

The Oval Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306446
Inspection date	25 February 2008
Inspector	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott
Setting Address	The Oval, Wallasey, Merseyside, CH45 6UX
Telephone number	07816370761
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Registered person	Heather Joy Williams
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 good. 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?

The Oval Pre School was registered in 1995 and is privately owned and managed. It operates from cricket club buildings in Wallasey on Merseyside. There is a large area for outdoor play.

The setting is open from 08.45 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15 each weekday, in term time only. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 25 children aged from two to under five years. There are currently 56 children on roll, of whom 31 receive funding for nursery education.

There are currently eight staff employed, of whom four have appropriate early years qualifications and one who is working towards one. The nursery receives support from an early years advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff are generally aware of the need to implement hygienic routines within the setting, this helps prevent the spread of infection. For example, children are encouraged to wipe their own noses and dispose of tissues in the bin and hand wash after messy play, toileting and before snack. However, the methods used to wash children's hands during the sessions are unhygienic, as they share a bowl of water and towel. This does not prevent the spread of infection. Most children are toilet trained, however, appropriate nappy changing facilities are in place to meet children's individual needs. Their privacy is always respected. Children's health is well protected, as all staff are first aid trained, should a child require first aid treatment. All documentation for the recording of accidents and medicines are in place and maintained accurately.

Children's health is positively promoted as they have free access to a cooled water machine. They regularly go and help themselves during the session, knowing when they feel thirsty. This helps children to form good habits for the future. At snack time, children can choose from milk or water and serve themselves with tongs from a selection of fresh fruits, crumpets, crackers or toast. Children's physical health is also well promoted as they use the large grassed area outdoors regularly. They engage in practising ball skills, balancing and play with a variety of apparatus. Children also benefit from yoga sessions with a qualified teacher. Overall, this promotes their well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in bright warm rooms, which are laid out effectively to enable them to move around safely and easily. The environment is welcoming with children's artwork decorating the walls and ceilings. This provides them with stimulating surroundings. The pre-school is well organised into clear learning areas. Children, therefore, are confident in knowing where to access the resources of their own choosing. For example, writing implements and dressing up clothes. They use a good range of safe, well-maintained toys and equipment suitable to the age and stage of their development. These are stored at child height in well stocked areas that develop children's independence and imagination during their play.

Staff conduct regular risk assessments of all areas and take prompt action to minimise the risks to children's safety. The main doors are locked once the children have arrived and children are reminded not to run inside in case they fall over and hurt themselves. Children and staff practise the emergency evacuation procedure on a regular basis. This helps children become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. They play an active part in tidying away toys to prevent accidents.

Children are well protected by staff who are confident and secure in their knowledge of child protection policies and procedures. Staff are able to recognise possible indicators of abuse and know who to contact, should they be concerned.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are enthusiastic about coming to the pre-school. Most enter with confidence and engage in an activity straight away. For instance, some children engage in painting, others get busy with a range of craft materials and some go into the 'shoe shop' role-play to buy and sell shoes. Older, more able children are encouraged to hang up their coats and bags, and register themselves by finding their name and putting it on the board. This increases their independence. Staff and parents ensure the younger, less able children are assisted as necessary. Children share conversations with the staff, who readily listen to them and take an interest in what they have to say. They relate well to staff and confidently approach them for support indicating trusting relationships are built.

Children develop a sense of belonging in the group, as they know where to access the resources they need and are aware of the routines of the group. For example, when a member of staff says it is circle time, children stop what they are doing and start to tidy up. Children are encouraged to develop good self-help skills as they independently go to the toilet and attempt to get their own coats and shoes on. Activities are changed regularly to encourage children's interest and promote learning.

Children under three enjoy similar activities to the older children but on a less formal level. The staff have knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework but do not yet implement it. They do not keep records of children's development or plan for their next steps. This does not maximise children's learning.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and interact well with the children during activities, to support their development. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. The environment is well organised and good use is made of the indoor and outside areas. Children move freely and independently around the playroom and can choose from a wide range of accessible toys and resources. Planning is clearly linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum and regular staff meetings ensure children's learning needs are discussed and met appropriately. Staff have responsibility for a key work group, who they observe and monitor using the assessments to inform future planning. Individual development files are in place for children, but as yet are not effective in identifying the next steps clearly. Planning does not detail individual challenge or support for more or less able children.

Children are confident and keen to help staff with jobs for instance, being the milk bar monitor. They relish in reminding the other children to wash their hands before they can sit down and ask which drink they can serve to them. Children are confident to answer questions, such as what the weather is like and how many children are present. They are very familiar with routines and know they have to wait for a space at the milk bar before they can have their snack. Children are well behaved because the boundaries are clear and staff have high expectations of them. They know if someone misbehaves and waste no time in telling a member of staff. They are becoming independent as they put their own coats on and try hard to get their shoes on and off as they play in the shoe shop.

Children recognise their names as they arrive and carefully stick them on to the board. They also have to find their names at snack time before they can sit down. Some children can recognise

other children's names too. Books are enjoyed as children sit on their own or in a group looking at the pictures and take part in story sessions with enthusiasm. There are many opportunities to develop writing skills. Pencils and other writing materials are available in different areas so they can make lists, such as a shopping list when playing in the role-play area. Older, more able children can pick out letters from their names on the toy computer. They also enjoy making patterns and tracks in special sand.

Children learn to count and recognise numbers during everyday activities such as counting each other at registration time picking out the date in the month on the chart. They are beginning to understand simple subtraction in songs and rhymes and some children are very able. For example, the child helping at the milk bar knows by glancing at the names left, how many children have not yet had their snack. Children follow the edges of patterns and shapes and can correctly cut out four hearts of play dough and put them on the corresponding card. They are fascinated with a block of ice. They feel it and describe its freezing texture. They carry on investigating it independently at intervals throughout the session. As the ice gets smaller, the pool of water in which it is sitting gets bigger. Eventually two children decide it will be great fun to have a paddle! Children learn about technology using a computer regularly and play with a programmable toy.

Children have many opportunities for outdoor play to run about confidently, imaginatively and safely, using good coordination. They gain knowledge of spatial awareness as they avoid each other and notice changes to their bodies after they finish playing football. They say they are tired as they go back inside and know they need to drink. Children enjoy craft activities and are encouraged to use a range of materials freely as they make little people with heart-shaped bodies. They explore with clay and make tea light holders for Mother's Day. Children particularly enjoy their role-play area that changes regularly. They have a shoe shop with lots of shoes, boots and sandals in boxes to buy and sell. They firmly encourage the visitor to buy a new pair of boots.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by staff who are aware of their individual needs and who value and respect them. They feel welcome in the nursery because staff create positive relationships with them and their parents. This contributes to children feeling settled and secure. Children are encouraged to think of others through fundraising activities, such as Comic Relief. They learn to share and take turns whilst they play. Children explore some different cultures for instance, the recent Chinese New Year. However, children's learning and acceptance of similarities and differences in society is not maximised, as there are few toys and resources representing diversity. Children have an allocated key worker, which enables them to make personal attachments to a carer. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is generally good although some older, more able children are excitable and find it hard to sit and concentrate when required to. For example, at story time. Staff act as good role models behaving in a friendly and courteous manner towards each other. Children are constantly praised and encouraged by staff who have high, but realistic expectations of them. Most children show good levels of confidence and self-esteem as they participate in a range of activities that encourage learning and development.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail. Any specific requirement is shared openly and the needs of children are

recognised and acknowledged. Parents are very happy with the service they receive and describe the staff as friendly, lovely and approachable. Positive channels of communication are established and well maintained through a variety of media. There is a brochure about the setting, regular newsletters and a parent notice board. However, systems in place do not provide parents with sufficient information about the nursery education their child receives or about the individual progress they have made.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Recruitment procedures are robust and ensure adults working with children are suitable to do so. Children are well supported through effective staff deployment and consistent daily routines. Adult to child ratios are maintained at all times, meaning children receive suitable adult support. Staff spend quality time interacting and playing with them. Procedures are followed for children's safety using standard policy documents.

The setting gives priority to ongoing staff development and training and several staff have attended a good variety of short courses. The staff are deployed effectively and understand their roles and responsibilities. Their morale is high and this has a positive impact on the operation of the setting. Children's welfare is promoted through well organised recording systems and written operating procedures, which meet the requirements of registration. All documentation is maintained and held confidentially.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager endeavours to provide a safe, happy environment for children. The staff team give continuity of care as they have worked together for many years. There are regular team meetings where staff discuss issues relating to planning, however, there is no formal appraisal system to look at staff development. The system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of nursery education is not effective in identifying some weaknesses in the provision. This means that gaps in assessment are overlooked. 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 ensure that children's differences were acknowledged and valued and the child protection policy was shared with parents. The setting does not currently have any children from different cultural backgrounds but the limitation on resources reflecting diversity, means this area of children's learning is not maximised. This remains an area for improvement. The folder containing the child protection policy is available for parents to look at should they wish to. The child protection policy is also included within the settings brochure. This means parents are fully aware of the staff responsibility in terms of their children's protection.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider was asked to improve planning so that children could have more chances for mark making and developing a sense of time and an awareness of their immediate environment. Planning closely links to all areas of learning. Role-play and creative areas provide plenty of opportunities for children to make marks for a purpose. A project about the local area, including an aerial map, helps children to gain a fuller understanding of the area in which they live.

The provider was also asked to review staff deployment to ensure that all activities were equally supported and to improve the monitoring of planning to ensure gaps were identified and that

there was a balance of activities. Staff are well deployed and a rethink in the way of operating ensures that staff are supporting a variety of activities during the session. Although planning is monitored, the system still has weaknesses. 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):

- ensure hygienic practices are followed when children wash and dry their hands
- develop the resources that reflect a diverse society.

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 planning details how more and less able children are satisfactorily supported or challenged; ensure that children's records of progress clearly show the stage of their development and what the aims are for their next steps in their learning (also applies to care)
- improve the partnership with parents and carers by ensuring that information about the nursery education provision is shared and information about children's progress is regularly provided
- develop the system for monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education to ensure weaknesses are highlighted and actioned.

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