

Outset Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY257167
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Jan Leo
Setting Address	Keble Road, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 4TP
Telephone number	01869 321301
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Registered person	Valerie June Clayton
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?

Outset Day Nursery is a private nursery, which is registered to provide full day care. The current owner registered the provision in March 2003. It operates from a single storey, purpose built building about a mile from the centre of Bicester, and has parking outside. The nursery consists of one main central room with a quiet room, office, toilets and kitchen leading off. There are two outside play areas providing a mix of hard and grass surfaces, and one area houses large equipment.

The setting is registered to accept up to 22 children under the age of eight years, and generally takes children from 18 months to five years. There are currently 42 children on the register of whom 18 receive funding for early education. The staff support children with English as a second language, and a full range of ability. Children attend on a full or part time basis.

The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 each weekday, all year round, except during public holidays. There are eight staff working with the children throughout the week and almost all are experienced and have appropriate early years qualifications to level two or above.

The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good hygiene through the daily routine. They spend their time in a clean environment and see staff wipe tables, encourage nose blowing, and assist with washing hands throughout the day. The children form close bonds with their key workers and, as a result, they settle quickly and are confident when asking for help with their personal care. All have individual towels and flannels to avoid the spread of infection, and staff change these at midday to provide fresh supplies for the afternoon session. At times, the children have their snack outdoors and overlook hand washing, compromising hygiene when hands are at their dirtiest. The key workers each have a 'buddy' to work closely with. This ensures that at least two members of staff get to know each child very well in order to avoid upset if a key worker is absent. Consequently, all children join in and are emotionally secure within the setting. The staff have a well thought through health and safety policy, which they consistently enforce to protect children from infection. Several members of staff have a first aid certificate and one is always on site to ensure prompt and effective treatment if children get hurt. They keep clear accident and medication records and share all information with parents and carers to keep them up to date about their children's health issues. Some medical supplies, in the first aid boxes, have expired and may no longer be sterile. All young and less confident children have free access to drinks to ensure they do not go thirsty if unable to convey their needs to staff. Staff encourage older children to ask for drinks to develop an awareness of their own needs and prepare them for the move to school. All bring a packed lunch from home and sit sociable around clean tables to eat their meal in small groups. The staff provide breakfast consisting of a choice of cereals with milk, brown or white toast, and fresh fruit and vegetables. They supplement meals with healthy snacks both mid morning and mid afternoon. A high number of children have food allergies or intolerances, but staff manage the situation very well, planning menus to suit all children. They keep a record of children's dietary needs for staff to refer to in order to make sure other children's lunches or party treats sent to celebrate birthdays do not put children at risk.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe because the nursery has a secure entry system and the layout of the building allows for easy supervision. The staff deploy themselves well to oversee the activities and all concentrate fully on supervising and supporting the children to keep them safe. The children learn how to play safely because staff consistently remind them of rules, such as not to run with equipment or climb on tables. The children generally receive clear explanations about how to keep themselves safe, in order to learn about consequences. All the children have easy access to a full range of stimulating and appropriate resources because most live in shelving units at low level for children to reach easily without risk of getting hurt. The children make very good use of all the equipment and the staff monitor children's play, to remove any broken or damaged toys promptly. The staff have a formal procedure for ongoing maintenance, adopting a rota to keep all equipment in good condition. Children have adequate indoor space, which is comfortable and well laid out. They have free access to the garden area for much of the day, to provide additional space to spread out freely. The children move around sensibly, avoiding collision and enjoy taking advantage of natural challenges, such as climbing the tree, while under the watchful eye of caring adults. All children and staff practise fire drills to become familiar with the evacuation process, and fire extinguisher test occurs annually to keep them in good condition. The staff take children on outings regularly and they complete thorough risk

assessments in order to avoid hazards and be prepared if things go wrong. The staff have a good understanding of the child protection procedure and their responsibility to safeguard children from harm. They keep notes on existing injuries, seen when children arrive at the setting, and take appropriate action when concerns arise. Some records however lack detail to give a complete picture of their concerns and any action taken.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children feel they belong because staff encourage parents and carers to be part of the settling in process. The children receive a cheerful welcome and find the room inspiring as soon as they arrive. They spend their day in a predominantly open plan area with opportunities to work with children of a similar age, time to mix with other age groups, or come together as one large group. All rapidly find something of interest, whether it be building train tracks alone, or taking dolly to the shops with a friend in the role-play corner. All children confidently try anything on offer and they remain productively occupied throughout the day. Young children frequently join the older age group when wanting to join their sibling or simply to watch what others do. The staff welcome their interest by routinely making room for them in the group and encouraging others to value their visit. As a result, all children mix very well and the setting has a strong community feeling.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff ensure that most of the learning is through child-initiated play, which they extend and develop according to children's interests. This method of teaching suits the children well and, as a result, the children are very enthusiastic learners. The staff show genuine interest in what the children do and say to develop children's high self-esteem. They generally allow children to progress at their own rate, but at times, more able children become engrossed in low-key activities without sufficient challenge. For example, when one child showed interest in trails of water on the path, there was no development to compare shoe prints, make bird or animal markings or see how long it took to dry. The staff make very good use of some visual aids to capture children's attention. Children flock to see what Bryson Bear has in his bag and eagerly contribute to discussion about whether his T-shirt from India is too big or too small, and try to solve the problem of him having no coat. A call for hand washing, ready for lunch, interrupts their enjoyment and children reluctantly go off in small groups requesting the story telling waits for their return. Some return and pick up where they left off, while others fidget having lost the thread. The staff routinely involve children in making decisions, asking for example 'how many shall we count?' and 'what shall we sing?' The children sit very well at group times. Each has an opportunity to speak and most make themselves easily understood. Some are extremely vocal, asking questions of visitors and explaining to staff what their lost bunny looks like to begin an effective search. The children listen well, take turns to speak and show a high degree of respect for others. The children use their knowledge as they play, demonstrating their understanding of how learning links to everyday life. For example, two aprons fell off the peg when a child was preparing to paint, 'oh no not two, I only wanted one' she said as she put one back, confidently using numbers in the correct context. The children frequently talk about what they do and eagerly share information with others stating 'I'm making a tank' before going on to explain how it works. The children successfully build object to their own designs, count accurately to double figures, and confidently use mathematical concepts in play. All practise writing for different purposes and some attempt to 'name' their paper automatically before beginning to paint, showing how they value writing. The children are all very polite and practise their moral and social skills as they play freely. One

showed concern for Bryson Bear telling staff 'you're bending his neck' as she bent over to pack Bryson's bag and squashed him on her lap. The member of staff apologised to Bryson and rubbed his neck better to show the children an appropriate reaction. This firm understanding of how to behave results in children telling others when they need an apron on, or giving reminders that they should share nicely. They play exceptionally well together and rarely find themselves with little to do. The children enjoy adult led activities, such as making calendars, and successfully recreate a picture copying one produced earlier by a member of staff. All have the freedom to create their own design if they prefer, to display their individuality, and they take pride in deciding when their artwork is complete. The children freely choose what equipment to use to develop their games, accessing resources independently whenever possible and asking for help to get those that are out of reach. They have access to some modern technology, including calculators, computer and tape player. These are not available routinely each day but children know they can use them on request. The staff monitor what children do by, for example, keeping a list of children who want to use the computer. They observe and record children's achievements in order to plan a varied programme around the main topic. Staff do not consolidate children's progress records frequently to be of full value. The staff transfer information to children's profiles at approximately two monthly intervals resulting in no easy way of identifying gaps in learning before completing short term planning, and no concise developmental information to ensure children continue to receive an appropriate level of challenge as they develop and learn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children benefit from the nursery being a small setting where everyone gets to know each other very well. All children feel welcome and make friends easily. Staff consistently promote a caring approach with great success and, as a result, all children join in fully, respect others, and behave very well. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and remain flexible when planning and following the routine, in order to overcome any insecurity when children first start at the nursery. The staff treat all children with equal concern and they work closely with parents and carers to devise ways of helping children settle and continue to develop. For example, staff learn some words in children's home language to help break down communication barriers and they use photographs to help children know what to expect. All children learn to share and take turns from an early age and they are unquestionably very considerate and well behaved. The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff display essential information on a notice board for parents and carers to see although the certificate and complaints policy are rather high and difficult to read. The setting displays an up to date poster from Ofsted showing a current contact number to enable users of the nursery to pass on any comments they may have. However, Ofsted's contact details in the complaints policy are out of date. Adults using the provision have access to the policies to get a clear picture of how the setting operates. They receive a newsletter twice a term, can speak to staff at any time, and have regular opportunities to contribute to their children's learning by suggesting new topics and passing on information about their children's interests. The planning for the nursery education programme is on display to advise adults of what their children do, and children sometimes take work home to help their families become more involved in their learning. For example, children decorated a pot and planted a bulb, taking the plant home with a notebook in which to record details of growth and the care provided. The staff run parents evenings with an opportunity for adults to 'play' as the children do and develop an understanding of how the activities help with children's learning and development. Parents and carers find staff very

approachable and value the setting highly. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The children benefit from a varied day planned with their particular interests in mind. All receive a high level of supervision to keep them safe and they generally follow good practice regarding hygiene to preserve their wellbeing. The children form strong bonds with their key workers but get to know all other staff well to add to their strong feeling of security. The children like attending and are very enthusiastic learners. They have a well-developed community spirit and consistently show concern for their friends. Behaviour is good and both staff and children enjoy their day. As far as the nursery education is concerned, the leadership and management of the provision are good. The staff work well as a team to support children's learning and development effectively. Staff receive a thorough induction to ensure they are clear about their duties, and the registered provider works alongside the staff on a part time basis to oversee and monitor daily practice. The provider is continuing her own training and development in order to identify areas for improvement, and she encourages staff to attend relevant courses to keep up to date with current thinking. Staff review all of the policies on an annual basis but are not always aware of changes to incorporate into their working documents. Although this has little or no impact on the care of the children, it results in unclear information for parents and carers. Staff do not check first aid supplies effectively to remove outdated items, and they sometimes neglect hand washing when children play outdoors. Together, this lapse in consistency results in the organisation being satisfactory for care.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three recommendations made for both care and education at the last inspection. To improve the care of children, the provider was asked to develop children's awareness of good practice regarding food hygiene, include more detail in records, and make better use of resources. The setting now routinely encourages children to wash their hands before meals and indoor snacks but this is not always done when children have a picnic outdoors. The children have clean designated tables to sit at when eating and staff promote good hygiene through discussion. Most documentation now includes more detail as required and is updated regularly to reflect how the setting operates. However, reviews are not always thorough to ensure documents contain current contact numbers and enough detail to give a clear picture of what staff do. The staff have created a comfortable reading area with space for children to relax and they lay the room out effectively to ensure children can now access equipment without help in order to enhance their games and develop their individuality.

The nursery education aspect of the provision required the provider to plan appropriate challenges and help younger children join in the activities, provide more opportunities for children to use mark making and technological equipment, and become more pro-active in sharing information with parents and carers. The staff have introduced a key worker system with workers 'buddying up' to provide consistency in times of absence. This help young children settle very rapidly and they all mix well, becoming fully involved in the activities. Most children remain focussed indicating that they are challenged sufficiently for the majority of the time, and they rarely lose interest. All children show curiosity in things around them but, while staff generally extend children's games, they sometimes fail to take activities as far as they can to bring in other areas of learning. The children now have a wide range of mark making equipment

out regularly to develop an interest in writing and control over their movements. However, technological equipment is not routinely out for children to access at will to extend their activities and develop their skills in operating equipment. The staff now build strong relationships with parents and carers by having an open door policy, being very approachable and providing opportunities for adults to be involved in their children's learning. Parents and carers feel they receive ample information about their children's progress and they can see their children's records at any time. They appreciate open evenings where they can play with equipment and get involved in practical activities to learn more about the value of play and how their children learn.

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):

- improve health by routinely encouraging children to wash hands before snacks and making sure first aid boxes contain up to date supplies
- ensure policies and paperwork are updated effectively to include accurate and detailed information

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):

- make better use of profiles to identify gaps in learning and help plan children's next steps to ensure they consistently receive an appropriate level of challenge
- review hand washing procedures to avoid disrupting circle time and spoiling children's enjoyment of group activities.

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