

Oakmere Children's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sue Anslow

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Oakmere Children's Nursery was registered under new ownership in 2011. It operates from four rooms in a purpose-built, single storey building in the grounds of Blakemere Craft Centre. The Craft Centre is situated in Sandiway, a rural area of Cheshire, mid-way between Northwich, Chester and Warrington. All children have access to an enclosed outside play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm, all year round.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 74 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 71 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery supports some children who have special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language.

There are 19 members of staff, including the owner and manager, 15 of whom hold early years qualifications to at least level 2. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds, and works closely with early years advisors from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this highly effective setting and the staff team maintain high quality provision for all children. Excellent guidance and teaching ensures children learn and develop to the very best of their ability, and general welfare requirements are expertly managed. The uniqueness of each child is valued and staff work hard to support their different ways of learning. Continuity is promoted through highly effective partnerships with parents and strong links with other local facilities. Self-evaluation at all levels reflects the rigorous monitoring of what the setting does well and actions are well targeted to bring about sustained improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continuing to develop the outside play areas to provide interest and challenge for young children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective and comprehensive policies are in place to keep children extremely safe and secure within the setting. All staff are familiar with the safeguarding policy and

are aware of the correct procedures should there be any concerns. Senior staff have attended relevant training and ensure all details are cascaded to the rest of the staff team. Rigorous recruitment procedures are in place and thorough checks are carried out to ensure the safety and well-being of children and their families. Children are not allowed to be collected by anyone not known to staff and closed-circuit television cameras are in place for added security. Highly effective risk assessments, safety checks and staff vigilance ensure children are cared for in a safe and clean environment. Any outings away from the building are carefully monitored and staff take expert precautions to keep children safe.

The new owner, who is a qualified teacher, her well-qualified and experienced manager and a team of enthusiastic and committed childcare staff work extremely well together and strive to cater for individual needs and particular requirements. Staff feel valued and empowered through individual and group meetings where their ideas, skills and areas for development are addressed. They have high expectations and set high standards which are embedded across all areas of practice. Rigorous and extensive monitoring, analysis and self-challenge enable the setting to devise exceptionally well targeted plans. Optimising the outcomes for children in every way possible is the main aim of the setting and, although the outside play area has been improved immeasurably, management are keen to develop it even further.

Partnership with parents is extremely well established from the start, with an induction programme of visits appropriate to each child's needs. Parents are given lots of useful information about the nursery, both verbally and in writing. Information about the Early Years Foundation Stage framework is readily available and parents can discuss their child's progress with their key worker at any time. They have a good understanding of what their children are learning and how they can help them at home, through newsletters, displays and daily diary sheets. Each child's learning journey profiles are easily accessible and parents are encouraged to take them home, share them with the family and add comments and photographs if they wish. Seeking the views of parents and carers enables the nursery to continuously improve and ensure the provision of an excellent and highly appropriate service. Superb working relationships are established with local schools and early years professionals to ensure continuity of approach and the best possible support for all the children. Staff's excellent relationships with children and their families inspires and promotes an environment of confidence, self-esteem and a positive attitude to learning.

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

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development through the expertise of staff and the provision of appropriate facilities and excellent resources. Children arrive excited and eager to experience the wide range of activities ready for them. They separate from their parents increasingly happily as their self-confidence grows, and join up with friends to make tea in the home corner or play in the sand. Children learn through play and the provision of meaningful, real activities. For example, having resources in the home corner that they are familiar

with at home extends their imaginations and communication skills. They watch the progress of the flowers, fruit and vegetables they plant, and thoroughly enjoy walks through the surrounding woodland, listening to birdsong or collecting leaves and twigs for their pictures. Staff take full advantage of the rich experiences provided by Blakemere Craft Centre where children can watch birds of prey flying through the air, use the fixed equipment in the playground or join the Carols by Candlelight concert at Christmas time.

All staff work very hard to create a highly stimulating and welcoming environment, which engages and captures the interests of the children. Displays of children's artwork follow the six areas of learning and photographs of children participating in the different activities boosts their self-esteem and stimulates conversation and discussion. An excellent balance of indoor, outdoor, active and quiet play caters for all requirements. Through observation and knowing the children extremely well, staff are able to offer extensive support and guidance. All areas of development are promoted to the highest level and children gain superb understanding of the world around them and learn to respect each other and their surroundings. Behaviour is exemplary because children are busy and interested in everything that is going on. They are caring towards their peers and respond eagerly to the 'tidy-up tune'. They run and find the boxes to put away the toys ready for lunch, replacing them on the low shelving marked with an appropriate picture.

Activities are planned week to week to meet the needs of individual children, identifying next steps based on their abilities and interests. A rigorous system of observation and assessment means that staff can plan specifically for the needs of each individual child. Starting points are assessed on entry and next steps are identified for all children, ensuring appropriate experiences are provided which enable them to achieve and move forward. Staff offer sensitive support to children with additional needs. They readily adapt activities to ensure that all children can access them. An effective equal opportunities policy is regularly reviewed and supports the staff well. This means that the individual needs of all children are met and everyone is fully included in the life of the setting. Children make their own choices in play, resulting in them being curious and inquisitive learners. Young toddlers giggle excitedly as they experiment with different sensory objects in the sand tray and confidently discuss what they can see and feel.

Children's understanding of safety issues is exceptional. They explain with confidence what they do when the fire whistle is blown, explaining 'we have to leave our toys and get out'. They show an excellent understanding of keeping healthy and the factors that contribute towards maintaining their health. For example, children serve themselves with water when they are thirsty and know why they have to brush their teeth after meals. They are extremely aware of the need for good hygiene 'to get rid of the nasty germs' and wash their hands at appropriate times. Staff follow rigorous hygiene procedures to prevent any spread of infections, such as wearing protective clothing when changing nappies or cleaning spills of bodily fluids. Children are provided with exceptionally healthy and nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Fresh produce is used and often includes potatoes or strawberries grown by the children. In this way children are well aware of where food comes from and can make healthy choices in what they eat and drink. Any special requirements are discussed with parents and strictly

adhered to. Children enjoy and benefit tremendously from plenty of fresh air and exercise, gaining a secure understanding of why these are important. They go outside to play several times a day and in most weather conditions. They go for woodland walks and try out the equipment in the nearby playground. Highly motivated and dedicated staff use their expert knowledge to promote learning opportunities and lots of fun and excitement for every child attending Oakmere.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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