

# Stowupland Pre-school & The Mighty Oaks

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	251678
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Smith
<b>Setting Address</b>	Church Road, Stowupland, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4BQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01449 678550
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Stowupland Pre-school & The Mighty Oaks
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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?

Stowupland Pre-school & The Mighty Oaks is administered by a voluntary management committee with charitable status. It operates from purpose built premises within the grounds of Freeman Community Primary School in Stowupland, Suffolk. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday in term time from 09.00 until 15.30, with a lunch club operating between 11.30 to 13.00. A breakfast club runs from 08.00 to 08.45 daily and it is intended to offer an after school club in the future which will operate from 15.15 to 18.00 daily. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children from two years to five years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and attend for a variety of sessions.

There are eight members of staff, seven of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications and one currently working towards a qualification. The setting supports children with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities. They receive support from the local authority and are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through well-established routines and planned activities. Positive steps are taken to promote children's health and encourage them to manage their own personal needs using the child-friendly facilities. Children clearly understand the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and staff are on hand to offer support as required. Pictures and prompts are displayed in the toilet area to encourage children to wash their hands. Children receive appropriate care if they have an accident or become ill whilst at the setting. All of the staff have first aid training and a well-stocked first aid kit is readily available. Most written consents are in place and accidents and medication requirements are correctly documented and signed off by parents on collection. However, the group do not have written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency advice or treatment, potentially compromising children's health and safety.

Children's individual dietary requirements are well met with satisfactory recording procedures in place to ensure children's well-being. A good range of fresh fruit and vegetables are offered at snack time and discussions are developing children's understanding of foods that are good for them and promote good health. However, children do not have an opportunity to develop their independence skills or take responsibility because the staff complete all the preparation of the snack and tidying away. Snack time is relaxed and social as staff sit with children and encourage their conversation. Children who attend the lunch club bring in their own packed lunches from home or can chose to have a school dinner.

Children have frequent access to a secure play area where they can run around and get exercise in the fresh air. A selection of ride-on toys are available which enables children to develop their physical skills. Children demonstrate increasing control while using a variety of mark-making tools to help them develop their hand-eye coordination. Children can rest and sleep according to their needs, a quiet area is available and small floor beds can be put out if required.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure, well-maintained environment where staff are vigilant in promoting children's safety. The staff and children are adjusting to their new premises and staff are constantly reviewing the layout of resources to ensure the best use of the available space is made. Staff are developing defined areas in which children can independently access resources. Toys are stimulating and consequently children are interested to play with what is available.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where staff take positive steps to minimise all risks. Staff are conscientious in carrying out regular risk assessments and thorough safety procedures ensure that hazards to children are minimised. The premises are kept securely locked during sessions and staff carefully monitor children's arrival and departure to ensure they only leave with an authorised adult. Regular fire drills ensure that staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire. Fire prevention equipment is in place and meets requirements. Good

staff interaction helps develop children's awareness of safety within the setting. For example, staff sensitively remind children not to run inside and to sit on the chairs properly so they do not hurt themselves. Visits from the police and the fire brigade reinforce children's understanding of staying safe.

Children are well protected from potential harm because staff are vigilant and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children. A written statement underpins all practice and local contact numbers and referral procedures are readily available. Staff know the children and families well and some have attended specific training to ensure children's continued well-being and safety.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and settle well or are sensitively supported by staff to do so in the welcoming environment. Children form good relationships with each other, they eagerly greet their friends as they arrive and excitedly show them what they are doing. Children are confident and can play well on their own or with others. Staff are supportive and caring towards the children and take time to listen to them, this helps children develop a sense of self-worth as they know staff value their contributions. The organisation of activities and routines of the session encourage children to initiate their own play and follow their own interests, as they freely choose to spend their time engaged in activities that interest and motivate them.

The group are developing the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their practice with this age group. They use a good system to record children's achievement and progression following the framework. Children have regular opportunities to experience creative play such as paint and sand. They actively engage in using their imaginations in the home corner and show their delight in re-enacting familiar scenario's such as making cups of tea, bedtime and playing families.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play ensures children are motivated and engaged in a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities. Staff use their good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to provide a stimulating environment which reflects all children's backgrounds and the wider community. Staff use an effective range of teaching methods to motivate children so they are keen to learn and make progress.

Staff constantly join in with children's play to extend their learning. All staff are enthusiastic and show genuine interest and enjoyment in the children's achievements. On occasions staff place too much emphasis on achieving the end result. For example, whilst making dragons, the staff did not adapt the activity to meet the needs of the older and more able children by allowing them to stick the pieces together themselves or to experiment with the design of the dragon. This means that some activities are overly directed by adults and do not allow children to learn by following their natural curiosity. Children enjoy daily access to the outside area. This is used mainly as an opportunity for physical play, although staff are actively working towards providing resources to support the whole curriculum outdoors. The outdoor area could easily be used to provide children with more flexibility and choice, allowing them to move spontaneously between the indoor and outdoor environment.

Planning is based on topics, is balanced across the six areas of learning and is linked to appropriate stepping stones. However, adult-focus activities do not always show a clear learning intention and do not include how they can be adapted or extended to ensure children are provided with sufficient levels of challenge. In addition, they are not always effectively evaluated to promote learning. Assessment is based upon meaningful observations recorded in children's records of progress. However, the children's next steps in learning are not identified in their assessment records to fully inform future planning and to ensure activities are based on children's individual needs and interests. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively and provide them with good strategies to help them learn to manage their own behaviour.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They have a positive attitude to learning and become confident and self-assured in their play, negotiating and interacting well with their peers to share ideas and experiences. They develop their self-esteem and take great pride in their achievements, for example, actively seeking out staff to show them what they have done. Children play together well, cooperating and offering their own suggestions when playing with the small world play and building tracks for the trains.

Children are developing their speaking and listening skills extremely well as they freely initiate conversations with their peers and adults. They have opportunities to learn letter sounds and some children can sound out the letters in their name. Younger children demonstrate good pencil control, although staff do not always make the most of opportunities as they arise to encourage their early writing skills. For example, staff routinely write the child's name for them on their artwork. Children use mathematical language during their play and often practise their counting skills. They enjoy playing games such as rolling a large dice on the floor and clapping their hands to correspond to the number that the dice lands on. This supports the development of number recognition through activities that are fun. Some children demonstrate simple calculation skills at lunchtime, confidently predicting how many pieces of toast would be left when a staff member had eaten a piece.

Children competently display their skills when using the computer and operate everyday technology in their play. For example, they enjoy talking to each other on the telephone in the home corner and use the tape recorders and headphones. Children learn about themselves and the world around them through planned activities and themed topic work. Children freely explore the globe of the world and confidently point to the North Pole where 'Santa Clause lives'.

They make good use of their imagination in planned and spontaneous role play situations both inside and out. They explore their creativity while experimenting with a range of media and materials when creating collage pictures. However, sufficient challenges are not always provided for the more able children such as being able to cut out their own shapes from the resources.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals and are able to make positive choices and decisions during their time at the setting. They are developing a positive attitude to each other and gain an understanding of the wider world through resources that show positive images of difference and diversity and through discussion. Children participate with different planned activities which enhances their understanding of different celebrations and festivals, these have included Chinese New Year and Christmas. Children have a clear understanding of their place in the community and share information about their homes and how they live.

Children are very confident in their relationships with staff. They play happily together and with adults and are developing a strong sense of belonging. The setting works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are met. Policies are in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there is a nominated member of staff to seek additional support and advice from other professionals to ensure that children's needs are met.

Children behave well as they know what is expected of them. They are learning responsible behaviours and these are reinforced by the staff through gentle reminders and simple explanations which are at an appropriate level for their understanding. They share resources and negotiate without adult intervention. This enables them to make choices, take decisions and build harmonious partnerships. A behaviour policy is in place and shared with parents. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered as they take part in the life of the setting and receive appropriate support from staff.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff have built a good rapport with parents and exchange information on a daily basis regarding any issues that may have arisen, this ensures continuity of care. Parents are encouraged to view their children's assessment records, this raises parental awareness of the Foundation Stage. However, there is no effective system in place to encourage parents to share and contribute to their children's records of progress to enable staff and parents to work together to plan for their children's next step. Parents are asked to complete a child profile when their children start at the pre-school to help identify their children's starting point. They receive newsletters which give general information regarding the running of the setting. A parents rota is valued by parents as it enables them to see what happens at the setting. The group actively seek the views of parents through questionnaires and respond positively to any issues raised by them.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by experienced staff with a good knowledge and understanding of child development. Children are safeguarded by sound recruitment and vetting procedures, which are in place to ensure that children are never left alone with people who have not been suitably vetted. Sessions are organised with clear routines which help children to settle and become confident. Accurate attendance registers are maintained for children and staff, however, they do not record staff actual hours of arrival and departure. The policies and procedures included in the operational plan are clear, updated and work well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff work efficiently as a cohesive team, as they share a clear vision for providing good standards of care and education and receive good levels of support from the committee. Regular meetings enable staff to review and evaluate the curriculum and self-evaluation is currently being carefully considered with areas for development clearly identified, ensuring the setting continues to improve. Staff work closely with advisors from the local authority to ensure that the curriculum offered is effective in promoting children's learning. Job descriptions and effective induction and appraisal processes help staff to be clearly aware of their roles and responsibilities and have their training needs addressed. Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At their last care inspection the setting was asked to develop procedures for staff induction and appraisals and that staff were vigilant when moving around the building. The setting has introduced an effective procedure for staff induction and annual appraisals are now carried out by the committee on the staff. The setting have recently moved into their own purpose built premises and no longer share facilities with the school. Therefore, the previous recommendation is no longer applicable.

At the previous nursery education inspection the setting agreed to extend the provision of Information and Communication Technology equipment and provide more prolonged opportunities for the children to interact with each other. The setting have purchased a computer with suitable software which children can access during the session. This enables children to develop their understanding of the role of technology in the world and to develop their physical skills through using the mouse. Planning at the setting now offers a good balance of activities that offer children the opportunity to play on their own and engage in group activities. This allows children to interact with each other at their own pace and develop their social skills.

### **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**

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 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):

- devise a system for registering staff actual hours of attendance on a daily basis
- ensure prior parental consent is obtained to seek emergency medical advice or treatment
- provide more opportunities for children to build upon their natural curiosity as learners by ensuring adults do not give too much direction to achieve the end result (also applies to nursery education).

#### **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 the assessment and evaluation of children's progress to identify their next steps in learning and to inform future planning
- ensure adult focused activities have a clear learning objective, show how they can be adapted or extended to suit the needs of individual children and are effectively evaluated
- develop opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's records of progress.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)