into their daily practice, they do not yet use this to assess and inform their planning for children less than three years of age.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Practitioners have an expert knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, deeply rooted in long standing professional experience and a real commitment to on-going and relevant training. Highly detailed plans provide an exceptional balance across all six areas of learning. Children access an extremely broad range of practical stimulating activities, which are well-planned and exceptionally well executed. Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child led learning promotes children to learn at their own pace. Staff are very perceptive to children's interests during self initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. They plan first hand experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. Highly effective planning, observation and assessment for older children build on the Foundation Stage guidance and interlinks positively with children's progression and achievement as they progress rapidly through the stepping stones.

Children are really interested and keen to learn. They are captivated and often inspired by an extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities related to their needs. They independently access an extensive range of well chosen resources which support their learning across all areas of the Foundation Stage. All children are highly motivated, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories and can recount favourites such as, 'Sam's Sandwich'. They join in enthusiastically with daily singing accompanied by daily live piano playing to such favourites as 'Bob the Builder' and 'Postman Pat'. The children readily

use marks to represent their ideas and older children are adept at writing their own names. Children are highly imaginative. They make sense of the world around them in the delightful outdoor area and gain pride in creating original, individual art work. Children have many varied opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them. For example, children observe the life cycle of the frog at first hand and become absorbed in the antics of the tadpoles. Posters and a display about marine transport consolidate earlier learning about different types of boats and submarines.

Children work extremely well together and actively participate in their own learning. For example, the pizza making activity involves every child at his or her own level, all contributing to the lively discussion about each stage of the preparation process. Children count as part of the daily routine and calculate that three and three more make six altogether. They discover the useful properties of a fish slice as they solve problems such as how to move the pizza onto the baking tray without breaking it. Their physical skills develop and improve rapidly through a wide variety of experiences, including music, movement and dance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with special needs are warmly welcomed in the pre-school. Practitioners ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others. Highly skilled staff implement excellent systems to ensure that children with specific needs receive appropriate support in the setting. This enables them to join in with all activities and make rapid progress given their age and starting points. Children are extremely well behaved, and very polite in response to the high expectations and consistent boundaries of caring staff. This helps children to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Their understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to gentle reminders to care for the environment, the group resources and each other. The manager ensures that staff provide a warm welcoming and homely environment and prioritises the welfare of the children in attendance. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.

Practitioners are highly conscientious and genuinely welcoming to parental input. There is a wealth of information which is easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided. Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards the individual assessment records of their child. Therefore, children benefit from a two way sharing of information between parents and practitioners to enhance their learning. This underpins their rapid progress in the setting and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The nursery effectively communicates and fully shares literature and information about the educational provision and therefore the partnership with parents of children who

receive nursery education is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The stability of the mature staff team, their commitment and dedication ensures that children benefit from, and thoroughly enjoy their time at this exceptionally welcoming provision. They are well qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. This promotes very positive outcomes for children and safeguards and promotes children's care and welfare.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The supervisor has a clear vision for the setting and drives the group forward in a dynamic and purposeful manner. She operates robust recruitment, induction and appraisal systems which ensure that the pre-school's procedures are consistently applied. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education through participation in an accredited quality assurance scheme.

The strong parent's management committee give practical, enthusiastic support to the staff team and employ a dedicated administrator. She is able to release the staff from paperwork to give their time and energy to the children, which promotes extremely positive relationships at all levels. Staff demonstrate a real affinity with children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Planning and assessment systems are superb, appropriately detailed and ensure a clear focus to firmly secure and rapidly progress children's learning. Documentation is comprehensive with only one or two very minor omissions. The pre-school meets the needs of all children who attend extremely well.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations were made following the last Children Act inspection. The setting was to ensure that all visitors record the time of their arrival and departure in the visitors diary and to monitor the implementation of the new policies for the administration of medication and for sick children. Checks show that both recommendations have been implemented with substantial improvements in the safety and protection of children.

The previous inspection of nursery education identified two recommendations concerning children's access to mathematical activities and staff deployment. The setting has taken positive action to ensure that children's mathematical learning is not left to chance by strengthening the inclusion of mathematics within the daily routine. Vigilant staff exploit every opportunity to engage with children at the mathematics table to fully support their interest and learning. Staff deployment has been significantly strengthened to ensure that there are no periods of time when children cease to be engaged in meaningful activities, e.g. at milk time and home time.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

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):

- continue to monitor the provision for younger children; for example, through use of the Birth to three matters guidance.
- continue to refine written procedures (this refers to the lost child and behaviour management policy).

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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