



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 105253

DfES Number: 517303

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 11/10/2004
Inspector Name Ann Hilary Guy

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Oak Tree Kindergarten Ltd (Ashcroft Road)
Setting Address 229 Ashcroft Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 9AA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Oak Tree Kindergarten Ltd (Ashcroft Road) 4560589

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Oak Tree Kindergarten Ltd (Ashcroft Road)
Address 229 Ashcroft Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU2 9AA

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

Oak Tree Kindergarten opened in 1989. It operates from five rooms within a detached house in the Stopsley area of Luton. A maximum of 52 children attend the kindergarten at any one time. The kindergarten is open each week day from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks a year. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 79 children from two to under five years on roll. Of whom 42 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from a wide catchment area. There are no children with special educational needs. The Kindergarten has a number of children attending who speak English as an additional language.

There are 14 staff working at the kindergarten. Thirteen of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level three, or equivalent. One member of staff is working towards furthering her early years qualifications. Staff receive support from an early years advisory teacher.

How good is the Day Care?

Oak Tree Kindergarten provides a good standard of care for children. The provision is well organised and effective use is made of staff, space and resources to ensure all the children are well cared for. A detailed set of policies and procedures underpin the care and are both understood and implemented by the staff team.

High priority is given to ensuring the children's safety both in and outside the building. A very effective daily risk assessment is carried out to ensure children's safety at all times. An effective moveable fencing system restricts access to areas of the garden during adverse weather, however there is a large paved area giving ample space for children to play. Children with special educational needs are both welcomed and supported by the kindergarten. They operate a policy of full inclusion and integration.

The staff work well as a team and have very good relationships with the children, parents and carers. A suitable range of practical activities is planned throughout the kindergarten to enable the children to experience a wide variety of opportunities across all areas of learning. Activities are mostly pre-selected by staff and children then have free access. Children's behaviour is managed in a positive manner by staff who offer much praise and encouragement and make good use of a sticker reward system.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Regular daily informal contact with staff ensures they are kept well informed. A good system for sharing information with parents whom key workers are unable to see, due to their shift patterns, ensures they too are kept fully informed about their child's day. An active parents association, regular newsletters, informative notice boards and information area keep parents as aware as possible with all that is happening within the kindergarten.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the kindergarten had one action to ensure confidentiality in the accident book. they have completely changed the recording system for accidents and now use a single sheet per accident.

What is being done well?

- Staff work closely as a team ensuring continuity in both care and education as the children move through the kindergarten.
- Very good systems are in place to ensure parents are kept informed about their child's development whilst at the kindergarten. These include a comprehensive information area in the entrance hall, including a box in which to place post, and a system of hand over to enable staff caring for the child to share information with the parent, even if they are off duty.
- Very high standards of health and hygiene are observed and maintained throughout the kindergarten, with all staff holding a food hygiene certificate and the majority of staff holding a first aid certificate.
- The owner and manager offer sound leadership and support to the staff, ensuring a high standard of care is maintained at all times.
- A wide range of suitable activities are provided for the children that both challenge and extend their knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum.

What needs to be improved?

- There were no areas for improvement identified during this inspection.

Outcome of the inspection
Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION
<i>All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.</i>
<i>As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.</i>

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Oak Tree Kindergarten (Ashcroft Road), is acceptable and of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good and strong priority is given to the teaching of reading and writing. The staff are continually developing their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. They work very hard, with evident care and commitment, to provide a range of appropriate activities which the children enjoy. These activities cover all areas of learning but the staff miss opportunities which arise incidentally and do not always question children to extend learning. Some activities can be overly directed by staff, focussing upon the end product rather than the quality of the learning process for the child. There is a stringent marking policy and staff provide detailed commentary upon children's work. Planning is thorough, comprehensive and underpins the learning programme. Detailed assessments of children's progress, based upon observations are kept but there is some discontinuity in record keeping across the nursery as a whole. Children mostly behave well and respond positively to the boundaries set by staff.

Leadership and management is generally good. The proprietor encourages continual professional development for her staff. Amidst imminent changes in the senior staff team, the proprietor is seeking to ensure that systems for monitoring daily practice in the classrooms is sufficiently robust to maintain consistency and quality.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are given every opportunity to be fully involved in nursery life. They are provided with good quality information and details about the curriculum. They are valued as partners in their child's education, attend regular parent's evenings and are positively encouraged to contribute to the assessment records.

What is being done well?

- A strong emphasis is placed upon the development of children's reading and writing skills, good manners and numeracy.
- Management provide a pleasant and supportive working environment which promotes a stable staff team who make a long term commitment to the nursery and give up much time to attend training.
- Professional documentation underpins the educational programme within a homely environment where children feel safe and secure.

What needs to be improved?

- the development of children's independence and choice in learning
- opportunities for children to express their own ideas within the programme for creative development
- the quality of the process of learning for children through activities in all areas of the programme
- the continuity of assessment across the nursery

What has improved since the last inspection?

After the previous inspection of funded education, the setting was required to ensure consistency of print style used across the nursery. Oak Tree Kindergarten have designated and implemented a 'house style' which is shared with parents and used throughout all classes. The setting has made very good progress with this issue.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing confidence and self esteem supported by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well. They appear interested and confident with new activities and are developing skills of concentration and sitting quietly when required. Children are mostly developing self care skills such as dressing for outdoors but are given more limited opportunities to make choices about their learning and select resources for themselves. Children behave well and learn to take turns.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Many children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversations with each other and adults. Children learn language for thinking, link sounds and letters, make marks and practice writing for a variety of purposes although some activities are overly directed by staff. Children usually sit quietly for stories and recognise their names through the daily routines. Children initiate use of the well stocked book corner during the day and enjoy individual reading and phonics with the staff.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children benefit from independent and small group support to develop their counting skills and to recognise shapes, colours and sizes. However, fewer links are drawn between the numerals and the number based activities. Children's understanding of number is constantly reinforced as they take part in the daily routines of working out the date or counting the number of children present. Children have more limited opportunities to develop simple calculation and practical problem solving skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing explorative and investigative skills through sand and water play. The garden area is currently under utilised as an outdoor classroom. Children observe the weather and notice that changes occur. They talk about familiar features of the locality and comment upon the aeroplanes overhead. Children are beginning to make models using a variety of construction materials. Children use the computer to support literacy and numeracy and have regular access to technological toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children do not have sufficient planned opportunities to use large and small apparatus in a progressive manner. Despite the nursery having a garden and ample equipment, childrens progress is hindered due to outdoor physical activity being mostly recreational. Some movement activities are arranged in the classroom. Children learn about health issues and use a suitable range of tools and malleable materials to develop their fine motor skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children participate in planned activities in two and three dimensions, but the emphasis is often placed upon the pre-cut, pre-determined end product rather than the process. Role play centres upon the Home Corner. Children have specialist music tuition but plans do not show this being developed in the class group. Their imagination is suitably developed through an appropriate range of sensory activities, movement and dance.

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

- Further develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals to improve and extend the quality of activities across all areas of learning, increasing children's independence and choice.
- Review the recording, reporting and assessment systems to ensure continuity across the nursery.

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.