

Oasis Children's Nature Garden

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY272063
Inspection date	04 August 2008
Inspector	Linda Close
Setting Address	Corner of Larkhall Lane & Studley Road, London, SW4 6SP
Telephone number	020 7498 2329
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Registered person	Oasis Children's Venture
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of 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.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oasis Children's Nature Garden is part of the Oasis Children's Venture, which operates three sites providing open access schemes, in close proximity to each other in Stockwell. The local authority is Lambeth.

Oasis Children's Venture is managed by a management committee, who employ a director to manage the three schemes. Each of the three schemes has a site manager, who has day to day responsibility for each site.

The Oasis Children's Nature Garden operates an open access scheme from 15.30 to 17.30 from Wednesday to Friday during term time. It is also open on Saturdays and during school holidays from 10.00 to 15.00. The project provides art and craft activities indoors and free play and gardening activities outside. Frequent outings are planned for the children to green spaces and places of interest in and around London.

The project is situated in a residential area in Stockwell and operates from an enclosed outdoor area, with an enclosed pond area and a small indoor space. It serves children and young people from the surrounding area.

The age range catered for is five years to 16 years and eight of the children can be aged five to eight years at any one time. The maximum number of children in the age range catered for during any session is usually 20. The project operates a one adult to 15 children ratio for children aged over eight and a one adult to eight children for under eights. There are 16 children present at the time of this inspection five of whom are under eight years old. The number of children present varies each day. There are four members of staff present. The supervisor has a level 3 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children can be cared for appropriately if they have an accident because several members of staff have attended training in first aid and first aid kits are to hand which are regularly checked and replenished. Staff record all accidents on separate sheets and these records are reviewed to identify any hazards that cause repeated accidents. For example, uneven paving slabs have caused children to trip and the management committee has obtained funding to replace pathways in the near future. However, the accident records do not include details of care given to children following an accident. Parents are asked to provide information about medication, allergies or health issues at the time of registration so that staff can provide appropriate care for the children. Children are actively encouraged to wash their hands and staff explain why this is necessary for good health. Soap and running water is available but children share towels which risks cross-infection.

Children are offered drinks throughout the time that they attend. They help themselves to drinks from covered jugs that are refilled regularly which helps the children to maintain good levels of hydration. Children can bring a packed lunch from home if they wish and they enjoy eating a picnic together in the garden. Staff offer healthy fresh fruit snacks in the afternoon and they provide a drink and a biscuit for children who attend after school during term time. No meals are prepared or provided at this open access setting.

Children enjoy healthy exercise in the garden. They dig in the soil and use full sized wheelbarrows with ease. Children also go on outings to green spaces in and around London. They play energetic games together with the staff in locations which include Hampstead Heath.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed into the setting. The garden provides a green oasis for the children in a busy built-up area. The setting is securely fenced and gated to keep the children safe. There is ample space for gardening activities and nature study outdoors. Designated areas are set aside for planting, digging and free play and the ponds are in a fenced off area which can only be accessed by children under adult supervision. The indoor space is sufficient for the numbers of children attending. Tables and chairs are the correct height for children to sit in comfort. There are suitable resources for gardening including forks, spades, wheelbarrows and a perspex greenhouse. Children wear Wellington boots for gardening activities if the ground is wet or if they are wearing open toe sandals. A good range of art and craft materials is made available to the children as well as a reasonable selection of resources for indoor use.

Risk assessments are made on a regular basis both at the setting and in preparation for outings. Children learn the correct way to handle gardening tools and they show in discussion that they must not lift sharp tools high and spades must be left with the blade pointing down to prevent accidents. Children are actively encouraged to think about safety issues and suggest safe ways to behave. All electrical equipment is tested for safety and checks are recorded. Documents show that smoke alarm checks and fire drills take place each month. Staff are vigilant about children leaving and returning to this open access setting. They remind children about keeping safe when they ask to leave the setting and staff monitor the gate at all times.

Children are safeguarded well in relation to child protection issues because staff are well informed. They attend regular update training about child protection matters. Staff are ready to take prompt and appropriate steps if any concerns are noted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make independent choices at the setting. The staff plan and provide a good range of activities with strong emphasis on helping children to learn about nature. Children are happy and busy. Some choose to be involved in close inspection of trays of earth and they use 'bug viewers' to identify mini-beasts and they find out their proper names from laminated charts. Staff share interesting information with the children when they find small creatures in the garden including snails. They learn how to find out the age of a snail by counting the spirals on its shell and that the salt on our skin may hurt the snails so it is best not to hold them for too long. Other children select art and craft activities and with sensitive support from staff they proceed to make models according to their own ideas.

The children have prepared the ground and planted seeds earlier in the year. They have cared for the plants and watched them grow over the intervening months and at the time of this inspection they were harvesting some of their vegetables. They were excited and absolutely delighted when they dug in the ground and unearthed their crops of red and white potatoes. Other children pulled up red onions and after trimming and washing them they tasted them and talked about the pungent smell. A child was also observed exploring and learning about blackberries. He consulted a member of staff and having ascertained that the berries are safe to eat he picked a ripe one and tasted it whilst being careful of the thorns. The children all live in the inner city area around the setting and may not otherwise learn such important and interesting facts about food and where it comes from.

The children are empowered to say what they like and dislike at the setting and to suggest ideas for future activities. They say they like coming to Oasis because it is fun, there are lots of different activities and they like being treated like grown ups. The children say they particularly like looking at wildlife, taking part in treasure hunts, decorating t-shirts and bags and going on trips and outings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff ensure that they find out about each child's individual health needs at the time of registration so that they can offer them appropriate care. All children are made welcome at the setting and they are treated with equal respect. Staff are aware that children with learning difficulties or disabilities may need additional support and they are ready to seek extra staffing

if required. Disabled toilet facilities and level access make the setting available to all children. Attendance fees are deliberately set at a low level so that all children are able to benefit from the activities.

Effective behaviour management helps to maintain a happy environment for the children. Staff are firm but kind and they repeat the rules in clear terms to the children to remind them of what is expected of them. Rules are enforced in appropriate ways. For example, children who use tools in an unsafe manner are asked to put them down and leave the group for five minutes after talking it over with a member of staff. Staff talk to parents, and to the teachers in the local primary school, to agree a consistent approach towards behaviour management. Exclusion from the group is a last resort if children do not respond to guidance.

Staff have developed a sound working relationship with parents. Information about activities is available at the setting or on the website. Parents can visit the setting to talk to the staff if they wish. They can approach staff if they have a concern or a complaint although there are no contact details for Ofsted readily available at the setting. Information and training courses are available for interested adults in the local community.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All members of staff are checked for their suitability to work with children at the time of their employment. The supervisor holds appropriate qualifications and has suitable experience of working with children. Other staff are experienced in work with children and this is evident in their effective interactions with the children. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to their work of raising children's awareness of environmental matters. Staff work together well as a team. They ensure that others know if they are leaving the garden for any reason and they ensure that a member of staff is near the gate at all times which helps to keep the children safe. After induction the staff all follow a training programme to help them to keep abreast of current developments in play work. All of the required documents and records are in place and most include appropriate details. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the provider was asked to devise and implement an action plan setting out how supervisors will achieve a level 3 qualification. At the time of this inspection the supervisor holds a level 3 qualification in play work. This contributes to the good overall standards of care provided for children.

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, that they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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):

- ensure that all accident records are completed in sufficient detail
- provide children with hand drying facilities that avoid cross-infection
- ensure that the information for parents and carers about how to make a complaint includes contact details for Ofsted.

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