

Orchard Barns Private Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650110
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Inspector	Sarah Johnson
Setting Address	Badliss Hall, Bromley Road, Ardleigh, Colchester, Essex, CO7 7LX
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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 outstanding. 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?

Orchard Barns Private Kindergarten opened in 1995. It operates from four rooms within a converted barn in Ardleigh, near Colchester. A maximum of 46 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to three enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 121 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 49 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports a number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is greatly enhanced as they play in a spotlessly clean and hygienic environment where excellent personal hygiene is actively encouraged throughout the daily routine.

Consequently, children understand why it is important to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and when taking part in cooking activities. Pictures of hand washing are displayed by the low-level sinks to remind children to wash their hands properly using the liquid soap and individual paper towels provided. Children independently help themselves to tissues when they need to wipe their noses and automatically place used tissues into the bin. Throughout the day staff follow strict cleaning routines to ensure all areas remain thoroughly clean. For example, staff routinely clean the toilets with antibacterial spray after children have used them and nappy changing areas are maintained to very hygienic standards. In addition, staff and children remove their outdoor shoes and wear slippers when indoors to ensure children's health is enhanced even further. Younger children sleep peacefully in cots or on mattresses with bedding which is individual to each child and washed frequently. Staff are dedicated in following the children's individual sleeping routines and are vigilant in monitoring sleeping babies at least every 10 minutes.

Excellent procedures are followed by all staff to ensure children receive effective care should they have an accident or become unwell. For example, detailed records are kept when medicine is administered to children and these are signed consistently by parents. Information about accidents is also recorded and passed on to parents, ensuring children's health is fully promoted. Staff are highly proactive in supporting children's individual medical needs as they all hold first aid certificates and have completed training with a health care professional to enable them to safely administer medication via an epipen.

Children readily help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the day. Younger children and babies are offered regular drinks as staff are vigilant to ensure they remain well hydrated. Older children confidently pour their own drinks and independently help themselves to a nutritious selection of snacks such as crackers with houmous, fresh fruit and vegetable sticks. Meal times are enjoyable sociable times where children sit together to enjoy a range of freshly prepared hot meals including home-made lasagne, roast chicken, fish pie and a daily helping of vegetables. Children's individual dietary needs are given high regard as staff obtain detailed information from parents which is displayed prominently in each playroom for easy reference. Children are developing their understanding of healthy eating during frequent cooking activities. For example, older children talk about the effect of sugary foods on their teeth.

Children have boundless energy and love to play in one of the three highly inviting and inspiring outdoor areas. They busy themselves with a range of activities that develop their physical strength and co-ordination, contributing to a healthy lifestyle. For example, they balance skilfully on crates and carefully climb the large climbing apparatus. Their spatial awareness is excellent as they run around freely in the large paddock, swerving to avoid each other during a game of 'Sticky Toffee'. They delight in sitting in the sensory garden, listening to the wind chimes and playing with leaves as they take in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children play in a highly safe and comfortable environment which contributes positively to their care, learning, play and ability to stay safe. The nursery walls are awash with bright and colourful displays, posters and photographs, creating a wonderfully stimulating environment for the children. The staff have recently reviewed the layout of the playrooms to ensure children are offered maximum space and freedom to move around and spread out in their play. Children benefit from free flow access to the outdoor classroom where they experience an excellent range of play and learning opportunities. Sofas, cosy cushions and carpet areas are provided, enabling children to sit and relax with their friends in comfort. Children enjoy an extensive range of play resources and toys which meet their different ages, interests and stages of development. All resources and play equipment are effectively organised to foster children's choice, with many stored in labelled boxes at the children's level.

Children's safety is given unquestionable priority as staff follow robust safety procedures and conduct thorough daily risk assessments of indoor and outdoor areas. The nursery is highly secure as the main door is locked and a CCTV system is in place to ensure only known adults can enter the premises. Procedures for collection of children are excellent and ensure only authorised adults can collect children from the nursery. Children are protected further as comprehensive fire safety precautions are in place such as a clearly displayed fire escape procedure and routine fire drills with the children. Children are developing a meaningful understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn to look and listen for cars as they cross the car park on their way to the paddock and use computer programmes focusing on safety.

All staff have completed training in safeguarding children and they demonstrate extensive knowledge of the signs of possible abuse. A comprehensive written policy is fully implemented to ensure any concerns are prioritised and dealt with effectively. Consequently, children are expertly protected from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children confidently settle when they arrive as they are welcomed by genuinely enthusiastic and loving staff who are very pleased to see them. They are clearly very reassured by the familiar daily routine, as they automatically find their name tag to hang on the apple tree and cheerfully greet their friends. Children respond well as staff consistently sing cheerful songs when it is time to wash their hands or tidy up. Staff are motivated by what children say and do and are consistently introducing children to new ideas and experiences. For example, when staff spot a squirrel in the garden, they take children over to observe it and a discussion about hibernation soon follows. Children proudly take responsibility for tasks within the daily routine, helping to develop their independence. For example, they independently help themselves to the dustpan and brush to sweep up the sand.

Staff use their extensive knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to skilfully plan activities that fully incorporate the needs of younger children. Younger children experience excellent levels of support in the form of praise for their achievements and encouragement when they communicate their ideas. An excellent settling in policy ensures that younger children are supported to deal with separation from their parents. For example, staff respect children's use of comforters when children are sleeping or unsettled and their older siblings are often

invited to join them during snack times. The setting offers numerous treasure baskets containing a vast range of natural resources such as pegs, wooden spatulas, large pebbles and brushes, all of which stimulate children's senses and exploratory play. Children delight in the messy activities they are offered. For example, they freely use their hands to explore trays of shaving foam, gloop, play dough and toothpaste.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The staff demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how to fully promote children's learning. Consequently, children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals, given their capability and starting points. Their progress is facilitated by expert planning documentation which reflects an array of innovative learning opportunities covering all six areas of learning, with clear learning intentions identified. There are detailed assessment files for each child which include examples of their work, photographs of their learning and a checklist of the stepping stones, which is consistently highlighted and dated to map children's progress. Children benefit from staff who are truly intuitive of their needs as they accurately record ongoing observations of children's progress, development needs and interests. These assessments are given high regard and are skilfully used to inform future planning. As a result, children continually move on to the next stage in their learning and enjoy activities which are tailored to meet their interests.

The staff use an excellent range of teaching methods to motivate children so they are keen to learn and make progress. Children experience excellent levels of support and challenge as they enjoy activities in appropriately organised groups led by their key person. Creative use of resources ensures children are highly engaged in their learning. For example, they enjoy learning about dinosaurs and archaeology as they use brushes to carefully clear sand away from buried dinosaurs. Strong links with people in the local community provide meaningful experiences for children. For example, they meet the local patrol officer, a dentist and paramedic who shows the children around an ambulance. Staff support children's behaviour extremely well to ensure an optimum environment for learning. For example, they learn clear boundaries when they are reminded of the positive rules which are displayed. These effectively encourage children to take turns and listen to each other.

Children display superb levels of involvement in activities and are highly interested and motivated to learn. They move independently within the setting, initiating a majority of their own play and spending substantial time developing their chosen activity. Children are mastering skills in caring for themselves as they competently put on their coats and shoes before playing outside, persevering for some time to successfully manage tricky zips and buttons. They show excellent negotiation skills as they work with a partner to complete the task of washing and drying the snack plates. For example, they work together to decide who will complete each aspect of the task and politely ask their peers for help when needed. Children are developing their competencies exceptionally well in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They confidently recognise their own names when self-registering and show a strong interest in accessing books and reading. For example, they eagerly begin to read a range of common words and show understanding of the sequence of events in a story when sharing books with the staff. Many children confidently form recognisable letters when copying their names onto whiteboards and some children are developing their control by using their fingers to trace the letters printed on a card.

Children enjoy learning about connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They use mathematical language such as 'longer' and 'shorter' when estimating and measuring the height of sunflowers in the garden. Children begin to relate addition to combining two numbers as throw bean bags at numbers and add these together. When placing farm animals in a display, children confidently use words such as 'behind', 'in front' and 'under' to describe their position. Children are confidently able to recreate patterns from a template using different coloured cubes. Children delight in using their creativity to express their ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance and imaginative play. They work creatively as they cut bat shapes from bin liners and stick these onto large sheets of orange paper. They decide precisely where each bat should be positioned and competently spread glue to stick them down. Imaginative play is a firm favourite with all children as they engage in role play based on the same theme. For example, they act out their roles in the shop as they pay for items at the till and form a group as they imagine they are in a musical band. Weekly movement and dance sessions encourage children to express themselves through movement. They enjoy learning to move like different animals and sing and join in with actions as they listen to music from the piano.

Children are highly interested in making sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through a range of first hand experiences. They investigate aspects of the living world with all of their senses. For example, they observe and lovingly tend to the flowers they plant in the garden and use magnifying glasses to look closely at the minibeasts they find. Children are actively learning about caring for the environment as they automatically sort paper and plastic into the correct bins ready for recycling and look forward to the delivery of a compost bin. Children frequently complete simple software programs on the computer and confidently instruct a programmable toy. They enjoy an array of activities that help them to master their manipulative skills when using small apparatus, tools and equipment. For example, they select appropriate tools and skilfully use their fingers to twist, roll and cut play dough to form recognisable models. They demonstrate excellent understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies as they notice that they breath quicker and feel warm after running around.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children play in a highly inclusive environment where staff value individuality and the contribution each child makes. The comprehensive written policy for equal opportunities is implemented precisely to ensure children are treated with equal concern. Children feel highly valued as staff have a very gentle manner and treat children with complete respect. Staff are committed to involving children in decisions that are made such as when choosing new resources to purchase. Children proudly take responsibility when it is their turn to be the 'shoe helper' or 'snack helper' for the day, helping them to develop an excellent sense of belonging. Children are learning to value diversity and are developing an understanding of the wider community. For example, they meet people who visit to talk about the Islamic faith and use resources such as books reflecting different cultures and posters written in different languages.

Staff are motivated in providing expert support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, staff issued questionnaires to parents and staff and consulted with the children to find out if the setting is truly inclusive. Individual plans for children with additional needs are very well monitored by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and include clear targets to ensure children are supported to realise their full potential. Children benefit further as all staff have completed relevant ongoing training including a workshop relating to supporting children with Autism.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is exceptionally good as they play harmoniously together. A number of innovative and positive strategies are used consistently throughout the nursery to ensure children are learning clear boundaries. Staff use persona dolls and displays about feelings to trigger calm discussions about behaviour or specific incidents. Staff aim to help children to understand that it is the behaviour that is unwelcome and not the children themselves. Children experience meaningful opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own. They celebrate festivals such as Diwali, Hanukkah, Easter and Chinese New Year, when they make dragons and sample traditional Chinese noodles using chopsticks.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Every parent receives an informative welcome pack, detailing the main policies and procedures for the setting. Strong relationships are fostered with parents to enhance children's care from the beginning. For example, parents are welcome to attend a session with their children, which is when staff gather information about children's likes and dislikes, what they can do and their individual routines. Parents are well informed regarding the Foundation Stage and how their children are progressing. This is achieved successfully through daily discussion with parents, termly newsletters and the planning which is prominently displayed. Staff actively encourage parents to contribute to their children's assessment records. For example, parents are asked to add comments and ideas to the planning for their children and they share the development records with staff at open meetings. Children benefit further as parents are given an abundance of useful information such as parent guides for supporting reading and writing and suggestions for activities which can promote children's learning at home. This ensures that parents have the opportunity to become fully involved in their children's learning and consequently, children's learning is significantly enhanced.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for by genuinely dedicated and motivated staff who are highly qualified and experienced in meeting children's individual needs. Highly professional recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are safeguarded, including a successful procedure for the induction of new staff. Staff are highly vigilant to ensure children are never left alone with adults who have not been suitably vetted.

Children's care, learning and play are significantly enhanced by effective organisation of all aspects of the provision. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the National Standards and understand how to promote outstanding outcomes for children. Children experience excellent levels of supervision and direct support as the adult to child ratios are above and beyond requirements and staff deployment is expertly managed. This ensures there are always ample staff available to cover for staff absence or emergencies. The manager works effectively with the staff to continually review policies and procedures in the comprehensive operational plan, ensuring that children are offered consistent care. Children benefit from ongoing improvement at the setting. All staff are involved in completing the self-evaluation process and they are skilful in identifying innovative ways to build on their existing outstanding practice.

The leadership and management is outstanding. Staff work together as a highly motivated and cohesive team as they share a commitment to offering the best possible experiences to children and their families. The Foundation Stage curriculum is expertly delivered as all staff are involved in contributing to weekly reflection and planning meetings. As a result, children benefit from activities which embrace their interests and they experience consistency in the teaching they receive. Children benefit significantly as staff strive for outstanding practice, constantly

monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. Annual staff appraisals provide valuable opportunities for all staff to reflect on their individual strengths and to identify their individual training needs, which are prioritised.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider was asked to introduce a planned programme of activities to promote children's knowledge and understanding of information and communications technology. Children now enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities which help them to learn about the uses of everyday technology. For example, they use a child-friendly digital camera, programmable bug, keyboards and enjoy daily access to a computer.

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 outstanding. 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 MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

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