

# Oakley Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Marriott

<b>Setting address</b>	Oakley Methodist Church Hall, High Street, OAKLEY, Bedfordshire, MK43 7RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 826 452
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:oakleypreschool@btconnect.com">oakleypreschool@btconnect.com</a>
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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## **Description of the setting**

Oakley Pre-School opened in 1968 and is run by a voluntary committee. It operates from three separate base rooms in the Methodist Church Hall complex in the village of Oakley, near Bedford. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The pre-school receives funding for early education. It is open during school term-time only, Monday to Thursday from 9.15am to 3.30pm and on Friday morning from 9.15am to 11.45am. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 24 places and there are currently 52 children attending who are within this age group, of whom, 44 are in receipt of government funding for nursery education. The pre-school serves the village of Oakley but may take children from the surrounding villages when space is available. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and there are systems in place to support children who have English as an additional language.

There are seven staff members, of whom, five hold relevant childcare qualifications. The pre-school is supported by an administrative officer, is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is a well-managed, welcoming, friendly and inclusive setting where the children make increasingly good progress in their learning and development. Staff sustain high quality interaction with children to draw the learning from play and promote positive attitudes to learning. Children are kept very safe and most aspects of children's care and education are promoted well. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers mean that staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs and exceptional partnership working with others secures continuity of care for children. The manager and her staff team have an extremely positive approach to continuous improvement and are beginning to use self-assessment procedures to support the ongoing review of their work.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure first aid boxes are fully stocked with appropriate contents to meet the needs of the children
- lead and encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The pre-school benefits from an enthusiastic manager who is genuinely embracing the spirit and essence of the Early Years Foundation Stage and many new initiatives are being rapidly introduced to continuously improve the outcomes for children. Children's safety is promoted extremely well as the pre-school has very effective safeguarding procedures. Staff attend regular training and review their procedures to ensure that they keep up-to-date with this area of work. Stringent checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children and a new mobile phone policy secures children's safety. Regular daily checks are recorded and risk assessments for all activities ensure that hazards are minimised. Documentation for environmental health regulations has been re-introduced, including opening and closing checks and temperature recording. Daily headcount checks have been introduced recently, together with a system to ensure all staff are aware of the total number of children present on each day. Good daily practice, such as ongoing explanations from staff, reinforce children's understanding of safety issues. For example, they are reminded to walk carefully across a wet floor as they move to the vestry room for story. However, the first aid box and outings kit contents present some potential for cross-contamination because a few of the items exceed their expiry date. The frequency of fire drill practice has recently been increased to ensure that every child has the opportunity to experience the routine at least once a term. An appropriate record of visitors is kept, showing the purpose of each visit and all visitors to the pre-school are notified about the fire evacuation procedure.

The pre-school is managed by an elected committee of parents with considerable support from a part-time employed administrative officer. The committee and manager have a clear vision for the future, whilst accepting that further development of reflective practice is necessary to secure their aspirations. Staff work well as a team and are actively supported in attending further training. This helps create a positive and increasingly dynamic environment, where children feel secure and happy. The recent re-organisation and enhancement of the indoor environment means that children are offered a wide range of activities that promote their development. For example, the quiet corner has been improved with comfortable furniture and a computer linked to a wall-mounted television. Children have increased independent access to resources resulting from improvements made by the manager. For example, loops have been sewn onto to dressing up clothes and painting overalls which now hang on hooks on the walls within the children's reach. The refurbished outdoor play area is fully utilised to offer children an extended range of opportunities and includes newly planted 'willow dens'. Thoughtful review of the outdoor provision has led to a dividing fence being removed to create more usable space and a canopy area between the building and the storage shed has been made into a 'house-den' with material drapes, carpet, table and chairs. Children enjoy climbing on the upturned bread crates and tyres and running their toy cars down the lengths of guttering fixed to the fence. They experiment with percussion sounds on pots and pans and grow flowers and vegetables in pots.

The supervisor and staff have a clear understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. They work with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and culture and are therefore able to meet their needs and promote children's awareness of individuality. Children's self-esteem is promoted as they are offered opportunities to talk about themselves, their families and recent experiences. Excellent communication with parents means that staff are able to work well in partnership with them. Parents receive thorough information about the pre-school and their child's progress, for example, through notice-boards, newsletters, daily talks with staff and review meetings. The pre-school also works well with other outside agencies such as the local authority advisers to consistently improve the quality of provision. Established and effective partnerships with other providers and the local school promote consistent, appropriate care for children.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well supported in their achievements because staff have a good understanding of child development and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager has improved the manageability and effectiveness of the observation and assessment system in line with the learning and development requirements and these now demonstrate the child's starting point and clarify the progress being made. Information gathered by staff is used to inform activity planning and ensure that children are offered activities that promote their individual development. Good use of the key worker system means that staff know the children well and can therefore provide appropriate support. Confident staff encourage children to explore and develop their own play, sensitively intervening to extend children's thinking and understanding. This means that children take an active role in their own learning and develop positive attitudes to this.

The environment is attractive and set out with defined areas which support the six areas of learning. Non-fiction books and photographs are an innovative alternative to the 'puzzle table' and surplus furniture has been removed to create more useable play space. Equipment is increasingly accessible, enabling children to make independent choices. For example, the doors have been removed from the jigsaw puzzle storage unit so that children can choose from the full range available. The daily routine is being revised to provide increased opportunities for the children to enjoy working in small groups and regular walks in the local village community are proving very beneficial. Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning effectively extended because staff join in appropriately with their play and discussions. For example, as children play with play dough, staff engage them in discussion about the shapes they have made. Children use mathematical language as they identify the smallest and the largest ball and attempt to count how many small pieces they have cut from the dough. As children participate in free painting at the easels, staff speak clearly and calmly at all times, continually affirming children's achievements with praise and promoting children's independence. They include teaching about colours and counting in their commentary, so that children

learn effectively through play-based activities.

Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe. They confidently approach visitors to the setting, for example, inviting them to sit and cut play dough with zigzag scissors. They select resources and play independently or with other children and staff. A key strength of the setting is the children's willingness and efficiency at tidying up. For example, two children co-operate effectively to scrub paint off the easels and another two help a staff member to tip the water trough so that the drainage tap trickles into a bucket. Children develop further skills for the future as they develop independence, share ideas and work together. For example, staff encourage children to try to fasten their own coats. Staff have recently introduced 'good sitting' and 'good listening' strategies and use some informal signing to reinforce desired behaviours during the daily routine. Children learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles as they participate in activities and discussions, such as noting how their heartbeat increases after exercise and discussions about likes and dislikes of various foods. As part of the pre-school commitment towards becoming more sustainable, all hot water pipes have been lagged with insulation. The children are learning about sustainability, because each child decorates their own cotton bag used to carry items to and from pre-school in place of plastic carrier bags.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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