

Oakenshaw Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205139
Inspection date	12 September 2007
Inspector	Christine Lynn Williams
Setting Address	Oakenshaw Community Centre, Castleditch Lane, Redditch, Worcs, B98 7YB
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Registered person	Suzanne Clements & Tracey Tombs
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 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?

Oakenshaw Kindergarten is a privately owned pre-school. It opened in 1980 and operates from one large main base room within a multi-purpose community building. It is situated on a large residential estate on the outskirts of Redditch, Worcestershire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the kindergarten at any one time. The kindergarten is open each weekday during term times from 09:00 to 15:15 on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays and from 09:00 to 12:45 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and have occasional use of a large hall for physical activities.

There are currently 33 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for nursery education. This includes funded two-year-olds. Children attend from the local area.

The kindergarten employs six staff. Four of the staff, including the managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are working towards a qualification. The kindergarten receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected because staff recognise and reduce any possible risks and help children to develop an understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Effective daily cleaning routines are used to prevent the spread of infection such as wearing gloves when handling food, wiping tables in between use and keeping toys and equipment clean and hygienic. Children are well supported in learning to wash their hands before food, after toileting and messy activities and nappy changing time is used effectively with the youngest children to help them feel emotionally secure and well cared for. First aid trained staff ensure minor accidents are dealt with effectively and children's health and medication needs are clearly recorded.

Children get plenty of robust physical exercise and fresh air. Outdoor play is provided daily in a small secure garden at the front of the building and children can also use an outdoor covered area during wet weather. They often run and use large apparatus in the large hall, while regular walks around the local area and to the near-by woods ensure that children enjoy lots of opportunities to learn outside and be physically active. Three-year-olds use the outdoor facilities with real enjoyment and have good control over their bodies. They develop confidence as they climb, pedal and balance and enjoy meeting the challenge of learning to control their actions during yoga and PE sessions. They show a keen sense of personal space as they play alongside each other and use push-along cars skilfully, avoiding obstacles and controlling their speed so that they do not bump into their friends. Children use a wide range of small and large equipment to help them develop control and learn to move their bodies in different ways. Hoops, a parachute and climbing frame are used both indoors and outside and daily use of paint, dough, construction and drawing tools helps them to learn how to use their hands and fingers effectively. Staff support children well in learning about how their bodies change when they are active. For example, they learn to recognise when they are out of breath and to put their hands on their chest to feel their hearts beating faster after they have been running.

Children's understanding of healthy eating is well supported so that they learn to enjoy food and begin to develop a understanding of why some foods are healthier than others. Drinks are provided throughout the day and children know to ask for additional drinks when they want them. Parents provide packed lunches for their children, with the setting providing a varied and healthy selection of foods at breakfast and snack time. Healthy choices such as fruit, cereals, toast and crumpets allow children to experiment with different tastes and textures and mealtimes are relaxed, pleasurable occasions when children sit together to learn social skills, good eating habits and enjoy each other's company. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children receive consistent messages about healthy eating and have provided detailed fact sheets that help parents understand how to improve their children's diets by being aware of such things as salt and sugar contents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a light, airy and spacious environment where indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively and they can learn, explore and develop safely and with close adult support.

There is a high ratio of adults to the number of children present and staff are carefully deployed ensuring children are always well supervised. Toys are attractively laid out to allow children to freely access what they want to play with and posters and colourful displays of topics and themes are displayed around the room, creating a very stimulating and child-friendly environment.

Children play safely both indoors and out due to vigilant staff and carefully considered safety arrangements. A detailed risk assessment ensures that all potential risks to children have been carefully considered and effective procedures and practices put in place to minimise these. For example, electrical socket covers are protected, doors are kept locked while children are present and they are always accompanied to toilet. There are good arrangements concerning the arrival and collection of children and passwords are used when necessary for extra protection. Staff are proactive in helping children to assess their own safety. Gentle reminders are used over such things as how to use hockey sticks and push-along cars safely and they learn to be careful when running around outside so that they do not bump into each other. They know what to do if they need to evacuate the setting in an emergency because they have discussed and practised this with staff.

Staff have a good understanding of how to protect children, and recognise that this is their first priority. They are vigilant, aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child. Good policies and reference guides are kept close to hand at all times and this ensures that current, best practice regarding child protection is always followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff develop warm and caring relationships with the children in their care and this is very evident. Children are cared for in small groups and good continuity of staff allows the youngest children to develop a sense of belonging with familiar and trusted adults. An informal keyworker system allows children to choose which adult they wish to make close relationships with and this helps them to feel secure and nurtured. Two-year-olds play alongside three-year-olds and benefit from watching and learning from their older friends. They join in with most activities, with additional times set aside for them to explore freely and experience a range of activities planned in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. As a result, young children are happy, settled and involved in a broad range of activities and spontaneous events that keep them well stimulated and interested. Young children's care needs are carefully considered and staff observe and assess children in order to plan activities that reflect their varying levels of concentration and ability. However, there is limited information gained about children's starting points and what they can do when they start at the setting and this affects staff's ability to effectively plan ahead to move children forward in their learning and development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's confidence and self-esteem and they are encouraged to be independent learners as they explore and experiment freely with interesting and tactile materials such as sand, soil, soap suds and paint. They self-select resources, decide what they want to do and so are confident in initiating their own learning and play ideas. Planning shows a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and provides a positive framework and a broad and balanced educational programme which results in children making good progress in all areas of their

learning. Staff often use planning flexibly in order to respond to children's developing interests or to make the most of spontaneous events that happen throughout the session, and they regularly observe children to assess what they are learning. Topics and themes are used effectively to provide fun activities that help children learn across all six areas of the curriculum and staff are attentive and responsive, give clear explanations and offer questions that make children think. As a result children are interested, fully involved and learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly well supported and underpins the rest of the children's learning. This is especially important because of the age mix within the setting. A strong emphasis is placed on developing self-care and independence and three-year-olds show skill and increasing confidence when putting on their craft aprons or washing and drying their hands. Children often show real excitement and pleasure as they play and learn. For example, they are fascinated when exploring with soap suds and show great excitement when building a tall tower of bricks. Good role models and careful explanation are used effectively to develop children's social skills, while stickers and lots of praise are used to reward good behaviour.

Children are developing well in the area of communication language and literacy. Three-year-olds talk freely and with expression when working in large and small groups and are beginning to develop the confidence to express their views. They enjoy a variety of good quality story and reference books and learn story telling skills as they join in with acting out their favourite books using soft toys and puppets. A simple phonic system is used to help children to link sounds to letters in a fun way and they enjoy learning to recognise their own names using a colourful self-registration system. Children make marks freely using pens, crayons, paint and dough and often enjoy writing during their imaginary play as they make 'shopping lists' or jot down messages when they are pretending to be using the phone.

Children's mathematical development is an area of particular strength. Counting and number recognition is threaded through most activities and this results in children developing confidence and very positive attitudes as they count, match and sort. For example they count how many children are present each day, know how many bricks they use when building a tower and often count spontaneously as they play. Children see numbers widely displayed around the room and an excellent range of mathematical resources are used creatively to help children learn to understand how numbers change when one or more is added or taken away. Children measure and use mathematical language as they play, using words like big, little and half as they cut their play dough into two. They use different shapes such as squares, rectangles and hexagons to make large scale patterns around the room and show a good understanding of how to link these to the shapes of familiar objects.

Children are developing well in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world. They explore freely as they use sand, water and dough and enjoy interesting activities such as discovering the texture of soap suds and watching what happens when bubbles burst. They develop their natural curiosity as they mix paint or look at how quickly ice melts and enjoy looking for ants in the garden and watching frogspawn grow into frogs. They make wide use of the kindergarten garden to observe and experience seasonal changes as they smell the blossom on the trees or try to catch leaves. They freely access a computer each day and show skill in using a mouse and playing simple games to develop their story telling and mathematical skills.

Children express themselves freely through paint, drawing, music and movement. Their creativity is valued and they are widely encouraged to make up their own games and act out familiar roles

through their imaginary play. For example, children enjoyed pretending to be going shopping and made up their own special game in the garden den. They explore colour and texture as they use a variety of painting techniques and collage materials and often help to make the colourful displays which decorate their learning room. There is lots of time for singing and moving expressively to music and they regularly enjoy experimenting with sounds and rhythms as they play musical instruments or enthusiastically join in with action songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a strong sense of belonging at the kindergarten, where their individuality is valued and they are helped to feel good about themselves. Positive support, praise and encouragement are used effectively to help build children's self-esteem and they benefit from very good settling arrangements that help them to quickly feel safe and secure with people they trust. For example, children are encouraged to choose which staff member they wish to make close relationships with and parents are welcomed into the setting so that they can settle their children before they leave. Young children's self-care and independence is supported extremely well. They choose what they want to play with, are encouraged to put on their own craft aprons and learn to wash and dry their hands. They behave very well, responding positively to the clear expectations and good roles models set by staff over such things as sharing and working together harmoniously. They are quick to help tidy away their toys, share and take turns and often show pride and excitement when receiving reward stickers for being helpful, kind or achieving.

Children broaden their experiences through well-developed themes that help them to look at and investigate their own cultures and the beliefs of other people. A wide range of playthings and activities are provided which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. These include such things as dolls, books, dressing up clothes and small world play. Children's birthdays and cultural festivals including Chinese New Year, Ramadan, Easter and Christmas are celebrated and these help children develop positive attitudes to our multicultural society. A positive and caring attitude ensures all children's individual needs are well met. Staff work in close partnership with parents over children's health and learning needs and both managers have received specific training to ensure all children are effectively included. Children's spiritual, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. A strong relationship with parents is developed and this contributes to children's well-being. Operational plans and policies are shared with parents and they are encouraged to talk freely to staff on a daily basis. A clear information pack and operational plan provides parents with useful information about the setting's policies and how it is operated, while notice boards and displays are also used effectively to keep parents well informed. Planning and activity plans are displayed for parents to see and regular newsletters inform parents about forthcoming topics and themes and what their children will be learning. Observations and assessments of young children's developmental milestones and learning achievements are shared through weekly information sheets and parents chat freely to staff each day at arrival and collection times. Nursery education parents' meetings are held each term to allow them to talk about their child's progress and they can also see their child's individual learning folder at any time. A book lending scheme allows parents to share in the learning at home as they look at these with their children and they also join in with special events such as the Christmas carol service, a leavers ceremony and trips and outings. Parents' views and concerns are respected and acknowledged and they know how to make a complaint on behalf of their children if they wish to.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is supported by enthusiastic staff and strong management. High staffing levels are maintained and this ensures children are given close attention. Staff work well as a team and have a shared commitment to providing good quality care. Time, space and resources are used effectively and good employment and staff checking procedures ensure that children are well protected by experienced and qualified staff.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The setting is owned and run by two well qualified and experienced managers who fully involve their staff in the decision making and planning processes and give clear direction over children's care and education. There is a strong commitment to on-going staff development and yearly appraisal and comprehensive induction procedures reflect the enthusiasm and commitment shown by all staff. Staff work closely with the local authority mentor teacher and regularly attend meetings with other early years professionals and local schools to share good practice and keep up-to-date with new initiatives. They have begun monitoring and evaluating how the setting operates, however this has only recently been introduced and systems for reviewing and reflecting on the effectiveness of the educational programme are not yet fully effective in ensuring that common goals for improvements are identified and acted upon. Staff are flexible in their teaching approach and often alter curriculum plans to allow them make the most of spontaneous learning events and to follow children's own interests. The joint managers observe staff and work closely beside them on a day-to-day basis and ensure that both staff and children enjoy their time at the setting. Staff work closely together and effectively as a team and there are good arrangements for ensuring on-going staff development.

A well-considered set of policies and procedures are in place to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing are always carefully considered. These are regularly reviewed and amended to meet changes in legislation and practice. Children's records are well organised and kept close to hand so that staff can easily update and gain appropriate signatures from parents and confidentiality is maintained. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to make improvements regarding parents' access to the complaints policy and to amend the child protection policy.

Good progress has been made in reviewing and amending policy documents since the last inspection and this helps to further protect children's overall safety and well-being. Effective methods have been devised to ensure parents are fully aware of the setting's complaints procedure. The complaint policy and contact number for Ofsted is now displayed on a notice board and parents' signatures are also obtained to confirm that they have read and understood the policy and know how to make a complaint on behalf of their children if they wish to. The child protection policy has also been reviewed and amended to include a statement on what action will be taken if an allegation is made against a member of staff. The new document includes a statement of what action will be taken and a checklist for handling and recording allegations or complaints made against a member of staff has been developed. This is shared with parents, who sign to say they have read the policy and know what action will be taken if any concerns are raised about a child.

Nursery Education

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to consider using appropriate lettering when using labelling around the kindergarten's care rooms. The use of appropriate lettering, symbols and photographs have been increased and improved since the last inspection to help children understand that words have real meaning. These are displayed around the room, in toilet areas and on toys and equipment and resources.

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):

- gain early information about children's starting points and what they can do in order to plan effectively for their future development and learning (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):

- further develop self-assessment in order to monitor and evaluate children's progress and use this to develop ways of continually improving the effectiveness of the educational programme.

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