

Oakengates

The Place, Limes Walk, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 6EP

Inspection date	12/11/2012
Previous inspection date	01/02/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Excellent leadership and management drives future improvement of provision. All stakeholders are involved in the process of self-evaluation and contribute to the identification of strengths and the setting of clear and achievable actions.
- All children are fully supported in reaching their full potential, guided by an extremely strong and highly-qualified staff team.
- The experiences children engage in are rich and varied as practitioners have high expectations of what and how children learn. They use exceptional questioning techniques to challenge and extend children's thinking.
- Partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies are extremely well developed to ensure that any child requiring additional support, challenge or extension receives tailored input in order to make significant strides in all areas of their learning and development.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed interaction between practitioners and children in all care bases and in the outside areas.
- The inspector participated in an off-site forest school session with a group of children and their practitioners.
- The inspector held discussions with members of the senior management team and the governing body.
- The inspector conducted some joint observations with the deputy and examined a range of documentation including policies and procedures, children's records and staff suitability records.
- The inspector took account of the views of some parents spoken to at the inspection, written comments from questionnaires and suggestions provided by parents and carers.

Inspector

Patricia Webb

Full Report

Information about the setting

Oakengates has been operating since 2005 and has been registered under its current leadership since 2009. It is run by a board of governors and is sited within The Place building in the centre of Oakengates town. The setting runs from a self-contained suite, which consists of three main care-bases and fully enclosed outdoor play areas. The setting is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm all year round excluding public holidays.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 235 children on roll, of whom 141 are within the early years age range. Older children attend before and after school and for some holiday club sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children from families where English is an additional language. The setting is in receipt of funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The provision includes an integral nursery school, where the older children receive their funded education. Extended day care is offered through the wrap-around provision in a seamless delivery of childcare and early education.

There are 33 members of staff who work directly with the children. The head teacher and members of the senior management team hold relevant teaching qualifications, and one member of staff holds Early Years Professional status. The deputy head also holds the national professional qualification in children's centre leadership. All other staff are qualified to at least level 2.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- expand the opportunities for the babies and toddlers to participate in activities that encourage exploration of their natural environment; for example, by re-developing an area of the garden to offer on-site forest-school experiences.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Every child truly matters when attending this vibrant and highly stimulating setting. Practitioners are extremely passionate and are committed to supporting all children in fulfilling their potential, given their varying starting points and levels of ability. All staff and management have very high expectations of what and how children learn, and this is reflected in the detailed planning in every care-base. Every learning opportunity or experience is used to the maximum. Children benefit immensely from intuitive staff, who listen perceptively and carefully observe and question children to improve learning. For example, children excitedly start to shout as they enter the railway viaduct tunnel; they notice how their voices are amplified because staff ask them about the sound echoing in the tunnel. A child notices black spots on the leaves as they walk to a nearby school for their forest school experience, and likens the spots to the 'mouldy bits on cheese'. Staff extend the conversation to talk about the taste and smell of cheese. Some older children are achieving very highly in their learning and development, and their assessment records include references for early steps in Key Stage 1 to show their rapid progression, particularly in reading skills.

Practitioners support babies and toddlers very well to settle into the provision; so they feel emotionally secure and cope well with separation from their parents or carers. Babies have some influence over which adult is assigned as their key person, as senior staff observe and note which adult a baby connects with most effectively. Such attention to valuing children's needs and preferences ensures that the relationships are very positive for all concerned.

Children are highly motivated to participate in the extensive range of activities. Babies delight in chalking on the red floor, noticing the marks and trying to copy shapes drawn by adults. Music and movement activities are enjoyed as the younger children vigorously join in with dancing, balancing, crawling to the different genres of music. They bang drums and shake maracas with glee, swaying and moving their bodies with ease. Staff are aware of how such activities improve children's balance and co-ordination as they respond to rhythm and sounds.

Babies and toddlers have access to excellent resources, natural and commercial, from which they make selections to encourage their active learning. They engage familiar adults in these actions; for instance, they select a favourite book and take it to a member of staff so that they can read it together. Staff support the development of children's language skills well as they encourage them to repeat some of the words and phrases. Children's interest in the story is sustained as they help to turn the pages with care.

Older children are particularly independent and readily choose and engage in activities. The forest school sessions at the nearby school encourage children to become budding explorers. Staff enthusiastically support children to learn about their natural environment, to promise to care for the forest and to investigate the wildlife to be found. Staff are extremely skilled at questioning and extending children's thinking. They help children to develop mathematical skills as they measure trees in the forest and use a variety of tools to do this. They count the number of flower patterns on the ribbons, use measuring tapes

or use their arms to calculate and compare thick, thin, larger and smaller trees. An exciting discovery of a large branch on the ground is shared by one child with a chosen companion. Together, they decide that the branch is actually a 'very long thin dog' and proceed to drag the 'dog' for a walk, developing a wealth of imaginative ideas.

The systems for observation and assessment of children's progress across all seven areas of learning and development are very sharply focused. Staff use Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance effectively as a tool. They monitor and identify areas where individual children may not be achieving as well as they should or where children, who excel in some aspects of their learning and development, require additional challenge. This close and systematic analysis results in very well-targeted support so that all children make excellent progress. Senior managers work exceptionally well with other professionals to support each child and their family, where necessary. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning; they share information about what their children achieve at home. Staff add this information into children's developmental records, further emphasising the true partnership between the setting and the family that benefits each child.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The setting engages in a very flexible process to support children during moves. Children's key persons and senior managers consult with parents to consider when the optimum time occurs for moving them to the next age group or level of activity. Parents express a deep appreciation of such consideration, as they are reassured that staff will always consider their child's personal, social and emotional needs as well as their more academic prowess. This process is also very well-supported by the setting's development of professional and highly personalised partnership working with other settings children attend.

Children benefit from the extremely positive role models they see in the staff. Children's behaviour is exemplary, and they readily show care and consideration for each other. For instance, even the youngest children show empathy for their friends as they locate a favourite toy to comfort them. Where some children demonstrate very strong emotions, additional support is identified to help them cope with confusion, anger and frustration in acceptable ways. All children learn to consider and respect each other's differences. Parents who speak languages other than English contribute to the wording on some posters to introduce all children to a variety of languages. They provide songs and rhymes in the family's first language, which are shared with children. Celebrating Diwali, children observe how to put on a sari, cook some curried rice and make their clay divas. Such concentration on providing children with real and accurate experiences ensures that they become aware of differences and similarities in their society. Children are well-known in the town and develop knowledge about their local community as they visit the post office to purchase stamps and post letters, and make regular visits to the library or the theatre. They have opportunities to make links in their learning as they call at the local hairdressers when planning a salon in the role-play corner.

Children are encouraged to test out their confidence and skills as they take risks in their

play. Staff supervise very effectively. They know when to allow a child time and opportunity to discover their inner strengths as, for example, a toddler tries to stand in a box of plastic bricks before discovering that it 'wobbles' his legs too much. Children show an acute awareness of potential dangers as they walk with care and attention to the nearby school and discuss the need to leave the poisonous red hawthorn berries for the birds. While older children thoroughly enjoy discovering wild habitats and natural environments, the babies and toddlers currently have fewer opportunities to enjoy such activities. They do, however, have free access to their outdoor area as they crawl and clamber on the excellent equipment, discover the properties of running water in the guttering and pipes, and hone their early walking skills in safety.

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

Leadership in the setting is passionate and inspirational. The governing body for this exciting and highly stimulating provision takes an active and very influential part in supporting each child and their family. Members of the board have undertaken specific training to engage in reviewing and challenging the action plans and ideas set by the staff for future improvement. Self-evaluation is thorough, focused and involves the views and opinions of all who participate in the setting. This includes parents and carers and the children themselves, as well as staff and management. Consequently, all have a vested ownership in how the quality of the provision continues to improve and move forward.

Senior managers consult with practitioners, parents, carers and children to draft central action plans, and these currently include ideas about extending the forest-school activities for the younger children. Management took a pragmatic and proactive approach to delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage, resulting in a decision to implement the revised framework at an early stage in order to embed effective practices. Innovative systems, such as specific language assessment programmes, work well to clearly identify any child who requires additional support. Staff are also very skilled in the use of non-verbal systems for communication, including Makaton sign language and picture story-boards to remind children about daily self-care routines, such as toileting and hand-washing. All children gain some knowledge of the Makaton system so that they can communicate effectively with each other and not just through the staff using such strategies.

Safeguarding arrangements, including staff recruitment and selection procedures, are extremely rigorous and are highly effective in protecting children and promoting their welfare. The interaction of prospective candidates with children is observed and forms part of the assessment when making appointments. High-quality supervision ensures that staff practice is consistent throughout the setting and that any issues are identified and addressed immediately through peer support, further supervision and specific training. Detailed training matrices show the exceptional levels of skill, qualification and experience that the staff team possesses. These attributes are put to good use as staff undertake thorough and exceptionally well-focused assessments of children. These, in turn, contribute to the ability of the setting to seek swift intervention where necessary to enable

every child to achieve. Parents speak about the setting as a 'family', an extension of their own family and a place where they know that their concerns and opinions matter and their voices will be heard. Other professionals praise the diligence of the staff, their attention to swift identification of need and the sensitive ways in which they support parents at difficult times. The setting provides an excellent start for children's early learning and development experiences.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY390885
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	849838
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	108
Number of children on roll	253
Name of provider	The Governing Body of Oakengates Childrens Centre
Date of previous inspection	01/02/2010
Telephone number	01952 387910

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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