

Oxhey Early Years Centre

Eastbury Road, WATFORD, Herts, WD19 4RL

Inspection date	22/07/2014
Previous inspection date	07/06/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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

- Practitioners are extremely innovative and develop a highly stimulating environment for children with exciting and natural materials, both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children explore, investigate and experiment in their play, making rapid progress in their learning.
- Teaching is exemplary because practitioners have extremely high expectations for all children's achievements and the planning links fully to their interests and observations. Practitioners provide early intervention when necessary to ensure that the achievement gap is narrowing.
- The management engages practitioners in highly effective methods of performance management and professional development. They support practitioners extremely well to build on their knowledge, skills and abilities. Individual personal strengths are identified and used in developing specialist roles within the setting to support all children.
- Practitioners give children's safety and well-being extremely high priority. They all demonstrate a secure knowledge of safeguarding procedures. They use comprehensive risk assessments and careful supervision of children exceptionally well to promote their safety.
- The setting uses highly successful strategies to engage all parents and practitioners work extremely closely with all other agencies involved with the children to fully support children's learning. The arrangements in place to provide a link key person ensure that there is continuity of care for families and children who attend the setting for long periods of time.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the provision and talked with the practitioners.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises and garden used by the children.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation,
- evidence of suitability of practitioners, and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents, as recorded in written questionnaires and through discussion.
- The inspector reviewed the providers hardcopy self-evaluation form as provided to the inspector at the inspection.

Inspector

Lindsay Hare

Full report

Information about the setting

Oxhey Early Years Centre Ltd daycare provision was registered in 2004. It is the integrated daycare provision within Oxhey Early Years Centre, which is also a Hertfordshire County Council maintained nursery School and lead agency for Sunshine Children's Centre. The centre is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose-built premises in the Oxhey area of Watford, Hertfordshire and is owned and managed by Oxhey Early Years Centre Limited. The centre serves the local area and is accessible to all children.

It operates from two main rooms within the building with children also accessing other indoor areas and several enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The daycare provision opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 87 children attending who are in the early years age group. The centre provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children, as well as the full time places funding. The centre supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The daycare provision employs 35 childcare practitioners. Of these, 29 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including two with Early Years Professional Status or Qualified Teacher Status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to enhance the already successful procedures in place for supporting children with English as an additional language.

Inspection judgements

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

Teaching is exceptional because practitioners are knowledgeable and have an excellent understanding of how children learn. They are extremely responsive to children's developing interests, for example, children take the lead from the practitioner who is face painting. They patiently take turns, using the paintbrushes to carefully paint each other's faces, following the pictures as a guide and asking the child what colours they would like them to use. Practitioners exploit children's recent interest in superheroes as they dress up in costume too and discuss with the children what superhero rules they could implement. This encourages children to think carefully about their behaviour and look at it from a different perspective. They take ownership and devise a set of rules that they are happy to follow, for example, 'superheroes run and fly outside, not inside'. As a result, children are highly motivated and show great enthusiasm for learning. Children independently make decisions, for example, when creating models, they choose their paper and whether

they will use wet or dry glue. Practitioners use excellent teaching strategies to help children think things through and find their own solutions. For example, they ask the children what they could use to stop the paper moving and ask for ideas on how they could move the floor puzzle without breaking it up. Children practise predicting and testing out their own theories to reinforce their learning. The extensive range of resources is designed to promote both free exploration and also link to areas of learning. For example, children use the light boards to explore light through different vessels, such as marbles, insects and glitter. They use natural materials to construct and create patterns and pictures. There is an extremely sharp focus on helping children to acquire communication and language skills. For example, children use hosepipes to make their own telephones and use them to talk to one another. Practitioners display transcripts of the children's detailed conversations. They use effective strategies to build on children's listening skills. Practitioners play games to aid pronunciation of certain sounds, tell stories and sing songs, which all contribute greatly to the development of children's language skills, especially those with English as an additional language. However, there is scope to continue to enhance the already excellent resources available to further support children with English as an additional language.

Accurate observations and assessments are precisely focused and build on the initial assessments completed by both practitioners and parents in partnership. Practitioners clearly identify children's next steps for learning, including these in the plans and using them to closely track children's progression in all areas of learning. All practitioners regularly evaluate the activities and observations, using their findings to inform the planning and ensure that every child is challenged. Practitioners are skilled in completing the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. There is extremely strong support available for children with special educational needs and /or disabilities, and children with English as an additional language, which ensures that they make rapid progress given their starting points. Practitioners use the home visits and stay and play sessions as a starting point to determine if there are any additional needs or concerns that may need some level of intervention. Specialist practitioners support children in both well-being and speaking and listening, and work closely with the key person, parents and any other professionals involved. Practitioners devise and follow specific programmes to support children in meeting their next steps and objectives in all areas of learning and development. The manager closely monitors the progress of all children, thereby ensuring that early intervention is provided for any child, where necessary to support learning. There is a strong emphasis on parental involvement and working together to support children's learning and the key-person system is integral to this. Daily verbal exchanges, accessible learning journals as well as parent consultations every term ensure that parents are kept fully informed of their children's achievements and progress. Practitioners use the open door policy to welcome parents in to share their experiences and skills and to learn alongside their children. Parents involve themselves fully in their children's learning, adding observations and comments from home to the learning record. For example, parents recognised a pattern of behaviour exhibited by the child at home, after sharing observations made by practitioners within the setting.

Practitioners fully understand the characteristics of learning and create a stimulating environment for all children with exciting materials and challenging activities. For example, children fill up their own watering cans and containers from the water butt and use them

to water the garden and to extend their creative play in the mud kitchen. Following the children's recent interest in pirates, the boat outside is utilised in their role-play and children dig for treasure in the sand. This means that children are highly engaged in their learning and make excellent progress in their development. Children show a high level of confidence when practising making marks. For example, they write their names independently in the sand and label their pictures, using phonics and a pictorial alphabet to predict how to spell some simple words. Supportive practitioners carefully repeat words, sounding them out and encourage children to listen and pick out the sounds they hear and write them in response. Children are extremely competent in using technology, they take photographs on the tablet of objects around the room beginning with different sounds and then practise writing the name of the object, using phonics. Practitioners use every opportunity to maximise children's learning experiences. For example, children find some play money and practitioners tell them they can buy ten toys with this. They move around the room, select their toys and bring them to match up to the number line, while practitioners ask 'how many more do you need to get to ten'. This promotes early maths skills such as estimation and addition. Practitioners extend children's mathematical learning further, as children count their steps, playing 'What's the time Mr Wolf' and when they find the right size wellington boots to put on to play in the mud kitchen. Overall, children are extremely well prepared for their future experiences in school.

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

The key-person system within this daycare provision is particularly strong and practitioners build excellent relationships with children and their families. As a result, children form close bonds and attachments with them. There are also arrangements in place for link key persons, in order to provide consistency of care for children who attend all day. Children demonstrate a strong sense of security, as their behaviour shows that they are very settled and feel safe and confident to move freely around the setting. Practitioners introduce each child and parent to the nursery at their own pace using a very clear induction process. For example, they may attend stay and play sessions with their parents before they start. Each child receives a home visit from their key person, who is able to gather detailed information to support the children when they start. Children are frequently heard to comment to their key person 'when you came to my house'. Several settling-in sessions, together with their assigned key person, are used to help the introduction of children and families into the setting and this happens again when they move rooms. These methods add to the close bonds made between the key person, child and family, and underpin the positive relationships. Practitioners model excellent social behaviour for children and offer them frequent praise throughout the day. They recognise and respect their backgrounds and uniqueness, by working extremely closely with all parents to learn as much as they can about children's family and culture. For example, the key person uses individual 'all about me' booklets with pictures of family and special friends to initiate talking points with children so that they can learn even more about the children in their care. These highly effective methods all help children to develop a strong sense of belonging and to know that they are valued. In addition to this, the role of the

specialist well-being practitioner supports those children with challenging behaviour and offers varying levels of play therapy for children who may have emotional problems. This fully promotes children's personal, social and emotional development.

Children show excellent self-care skills and develop a very secure understanding of healthy eating. They participate in preparing their own snack and are growing and harvesting a wide range of vegetables and fruit in their allotment. Children learn how wheat is grown, ground and used to produce bread. They are very well nourished and their health is fostered. A well-balanced diet of freshly cooked food is provided, which accommodates every child's specific dietary needs. Practitioners effectively support children's growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, named water bottles are easily accessible to children and taken outside, when they go outdoors to play. Children regularly discuss why they need to drink plenty of water when it is hot outside, and this leads to them discussing other things that they need when the weather is hot, such as sun cream and hats. Practitioners implement a comprehensive intimate care policy. This reinforces children's awareness of being safe, while they change their clothes. There is an excellent selection of equipment and resources to promote children's physical skills. Children climb on the frame and improve their upper arm strength as they hang from the bars. They have an excellent understanding of how to manage risks and challenges relative to their age within a safe environment. For example, they know how to safely handle and use natural materials, such as planks and crates, to build with and climb in and out of tyres on the safety surface.

Well-planned moves between rooms ensure that children are confident and emotionally ready for the transfer. Practitioners share the learning journal and other information about the child with practitioners in the next room, who use it to ascertain new starting points for children in the different environment. Key persons from both rooms work closely together to support the child through the process. Children's independence is emphasised and activities focus positively on the forthcoming move to school. For example, children dress up in school uniforms, have their lunch on a tray and practitioners use the persona dolls and the 'mini me' models in discussions about starting school. Practitioners invite class teachers to visit the children within the setting to further support the move. This results in children who are extremely well-prepared and emotionally secure for their move onto school or within the setting.

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

The directors and management team have very high expectations for the quality of care that is offered to children and families. They are innovative and flexible in their approach to meeting the work-life balance of parents and carers. Regular and robust reviews of all paperwork and procedures take place to ensure that all requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Arrangements to safeguard children within the setting are particularly robust. All practitioners attend annual mandatory safeguarding training, and

review this at team meetings and supervisions. There are extremely clearly defined procedures for monitoring any safeguarding concern within the setting and regular discussions highlight the safe use of mobile phones, cameras and social media sites. Safeguarding also features in the parents evenings, where the management discuss with parents how to keep children safe when children are using information communication technology at home. There are also extremely thorough recruitment and suitability checks, which follow the local authority safer working practices. Managers use a detailed checklist to ensure that all the necessary checks, references, qualifications and employment history are complete. In addition to this, a detailed induction and probationary period effectively supports new practitioners and students. All adults working with or in contact with the children complete vetting checks before they start employment. This protects children's safety and well-being. Practitioners create a rich learning environment that is stimulating and where children engage in active learning. The management team take effective measures to ensure the security and safety of children within the environment. For example, external doors are securely closed. Parents ring the doorbell and are admitted by practitioners at the beginning and end of each session or a well briefed admin team trained in safeguarding, at other times. The outside areas are secure, preventing intruders accessing these areas and children leaving unsupervised. The manager has a clear overview of what is taking place in all areas, at all times, through constant monitoring throughout the day. Hence, children's welfare and well-being is shown to be of the utmost priority.

Excellent practitioner retention and a targeted programme of professional development ensure practitioners are constantly improving their already first-class practice. New practitioners have a mentor to work alongside and have a clearly outlined professional progression path to follow. The managers and mentors use high quality professional supervision in the form of very regular observation and constructive feedback to practitioners, an annual appraisal and six monthly reviews. In-house training is extremely frequent and the management is able to access other training courses through their links with the children's centre and through the local authority. For example, managers use observations and evaluations of practitioners' practice to identify their particular strengths and talents. They are given strong support and guidance by management to further their professional development and gain additional qualifications. This has also been used in the introduction of specialist practitioner roles, such as the well-being and speech and language practitioners. Their skills are built on and used to support all children attending the setting. The manager demonstrates that she has an excellent awareness of how to monitor and evaluate practitioner practice. The management strongly promotes learning from each other and uses the local authority performance management standards across the integrated setting. Senior practitioners, with strong support, manage the performance of practitioners in line with the ethos of distributed leadership. Extremely thorough reflective practice includes input from the manager and Head of Centre, practitioners, parents and carers, and children. All practitioners evaluate the practice in their areas and develop a focused improvement plan. This demonstrates their commitment to continuous improvement. Senior practitioners meet each week to review the development plans, which feed into the overall reflective working document for the integrated setting. The team invite several external professional advisors into the setting to help with reflective practice and several audits help practitioners identify specific areas for improvement. The manager monitors children's learning closely, using appropriate guidance documents to

provide an exciting educational programme that motivates children and ensures that they are developing a positive disposition to learning. Each term, the progress of particular groups of children is monitored, such as the older or younger children, boys or girls. This data is analysed and used to establish whether progress is consistently better than or lower than others. Group action plans are put into place to address anything the monitoring identifies and this is reviewed. This further assists the team in examining all areas of practice and ensures practitioners strive towards ongoing exemplary standards.

Parents are highly involved in the practice of the setting. For instance, the parent partner agreement promotes the idea of parents being active participants in sharing children's learning. Children and parents give their views daily through verbal exchanges and by way of regular questionnaires that also consider the voice of the child. Practitioners collate and evaluate parents' views. For example, children's views were sought and used to develop the outside area. Parents report that they are fully involved in any individual education plan to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents comments include 'fantastic support given by an amazing key person', 'cannot rate the setting enough', 'the progress my child has made is brilliant'. As a result of these clearly embedded methods of working with parents, their feedback helps to drive the continuous methods that maintain the high levels of achievement. The setting regularly undertakes audits of particular aspects of childcare and the results of these also contribute to reflecting on the provision as a whole and how it can be improved. For example, the Early Years Foundation Stage audit led to the changes in the way messages are relayed to parents and the introduction of a link key person for continuity of care. Practitioners work extremely closely with all other agencies involved with children and this means that children's needs are quickly identified and extremely well met. Practitioners are instrumental in establishing links with other key agencies, particularly benefitting because of their partnership with the integrated children's centre. The partnerships with other settings that children attend are enhanced by shared care documents that help the key person in both placements develop learning programmes to fully meet children's needs. Children who attend more than one setting and have the support of external advisors have visits in both placements to support shared programmes. In this way, the shared information fully promotes continuity in learning and ensures that children are supported at the earliest opportunity to effectively close any gaps in their learning and promote further progress. The dedication seen in reflecting on excellent practice and continuing to improve all aspects of the setting demonstrates that there is a strong drive to maintain the high levels of achievements. Children are exceptionally secure and confident and thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. Consequently, children enthusiastically embark on their learning, ready to seek out new experiences and further their learning and development.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. 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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY286935
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	982877
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	87
Name of provider	Oxhey Early Years Centre (Ltd)
Date of previous inspection	07/06/2012
Telephone number	01923 330300

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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