

Orchard School & Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY350158
Inspection date	18 April 2008
Inspector	Lesley Boyle
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Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Orchard School and Nursery registered in 2007. It operates from a purpose built building where all areas are used. It is situated on the outskirts of Barton Le Clay in Bedfordshire. A maximum of 100 children may attend the school and nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 48 weeks of the year and the school also runs an after school club and a holiday club. All children share access to a secure and enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 74 children on roll and they come from a wide catchment area. The school and nursery employs 26 members of staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Exemplary practical hygiene practices are underpinned by extensive and professional documentation which is consistently implemented by staff. For example, all staff ensure that they wear protective gloves when changing nappies or supporting children with toileting needs. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines.

They know for example, that it is important to wash their hands prior to eating and after using the toilet. Children have separate rest areas, with individualised bedding which prevents the spread of infection. These measures support extremely high levels of cleanliness within the nursery environment.

Children's health is individually monitored throughout the year and they benefit enormously from the wealth of knowledge and experience that the headteacher has of health issues. Any concerns that are identified are raised and discussed sensitively with parents. Children are extremely well-cared for if they have an accident or become ill. All staff attend first aid training; the first aid boxes are conscientiously checked and re-stocked, and staff are vigilant about taking these during outside play and outings.

Children are offered exceptionally healthy and nutritious snacks and meals which include a wide range of food types. The menu is superb and has been carefully designed to provide all the nutrients that children require to achieve optimum health and nutrition, while at the same time taking into account children's likes, dislikes and their dietary requirements. Children are all encouraged to try a wide range of raw fruit and vegetables to widen their food experiences and reluctant eaters are monitored as part of the ongoing health assessments. Children learn practical social skills as they sit together to eat their snacks and meals alongside staff, discussing a variety of topics with each other. Children are extremely independent, for example, they learn to eat with knives and forks, they help to lay the table and serve themselves food and drinks. Water is available throughout the day through individual water bottles which are rinsed and refilled on a daily basis.

Children thrive as they enjoy an extensive range of physical activities through the outdoor area which has been developed to provide a delightful and stimulating outdoor learning environment for children and is in constant use throughout the day. There is a splendid development plan in place to continue to provide exciting and relevant outdoor experiences which is in keeping with nature and the idyllic scenery. Children become totally absorbed in a vast range of versatile learning opportunities which cover all areas of the curriculum. For example, children have opportunities to paint with water, use construction equipment, play with water and sand, plant and take part in imaginative play. Children also enjoy varied and challenging activities which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. They climb, jump and balance on a versatile range of equipment. Children delight in weekly music and movement sessions and physical education lessons run by expert teachers. Their finer manipulative skills and control are actively encouraged through a vast range of interesting craft activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the school. Staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Daily checking of all areas by staff ensure that extremely high standards of health and safety are maintained. Systematic risk assessments are carried out and all staff share in the responsibility for keeping the children safe. Meticulously kept accident and incident records are complemented by rigorous monitoring of any accidents so that any recurring incidents are identified as part of the risk assessment process.

Security systems are robust, for example, children enter the school through the reception which is carefully supervised by a member of staff, the gate is then locked and no one can gain access to the premises except through ringing the gate buzzer to alert staff of their presence. Children

are further protected through a signing-in system where children are scrupulously signed in and out of classrooms and there are intercoms in classrooms to allow for communication between teachers and the headteacher in the event of an emergency.

The school is very well planned with lots of space for children to move freely and safely around activities and areas. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the group as they explain and practise procedures, such as emergency evacuation. Children benefit from staff's sensitivity, for example, younger children are given specific boundaries outside to help them get used to the bigger space and to learn to use the equipment safely. Staff are continually conscious of giving children strategies to keep themselves safe, for example, reminding them to walk inside, to tuck in chairs and to come down the stairs one at a time. Staff also give children opportunities to learn about road safety through their many outings in the local area as well as opportunities to reinforce this through role play.

Children's welfare is robustly safeguarded because all staff attend child protection training. The headteacher is the safeguarding children coordinator and ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities. This is supported by comprehensive paperwork which accurately records any concerns. Children are protected at all times as there are robust procedures ensuring the recruitment and employment of suitable staff and their ongoing suitability whilst employed at the school.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally happy, secure and settled. The school has an extremely sensitive settling-in process which allows new children to be gradually introduced to different routines and this builds their confidence so that once they come for the whole day they are fully integrated into the school life. They separate well from their parents and carers and enthusiastically explore the activities and play opportunities provided.

Children have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, and demonstrate great maturity in their language development. They confidently ask questions during story time and show high levels of observation. For example, they ask why a story character has got pictures on the wall which develops into a discussion about why families have photographs of loved ones on display. The atmosphere throughout the setting is industrious yet calm and children show very high levels of independence as they competently choose their activities and resources, tidy up after themselves and participate in tasks like helping to set the table for meals and snacks.

Children's natural inquisitiveness is fully encouraged and their independent learning is fostered throughout the setting. Staff are extremely skilled in supporting this, making excellent judgements about when to leave children to explore and when to intervene. Children's learning and development are consistently promoted and extended because staff make extensive use of all learning opportunities. For example, children are involved in planting trees to make a Hazel tree path. Their belonging is fostered because each family has a tree which is identified by a personalised plaque. The children are kept fully involved in the development of the outdoor area, for example, they are excited about the plans for a tree house and have been out to measure the area with their teachers. Evidence of the value of their outdoor experiences is shown in the quality of their spontaneous activities, such as through their observational paintings.

Children also benefit from additional opportunities to expand on their interests through expert visitors who develop their skills in gardening, French, painting, music, reading and physical skills. The staff know the children extremely well and are able to adapt each activity according to the children's individual needs. The staff have ongoing observation records of the children which positively informs the planning, which also takes into account children's interests and dispositions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are offered a multitude of creative play opportunities and activities which promotes their understanding of society and their local community increases their awareness of other cultures and ways of life and enables them to develop positive attitudes to others. All the activities are carefully planned so that the children learn about the true meaning and value behind each festival or celebration. For example, as part of celebrating St George's Day, children learn about courage which promotes meaningful discussions and gives them an insight into human spirit and aspirations. Children learn about their neighbourhood through walks in their local area which develops their sense of place. Visitors, such as a vet, police officer, artist and gardener give children a deeper knowledge of the different roles people have in the community.

Children are respected at all times and play a full and active part in the school because staff value their individuality and the family context for each child. Staff provide excellent role models for children by being positive and courteous. They have high expectations of children's behaviour and praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Children have an extremely mature understanding of right and wrong and the values of caring for each other are so deeply instilled in this school that very little reminders are needed for the children to display exceptional behaviour. They demonstrate high levels of independence as they confidently choose their activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. For example, a group of children spend a considerable amount of time collaboratively persevering with building 'Buckingham Palace' with wooden bricks and jointly celebrating their achievements.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their requirements clearly identified and consistently met as there is a detailed, practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is consistently implemented. Individual needs are discussed with parents in detail and consistent communication and information exchange takes place to ensure that parents are fully informed and children's needs are appropriately met. The headteacher has a medical background and this contributes towards the excellent understanding the staff have of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's specific requirements are clearly understood, with additional staff training arranged to support this, for example, staff have attended training in sign language to ensure that they are able to use a range of communication methods. Staff are clearly committed to supporting each and every child in order to meet their needs and promote a truly inclusive environment where every child matters.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging, security and well-being. Parents play an active role in their children's care and a two way sharing of information is encouraged with the use of observation and achievement books as well as regular parent consultation evenings. There is a comprehensive website designed to include parents who work and all letters and notices are available electronically. Parents are highly valued and regularly consulted through questionnaires and informal discussions, for example, when children move to a different phase, parents are asked to contribute to the

knowledge the staff have of the children through a comprehensive and detailed questionnaire that includes observations of their child and anecdotal information about family life. The school has a very active parent and friends association and their involvement and support of the school indicates how much the staff commitment is valued by parents. In particular, one parent notes that the staff consistently 'go the extra yard with everything' and are remarkably observant and sensitive to children's individual needs.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care, learning and welfare is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation, inspirational leadership and a commitment to continued reflective learning. There is a comprehensive range of policies which are shared with parents. Moreover, the staff look at each policy to highlight and develop processes that will enhance outcomes for children. The staff consistently ask themselves 'what is it like for a child here?' and parents, children and staff are all involved in evaluating the provision which is continuously looking for ways to improve.

Children benefit from the care provided by well-supported, committed and highly skilled staff. Their care and enjoyment of the setting are significantly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and the meticulous attention paid to all details relating to their comfort, development and well-being. Staff follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide constant and effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children. Staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to ongoing training to continually update their skills, knowledge and ability to meet the children's needs effectively. There is a robust recruitment and induction procedure which ensures that staff are fully aware of the school's procedures and values and that staff are all suitable to work with children at all times. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 the 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

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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.

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