

Oakwood Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY367982
Inspection date	01 May 2008
Inspector	Sonjia Nicholson

Setting Address	Beaconsfield School, Wattleton Road, BEACONSFIELD, Buckinghamshire, HP9 1SJ
Telephone number	01494 670851
E-mail	morriss-oakwood@talk21.com
Registered person	Audrey Morriss
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

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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?

Oakwood Nursery School has been operating for over 30 years. It is privately owned and is set within the grounds of The Beaconsfield School close to the centre of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire and within easy reach of the M40 motorway. Children have use of two play rooms and a large secure garden for outdoor play. Other facilities include a kitchen, office, two store rooms and a staff room. The nursery is open five days a week during term time only from 08.30 until 16.30.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 44 children from two to under eight years. There are currently 20 children on roll, 14 of whom receive nursery education funding. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The proprietor/manager holds a Level 4 qualification and employs a further four staff to work with the children, three of whom hold relevant qualifications to Level 2 or 3. A specialist dance teacher attends on a weekly basis to hold music and movement sessions with the children and

a cook/cleaner and maintenance man are also employed. The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is maintained as several staff hold first aid certificates and are able to deal with minor injuries; those staff whose certificate is set to expire will attend training in the near future to ensure children stay safe and healthy within the nursery. A well-stocked first aid box is available and staff obtain parents' written consent to seek further treatment in an emergency. There are clear guidelines in place for parents about the setting's medication policy. A medication book is used to gain parents' written permission and staff record details of when they administer medication to children. Details of children's serious health issues are easily accessible in the office to ensure all staff can act promptly so they receive appropriate treatment.

Children stay healthy within the nursery as parents follow the setting's written sickness policy; an infection control poster is on display in the entrance hall which keeps them informed about symptoms and incubation periods for childhood diseases. Staff ensure they display a poster to keep parents well informed of any infectious diseases and therefore reduce the risk of infection. Children learn good hygiene habits as they wash their hands before snacktime after using the toilet; they use soap and paper towels to prevent the spread of germs. Staff further maintain good hygiene within the nursery as they follow a good nappy changing procedure which includes wearing gloves and disposing of nappies appropriately. The environment is extremely clean as the fixtures and fittings are all new; staff undertake cleaning tasks each day to maintain a clean environment with another doing a thorough weekly clean. Children are encouraged to sweep the sand up and put the toys away after use so they learn how to look after their environment.

Children enjoy a healthy snack each day, for example, rice cakes, apple, grapes and raisins. They have a choice of water or milk with their snack and can also access a small jug of water on a table at their level throughout the day which they can pour independently; this ensures they are not thirsty at any time. Lunchtime is a sociable event where staff provide a plate for each child to put their packed lunch on; they sit with them, hold conversations and encourage good manners. The nursery does not provide information about healthy options but all parents show a good awareness and send nutritious items, such as, a sandwich, fruit and yoghurts. The kitchen facilities are excellent; all units are newly fitted with an industrial sized refrigerator and freezer, used to store children's lunchboxes so the contents do not spoil. The setting is registered as food business with the District Council and there are plans to offer hot meals in the near future.

Children have many opportunities to develop their physical skills. They increase their dexterity by using playdough which they handle by rolling, patting and cutting with a variety of tools and use pencils, paintbrushes and scissors with increasing confidence. Staff plan activities to further develop children's hand/eye co-ordination, such as, lacing cards and using zips, buttons and other fastenings on dolls clothes. As part of the current topic children use a selection of tools for digging, raking and watering in the garden. Children keenly take part in the weekly Physical Education session with a specialist instructor. They listen to and follow instructions and move in a variety of ways, such as, balancing, jumping and crawling through a tunnel of hoops. Games and activities, such as, musical statues and listening to a music and movement compact disc (CD) provide further opportunities for children to move in different ways, for

example, walking on tiptoes in different directions, marching and jogging. Staff encourage children to think about how they feel after exercising and the effect it has on their body; they feel their heartbeat and recognise that they feel out of breath so lie down to stretch and rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are highly inviting for children and parents. All areas are decorated, maintained and furnished to a high standard and the many large windows and displays of children's artwork add to the bright, welcoming environment. The superb garden facilities provide children with ample opportunities for physical play. There is a wooden climbing frame, a wide variety of ride-on toys and gazebo to encourage children's imagination; the lawn area extends around most of the building with a playground made of safety surface and many large trees for shade in hot weather. Each playroom is very well resourced with a wide range of high quality age-appropriate toys and equipment. The rooms are divided into different areas with a book corner, role play area, messy area and ample floor space for free play. Children make independent choices about what they want to do as they self-select from the many storage units containing toys and equipment.

Children play in a very safe environment. The building is new and all safety aspects have been considered, for example, sockets covers are in place, heaters are covered by grills and no hazardous materials are accessible to children. A written risk assessment has been completed and a member of staff is appointed as Health and Safety Officer, however, all staff take responsibility for keeping children safe. For example, a member of staff checks the garden before children play outside; she ensures all gate are locked, sweeps leaves from the safety surface and picks up fallen twigs and branches from the trees. Another member of staff helps a child to stay safe by reminding him to sit on his chair; she explains the consequences, for example, that he may fall and hurt himself. Security is good with a security system fitted to the main door to prevent unauthorised entry and vigilant staff who monitor the main gate. Visitors sign the visitor's book and wear a badge whilst on the premises so they are easily identified. Policies relating to a parent failing to collect their child or if a child goes missing are in place and known to staff.

The setting's evacuation drill is on display and staff ensure visitors are aware of the exits in case they need to leave in an emergency. As a precaution, fire extinguishers are sited throughout the building, a fire blanket is fitted to the wall in the kitchen and fire exits are free from debris and clearly signed. Most of the older children are very familiar with the drill through regular practices, details of which are recorded for future reference. They confidently describe how they leave the building, 'we open the fire door and go outside and stand on the grass. The teacher calls everyone's name'.

Children have protection from possible abuse and neglect as staff are aware of how to safeguard children. Two staff are responsible for child protection matters and have attended training to increase their knowledge. They are familiar with the types and signs of abuse and the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This document is not readily available to parents which means they are not fully aware of the setting's role and responsibility to protect their children. The setting has its own Child Protection policy which needs some minor amendments; details are set out briefly in the prospectus and parents are encouraged to ask to see the full version. Staff have a system in place to record concerns and existing injuries to children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff are very aware of the needs of the two year olds who are currently cared for within the same room as the three and four year olds. They recognise their unique stage of development and provide plenty of opportunities for free play and exploration of their surroundings, for example, playing with sand, water and playdough which the children eagerly join in. During more structured activities for the older children, such as, singing time, staff do not expect two year olds to sit still and concentrate so allow them to play with toys under the supervision of a member of staff. Staff work well with parents to ensure children settle quickly and feel happy, for example, they offer cuddles and verbal reassurance to a child who becomes distressed towards the end of the session. They give her the opportunity to look out of the window for her mummy and have a drink of water to help calm down. Staff also successfully liaise with parents to help children overcome their dislike of some aspects of the daily routine, such as, nappy changes. Staff create a book for each child with details of the activities they have participated in, personal observations and lots of photographs. A more formal progress record is also kept for the two year olds which charts their involvement and interests linked to the four aspects of the Birth to three matters framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff follow a daily routine which includes time for free play, planned activities and outdoor play. Staff follow a topic each term which is currently 'Growing and change in the garden'. All staff are involved in planning activities and the planning tool used clearly shows how all six areas of learning are covered each week, such as, gardening, music, singing and computer skills. Staff make informal observations throughout the session, for example, a member of staff records the comments made by children as they explore different textures and materials; she adds these to the child's record of achievement and if necessary uses them to inform future planning. Records also include an observation sheet and an initial child profile form with details from parents, however, not all children have one of these. Staff plan to implement a Key Person approach once numbers increase but currently they all participate in the assessment and record keeping process for all children. Children are making good progress during their time at the nursery but there is currently no organised way of sharing children's records with parents; most parents are aware staff make observations and keep records but there is no information to encourage them to be involved and make comments about their child's progress, not only at nursery but at home too.

Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage gained through completing professional courses and on-the job training. They are clear about the learning objectives and aims of their activities which means they can implement them successfully with the children. Staff are very involved in children's play, for example, a member of staff joins in the role play in the 'garden centre' and asks relevant questions to make children think, such as, 'does this come in a big box or in a flat pack that I have to put together myself?' and 'how much is this?' Staff speak respectfully to the children and show an interest in what they say and do; good relationships are very evident.

Children enjoy a singing session with a member of staff who plays the guitar; they join in action songs, such as, 'Five Little Speckled Frogs', 'Cousin Peter' and 'We can play on the big bass drum' with enthusiasm. They have great fun using a range of musical instruments and staff encourage them to learn the names of the instruments and play them at appropriate times as they sing 'We can play on the big bass drum'. Children are busy as they play in the garden

centre set up in the role play area; they act out scenarios, such as, buying plants and pots in small groups and with sensitive interaction from staff.

Children express themselves freely by painting or chalking at the easel and participating in planned creative activities, such as, mixing colours for butterfly printing and using collage materials to make a sunflower picture. There are ample opportunities for children to sort, count and make simple calculations, for example, they find and sort natural objects for the number line, draw the correct number of legs on a spider, count the spots on a ladybird and estimate the amount of compost/sand required for gardening activities. Children begin to recognise numerals as they use the number frieze to count to 10 and make their own price tags for items in the garden centre. Planned activities further increase children's mathematical knowledge, for example, they make a graph about which food they like best, sequence and order frogs by size and complete matching puzzles. Children spontaneously and confidently count to 10, for example, a child counts how many children are sat at the table for snacktime.

Children explore change as they grow cress seeds in egg boxes cut to look like caterpillars; they enthusiastically crowd around to find their caterpillar when a member of staff asks who wants to look at them. Children are learning about the lifecycle of a frog through the current topic and several activities help children develop an interest in natural and living objects, for example, observing frog spawn, tasting fresh peas and herbs and making sandwiches for a picnic. Children investigate and explore different textures using their senses as they feel a range of natural materials, such as, a large piece of bark, shells, feathers and stones. Staff introduce new language, such as, rough and smooth and children watch with fascination as a feather floats to the ground. Children have regular opportunities to use the computer in pairs with a member of staff; they learn how to manipulate the mouse and following simple instructions using appropriate programs. Children keenly take part and demonstrate a high level of interest; staff keep accurate records of their progress so they can build on their knowledge at the next session.

Children write for a purpose, for example, they make labels for the garden centre including prices and an open/closed sign. Most children are beginning to form recognisable letters as they write their name, age and colour of their hair and eyes to accompany the painting of them for the display called 'We are all different – We are all friends'. Children make marks in a variety of ways, mainly in the writing area using pencils, crayons and stampers; the chalk board and whiteboard also provide opportunities to record and communicate. As children arrive they find their name card and stick it on the board which helps them begin to recognise their name. Children learn a different sound each week, sometimes linked to the theme; this week it is 'h' and the board contains relevant pictures to help children's understanding – hen, hat, horse and hamburger. At story time they enjoy the story about 'Hairy Hat Man'; they smell some honey and the member of staff involved asks them if they think it is 'horrible' or 'heavenly' to further develop their knowledge of the sound. Children communicate effectively during a group discussion about what they are good at doing; they give considered answers, such as, 'football', 'singing', 'winning races' and 'riding my bike'. The children sit still and listen carefully to one another. The book corner contains a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books that children access independently.

Children are happy and enjoy their time at nursery; they relate well to the staff and freely approach them to ask questions and make comments. They have a strong sense of belonging within the group as staff ensure they are greeted warmly on arrival and spoken to throughout the day. Children speak confidently to visitors and are proud of their surroundings making comments, such as, 'our playdough is soft, come and feel it'. Children are busy and behave well as they take part in a variety of activities; some enjoy threading with cotton reels or completing

jigsaw puzzles while others use playdough or play at the sand tray; they appear settled and familiar with their surroundings. Children operate independently within the setting, taking themselves to the toilet and attempting to put on their coats and outdoor shoes. At snacktime staff do not always give children the opportunity to pour their own drinks or hand round the plates and cups to develop their self-care skills further.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children attend from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds and some speak English as an additional language. Staff work well with parents to discover relevant information in order to offer appropriate care. For example, they learn simple words in the child's first language to help them settle in and support parents in toilet training. There are some resources that develop children's understanding of diversity including books, games, jigsaw puzzles and dressing-up clothes for boys and girls that also depict the different jobs that people do, such as, a builder, police officer and fireman. Children learn about the wider world as they celebrate festivals, such as, Chinese New Year where children peel and chop vegetables to make a stir fry which they eat with chopsticks. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well-supported by the setting's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who has received relevant training in the subject. She acts as a link between the nursery and outside agencies, such as, Occupational and Speech Therapists and liaises closely with parents and the Area SENCO to ensure children receive the help they need. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well and play together co-operatively. They respond well to staff instructions and listen to the music that is played to encourage them to tidy up as they put the playdough tools in the tub. Staff deal with children's behaviour effectively, for example, a member of staff tells a child hiding under the table because she does not want to put her shoes on that she has made her feel very sad because she is not listening to her; after a short period of negotiation the child relents and lets her put her shoes on. During a music and movement session the children become very excited and do not listen attentively, however, staff address this by stopping the CD to gain their attention before explaining that they must listen or else they will not know what to do. Staff give high priority to helping children develop good manners, for example, reminding a child to say 'thank you' at snacktime.

Parents receive plenty of information about the nursery; initially they receive a prospectus, followed by letters as and when needed to inform them of forthcoming events, for example, the introduction of hot meals. A notice board and daily feedback from staff also ensures they know what is going on. There are a range of written policies detailing the service offered, most of which contain the necessary detail. The owner\manager is keen to seek parents' views and has recently sent out a questionnaire asking them to grade certain aspects, however, comments regarding suggestions for improvement were not included. She plans to include this in future questionnaires.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents are happy with the nursery and particularly like the excellent facilities, friendly staff and cleanliness. Most feel it is structured but with a 'laid back' feel where children are very happy. Parents know that staff make observations of their children and keep records but most have not seen them. Children readily tell parents what they have been doing at nursery and often bring things home, such as, jelly and a sunflower plant but parents are not familiar with

the Foundation Stage curriculum as there is little information available other than in the prospectus. There are limited opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All aspects of the setting are well-organised. There are sound procedures in place to recruit suitable staff including gathering references and completing suitability checks. New staff undergo an induction programme during their first month to ensure they gain a basic knowledge of their role and the nursery policies; these include the evacuation drill, daily routine and risk assessment of the outdoor area but does not include information about safeguarding children and protective behaviours other than reading the setting's policy. The nursery owners provide opportunities for staff to attend relevant training courses to update their skills and knowledge, most recently food hygiene and child protection; children benefit from this on-going commitment. The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and uses all of their documentation including attendance register and accident book; they have also adapted many of their policies, some of which need further amendments to ensure they contain the necessary detail. Adult to child ratios are high which means children receive good levels of care and attention. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and Management are good.

The owner or co-owner are on site everyday to oversee the nursery and complete administrative tasks. They employ four staff to work with the children all of whom hold suitable childcare qualifications. Staff files are maintained and contain job descriptions so staff know what is expected of them. There is an action plan in place to highlight areas for development including recruiting more staff, opening the room for two year olds and setting up an appraisal system for all staff. A business plan also shows how the owners intend to make links with the local community and schools.

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 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):

- ensure all written policies are updated to ensure they contain accurate 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):

- provide further opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and ensure progress records are shared on a regular basis
- continue to encourage children's independence at snack time by allowing them to pour their own drinks and hand out plates and cups.

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