



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY268301

DfES Number: 546268

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	17/05/2004
Inspector Name	Anneliese Fox-Jones

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Oaklands College Nursery
Setting Address	Smallford Campus Oaklands St. Albans Hertfordshire AL4 0JA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Oaklands College
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Oaklands College
Address	Smallford Campus Oaklands St. Albans Hertfordshire AL4 0JA

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Oakland's College Nursery was previously well established at the City Campus site and registered at the Smallford Campus at Oaklands College in 2003. It operates from a large refurbished and converted house and comprises of 5 base rooms. Children are allocated to rooms according to their age and stage of development, where children aged 3-5 years have three base rooms, children aged 2-3 years have one room and children under 2 have one room and a dedicated sleep room. An extensive college campus and nursery garden is available for children to regularly explore the outdoors.

There are currently 50 children from 3 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 6 funded three-year-olds and 6 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are no children currently attending with Special Needs or Disabilities, although the setting does support a small number of children with English as an additional language.

Fiona Marks oversees the management of the nursery. The deputy is Ann Voo. Three part-time and 7 full-time staff work with the children, 8 of whom have early years qualifications to level 3 and two members to level 2, of which one is currently working towards a level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and regular qualified teacher input. The nursery has completed the Herts Quality Standards Award and is due for re-accreditation.

The group opens five days a week, 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00.

No overnight care is provided.

How good is the Day Care?

Oaklands College Nursery provides satisfactory care for children. The nursery benefits from qualified and committed practitioners who work well as a team. The

indoor environment is clean, well-maintained and welcoming. Necessary documentation is maintained to ensure the safe and efficient running of the provision, however, some documentation lacks detail.

Staff's planning of activities is appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. There are a good range of resources, which are accessible to children, providing many opportunities for children to develop their independence and learning in all areas. Extensive college grounds and the nursery garden provide numerous opportunities for the children to explore the outdoors.

Staff and management show genuine interest in the children. They are good role models and create an environment that promotes good behaviour. Staff are friendly, approachable and have developed effective relationships with the children. Reasonable precautions have been taken to promote safety within the setting and hygiene is promoted through effective procedures and children's routines. However, some issues have been identified for improvement.

Staff have established professional, friendly and effective relationships with parents. Parents are happy with the care and education their children receive and are provided with quality information about the provision. Newsletters, verbal feedback and daily sheets for children under one year keep parents informed about what is happening.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no actions outstanding from the previous registration.

What is being done well?

- The environment is attractive, welcoming and set out into designated age-groups, where children can freely choose from a good variety of accessible resources as well as participate in structured activities.
- Staff are friendly, approachable and good role models. Their relationships with the children are good and children respond well to them. Consistent staff members are therefore familiar to the children, enabling them to feel confident and secure.
- Staff provide stimulating play opportunities which help to develop children's learning in all areas and promote their welfare. Staff talk and listen to the children and value their contributions through regular praise and encouragement.
- Staff work in partnership with parents. There are informative notices, newsletters and policies available to parents and carers. Parents are happy with the care and education their children receive. The Phoenix Committee ensures parents are working as partners.

What needs to be improved?

- the procedure for registering children and staff on a daily basis
- the system to identify and monitor risks within all areas of the nursery
- the procedures for providing sun hats and recording nappy changing
- the policy for Special Educational Needs.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
6	Devise and implement a risk assessment of the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimise identified risks.	03/06/2004

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Maintain an accurate system for registering children and staff on a daily basis, showing hours of attendance.
7	Review procedures for providing sun hats and when recording nappy changing.
10	Review and develop the Special Educational Needs policy in line with recent changes.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Oaklands College Nursery provides good quality nursery education overall which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children make very good progress in the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and personal, social and emotional development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have good relationships and interact with the children well. They encourage the children to share and negotiate. Staff have developed their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a variety of activities. Indoor space and resources are organised imaginatively, allowing the children to make choices and develop their independence. Limited use of the outdoor garden prohibits some children's opportunities for physical challenge. Children are encouraged to explore the surroundings around the nursery.

During group activities staff actively involve children in conversation and ask questions, encouraging the children to think and talk about what they are doing. This is sometimes less effective on an individual basis.

Long term plans are clearly effective and demonstrate how activities will promote the learning objectives in all six areas. However, short term plans do not effectively show the learning intention or how activities are adapted or help all children with different abilities to progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are all involved in planning and recording assessments, although the assessments are not clearly linked to the six areas of learning.

The leadership and management of the nursery is generally good. The manager is actively involved with the children and is committed to making improvements. She communicates effectively with staff and recognises any needs for training development.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are well informed and are actively involved in their children's learning. There is an effective key worker system in place.

What is being done well?

- Relationships between staff and children are good. Children are confident, able to make choices. They relate well to each other and make attachments in their group. Children are able to sit, concentrate and work well, either alone or in group activities.
- Children are confident in asking questions and initiating conversation with each other and with staff. Resources are clearly labelled and the children are able to link sounds to letters, recognise their names and some children are able to begin to write letters.

- Children learn about the world we live in through stories and fun practical activities using the natural environment. Children learn about different countries and cultures, and actively involve parents in this role through the use of language.
- Opportunities to promote creative development is good. Children have regular access to natural materials such as sand, water, paints and dough. Children are involved in interesting and creative activities and have opportunities to develop their imagination through role play, and exploring sounds using musical resources.

What needs to be improved?

- the short term plans to ensure they highlight learning intentions and include any adaptations needed to meet children's individual needs
- opportunities to challenge the older and more able children to develop their gross motor skills in physical play.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made since the last inspection. Staff have developed long term plans to ensure all six areas of learning are covered. This has enabled staff to plan and provide a wide range of activities for the children; the staff are aware of what the children should learn from the activity, which was raised as a key issue.

Staff were asked to develop a more systematic method of recording children's attainments and use this information to plan and ensure that work is well matched to children's individual needs.

Staff have since attended training on planning and are completing regular assessments on the children's learning. These are not all linked to the six areas of learning however and short term plans do not identify the learning intention or how they will be adapted to help all children progress towards the early learning goals. This has been highlighted as a key issue.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy and settled into the group. They are confident when choosing activities and resources and independently care for their personal needs such as dressing and using the toilet. They have good relationships with each other and with adults and are able to take turns. Staff encourage the children to negotiate and to share. The children work confidently alone and in small groups.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

The children listen attentively to stories and the staff encourage discussion in large group activities. Some opportunities are missed to extend children's vocabulary on a one to one basis. Children sing and are able to link sounds to letters through stories. Resources, pictures and signs are labelled throughout the nursery and children are able to recognise their names. Opportunities for letter writing are developed through activities such as role play, using writing pads for the post office.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have regular opportunities to develop their counting skills, and to recognise shapes, colours and sizes. They explore weight and capacity through using natural materials such as water, sand and pasta. Adding and subtracting are reinforced through practical activities such as laying the table and seeing if there are more girls or boys in the nursery. There are limited opportunities to enhance the children's understanding of measurements.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Good use is made of the natural environment around the nursery. Visits to the local orchard, farm and cress beds are put in place. Children took part in a practical building activity using real bricks and sand. Children learn about different cultures through practical activities such as food tasting, Indian dancing and celebrating Christmas around the world. Children confidently use programmable toys and IT equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

There are regular opportunities to develop children's fine manipulative skills. Children use pencils, paintbrushes and scissors with confidence. Children learn about how we grow and how our bodies work through discussion. Outdoor play provides opportunities to negotiate space, climb and run but there is limited opportunity to develop and challenge gross motor skills for some of the older or more able children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children participate enthusiastically in music sessions and singing. They explore sounds using instruments and listening to music tapes using rhyming actions. Children draw freely using different materials and experimenting with different painting methods. Children are able to develop their imaginative skills through role play, for example, the home corner had been turned into a breakfast café.	
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve short term plans to ensure they highlight learning intentions and show any adaptations needed to meet children's individual needs
- provide opportunities which challenge the older and more able children to develop their gross motor skills in physical play.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.