

Oaktrees Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131550
Inspection date	17 September 2007
Inspector	Judith Reed
Setting Address	Helvellyn Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO16 4AS
Telephone number	07931 705933
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Registered person	Oaktrees Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Oaktrees Pre-School opened in the current premises in 2002. It operates from a purpose built room, within the Mason Moor primary school, in Millbrook Southampton. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 25 children may attend each session. The pre-school opens each weekday during school terms. Sessions are from 9.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports some children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the opportunity to use the outside play area for daily, free flow, activities. Staff encourage children to play outside for a part of each session. Children demonstrate a good sense of space as they move confidently during physical activities. They ride tricycles around the outside play area while other children are throwing balls or play in the water tray. Children take part in an obstacle course, taking turns to crawl under a table and balance carefully across the beams. They move on to jump through a ring and throw a ball into the basketball net. Children cheer and clap for each other as they go around the obstacle course. Staff call children by their names helping the others present to learn their names.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene and develop self care skills. They are reminded to wash their hands before making their sandwiches, or after messy activities. Both individual paper towels and a hot air dryer are available for hand drying. Children are encouraged to be independent when using the toilet. They also help themselves to tissues when required and dispose of them hygienically in the waste bin. Tables are cleaned regularly during the sessions enabling the children to enjoy a healthy environment. Staff are trained in first aid and have obtained written permission for emergency medical treatment for each child. They inform parents about accidents through good use of the accident book. Medication administration forms are used when required and are fully signed by parents and staff as necessary.

Children are offered a healthy choice of snack during each session. They are able to help themselves to water from a jug whenever they feel thirsty. At snack time children sit at tables in small groups. They pour their own choice of water or milk from small jugs. Fruit is included everyday, alongside crackers and cheese, toast, breadsticks and dip or sandwiches, which the children have made for themselves. Staff take incidental opportunities to talk to children about healthy eating and why milk is good for them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure and safe environment. Staff ensure the premises are secure when children are present and parents or visitors ring a doorbell to gain entry. The purpose built room offers a welcoming environment for the children. Their work is displayed and the furniture and equipment are suitable and appropriate for the children attending the pre-school. Toilets are directly off the play room. A low level sink is also available next to the messy play area with paper towel dispenser adjacent. The outside play area is well fenced and the gate is securely locked. The storage container which is used for outside toy storage is kept closed during the session. Children independently help themselves to a wide range of equipment and toys from well labelled storage boxes around the room.

Children are safe as the setting is well planned regarding safety issues. Staff are vigilant regarding safety and carry out full risk assessments each term. Daily visual checks are made to ensure children's continuing safety at all times. Staff are effectively deployed around the setting to ensure children are supervised in all areas. Children are aware of the dangers of fire and regularly practise the fire evacuation procedure. Staff evaluate the fire drill to further improve practice.

Children are safeguarded by a well informed staff team. Staff are aware of the child protection procedures and would report any concerns to the lead practitioner. Staff are aware of their professional duty regarding safeguarding children and have an information folder available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the pre-school confidently. Staff welcome children by their individual names. Children know the routine of the pre-school and immediately sit in the corner for registration time. Staff place an emphasis on helping children to settle quickly and be comfortable in pre-school. They introduce new children to the group and help them to link with other children they already know. Children answer their name when the register is called. They join in counting the number of children present as well as naming the days of the week. Children observe the weather and discuss it with the staff. Children look at a time line of activities within the pre-school. They begin to learn how the session flows and what activities are available as staff describe them.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning and include stepping stones in the planning. The plans are straightforward and easy to understand, although they are not always used as resources and equipment are not available. Staff use incidental opportunities to help children learn, for example, encouraging children to count the pieces of apple they take during snack time. They also join in activities such as painting or making play dough, and are involved with the children throughout the session. They make frequent, brief, observations of children's achievements to contribute to their record of achievement. Unfortunately staff have not yet begun to complete the records of achievement for the children currently attending the pre-school and are therefore not able to use these records to plan children's next steps of learning.

Children independently select their own activities. They demonstrate a sense of pride in their achievements when they build a tall model with the stickle bricks. Most children talk feely about their homes and families and have good self esteem. Children communicate well and are learning to listen carefully to instructions. For example, they learn to listen to the computer when instructions are given for the game they are operating. Children listen to stories and enjoy 'There was an old woman who swallowed a fly'. They discuss the amusing ideas around eating animals such as horses. They know that marks have meaning and are encouraged to try to write their own names on their work. Children practise writing their names with crayons and tracing paper. They hold the pen in the correct manner and carefully copy the letters.

Children count routinely during registration and snack time. They begin to calculate how many plates and cups are needed at each table. Children learn mathematical language when staff ask them to cut their sandwiches in half, or they take big or little steps during 'What's the time Mr Wolf?'. They recognise different shapes such as circles, squares and triangles when playing a computer game. Children ask to have the computer turned on and request favourite games. Some children find the movement of the mouse difficult, although they persevere and are rewarded by a positive reaction from the computer. Children build models with stickle bricks and proudly show staff their creations.

Children are creative and enjoy painting and gluing activities. They carefully cut out pictures from catalogue and stick them onto a sheet of paper. Several children paint pictures of their

homes. Children use their imagination when playing on the play cube. They pretend to be driving in a car and then breakdown. They use a torch to look under the seat and tools are improvised from stickle bricks to mend the car. Children enthusiastically join in singing action songs at the end of the session. They are invited to sing their favourite songs with the group. Children choose Five little monkeys, Twinkle, twinkle chocolate bar, and The wheels on the bus.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are valued and staff get to know their individual requirements. Staff work closely with the area special needs co-ordinator to support all children. They have an awareness of strategies to support children with disabilities or learning difficulties. Staff have not yet undertaken training to enable them to fully support children with additional needs.

Children are treated as individuals. Staff get to know the children quickly and they also get to know their families well. They welcome contributions from families in the community, for example, parents offer suggestions and ideas for celebrating festivals. Some posters are displayed showing children from around the world. Children use equipment which reflects diversity including small world toys and dolls with various disabilities and aids.

Most children behave well and understand the routine of the pre-school. Children begin to understand the rules of the pre-school and take time out as recommended by staff. They remember that they need to "keep my hands and feet to myself" when asked why they are having time out. They are encouraged to share toys and equipment and learn about taking turns. Some children help to tidy up at the end of the free play session. They are given specific jobs, such as sweeping the floor, or collecting cars into a box. Staff thank children for their efforts. Behaviour management issues are shared with parents and strategies to help children are shared.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children are well cared for due to the regular communication between staff and parents, who feel welcomed into the pre-school. Staff give a brief verbal feedback to parents when children are collected, also ensuring signatures are obtained on any accident records. Parents are aware of their child's key worker and give suitable information when their children start at pre-school. They are fully informed about the Foundation Stage of learning through the prospectus and kept up to date on planning through the half termly newsletters. An informative notice board is available. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the pre-school management committee and to attend meetings. A list of policies is included in the prospectus and the full policy book is available for parents and staff at all times. Parents are fully aware that they may talk to the lead practitioner about concerns and can make complaints to Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The lead practitioner and deputy are working towards establishing a good, well trained, staff team. Ongoing training is valued and staff have booked several courses in the near future. Staff meet regularly and discuss planning. They communicate well with parents, building an open relationship with parents to help the children develop and learn. The staff and committee receive regular advice and support from the local authority as well as development workers from the Pre-school Learning Alliance. All activities

planned are evaluated by the staff team. Staff are key workers who continually make incidental observations of children to add to their achievement records. These records are not currently up to date and are therefore unable to be used when making plans for children's development.

All required documentation is in place to promote the welfare and care of the children. Personal documentation and individual permission forms are stored confidentially. The pre-school is well organised with visitor records, and staff attendance records in place. The pre-school leader currently welcomes children into the setting and keep a note of their names and times of arrival, and departure from the group. A register is also completed with the children and this is used during fire drill evacuation. The register information is not always correct as not all children who arrive later are marked into the book and children may be at risk. Children are motivated and involved with activities during the pre-school session. They become familiar with the routine of the pre-school. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children are cared for by experienced and qualified staff. The committee have suitable recruitment procedures in place and encourage further staff training. Annual appraisals are held and include deciding the future training needs of the group. The committee are responsible for ensuring all necessary forms and checks are completed by new members of the committee as well as the staff team. Children's care is supported by the high staff ratio within the pre-school.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last integrated inspection the setting was asked to ensure that written permission is obtained for staff to seek or administer emergency first aid, ensure that the policies and procedures reflect the practice of the playgroup, and to develop the range of information obtained from parents to ensure individual children's needs are known when they first join the group.

The pre-school staff sit with parents when children first start and go through the all paperwork, including completion of the permission for emergency medical treatment form. This enables staff to find out about the children and build a relationship with the parents. The committee and staff are fully aware of the policies and procedures of the group and ensure they work to these policies to enhance the care of the children.

Actions regarding education were to develop effective systems between the committee and senior staff to ensure the educational programme is monitored, evaluated and contributes to children's learning, to extend the detail of planning so that staff are aware of learning objectives and how to support children to achieve these, and to develop systems of assessment so that children's individual abilities can be built upon. Use this to support parents in extending their children's learning.

Staff have worked closely with advisors from the local authority to develop the educational programme which is now evaluated by all staff and monitored by the lead practitioner to ensure all areas of learning are included. Planning includes clear learning objectives from the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage, however these are not always followed and this aspect remains a recommendation. Assessment records are not yet up to date although regular observations take place. This also remains a recommendation.

Complaints since the last inspection

On 14 May 2007 and 24 May 2007 concerns were raised as follows: that staff were shouting inappropriately at children; that staff may not have had the appropriate skills and qualifications to care for children; that there were not enough activities provided to develop children's capabilities; that precautions were not in place to prevent accidents as children were not being supervised appropriately and that staff did not adhere to any behaviour management policy.

These concerns related to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play, National Standard 6: Safety and National Standard 11: Behaviour.

Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 18 May 2007 to investigate the concerns raised. As a result of the findings at the visit, Ofsted raised the following actions:

National Standard 2: Organisation - "ensure staff are deployed effectively to meet children's needs"

National Standard 6: Safety - "ensure that reasonable steps are taken to minimise hazards on the premises"

National Standard 11: Behaviour - "ensure staff are consistent in managing children's behaviour and are working with the settings policy and procedures"

National Standard 14: Documentation - "ensure records are always available for inspection" and "ensure that Ofsted are notified of any changes, as set out in the regulations"

A written response was received on 13 June 2007 showing what steps had been taken by the provider to ensure the actions had been met. As a result of this response, Ofsted are taking no further action and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- ensure register of attendance is correct at all times

- ensure special educational needs co-ordinators receive training appropriate to their roll to enable them to support all children's needs

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):

- ensure all equipment and resources required are available to enable planning to be used to enhance children's development
- ensure children's assessment records are up to date and are used by the key worker and parents to plan and implement the next steps in children's learning

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