



# Oakengates Children's Centre

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 123348  
**Local Authority** Telford and Wrekin  
**Inspection number** 292639  
**Inspection date** 8 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jonathan Palk

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery	<b>School address</b>	The Place
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		Oakengate
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-4		Telford TF2 6EP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 387910
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	70	<b>Fax number</b>	-
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Pamela Sculley
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Kay Darlington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Nursery moved to new accommodation in April 2005. It is now part of a Children's Centre that provides day care for children aged 0 to 8 years. The headteacher of the Nursery is now head of the Children's Centre. Eight children attend the nursery on a full-time basis and a further 62 attend for a morning or afternoon session only. The centre is in a regeneration area and is recognised as having some significant social disadvantage. Most children are White British, with a few representing other minority ethnic groups. A few children speak English as an additional language. Full day care is provided in partnership with a private company. Temporary staff during the inspection covered three of the five permanent posts in the Nursery.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'Everyone matters, not just the clever ones', sums up the overwhelmingly positive views of parents. They are right to be confident about the experiences children are having. Children thrive and achieve well in this good Nursery. This is the result of strong and determined leadership by the centre leader, effective teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support.

A particular strength of the Nursery is its strong emphasis on catering for the needs of all children. This is based on thorough systems for checking each child's development. All children are given high levels of support and encouragement so that they all benefit from what is on offer. Children come in with a range of skills that are similar to those expected for their age. As a result of the very well targeted support and careful attention to their needs, all achieve well. The overall personal development and well-being are outstanding. Excellent relationships with staff make children want to learn and they eagerly launch into play when they arrive. All children achieve well in their creative development and physical skills. There is plenty of high quality emphasis on extending children's speaking skills and mathematical development. By the time children leave, attainment in all areas of learning is above expectations. Good teaching and learning is underpinned by strong teamwork. Staff have focused successfully on improving children's knowledge of letter sounds. Writing skills have not been given the same high profile. For example, there are too few areas where children can write as part of their other activities. These shortcomings particularly affect the achievement of the more able.

The curriculum is good and there are excellent resources. Good use is made of the new accommodation and children derive immense pleasure as they get involved in imaginative and exciting activities. The outside activity area gives children many opportunities to choose their own activities.

Good leadership and management have ensured the successful establishment of the Nursery as part of the Children's Centre. Excellent links with support services and families impact positively on children's well-being and willingness to learn. There has been good improvement since the Nursery was last inspected and the leadership is always looking at ways to do even better. For example, there has been successful development of tracking systems. This improvement means that adults know what children need to learn next and how they respond to different types of activities. The leadership team does not yet systematically check on the effectiveness of teaching and this means that they do not always pinpoint what works best in extending children's learning. However, the team have good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Boost more able children's writing skills by ensuring more opportunity is given for learning through play.
- Refine evaluation of teaching so that the impact of initiatives is clear and helps inform further development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children achieve well so that standards are above expectations by the time they leave the Nursery. They make good progress in all areas of learning and do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. Children's language skills are above expectations and this reflects the good progress they make in speaking and listening skills. They use language imaginatively in their play to organise their thinking and communicate their ideas. The lack of prominent writing areas limits what more able children could achieve in developing writing as a means of communicating. Children make good progress in their knowledge of sounds and letters but opportunities are sometimes missed to extend these skills when children are working in small group time.

Children attain above expectations in mathematical development as a consequence of the high quality practical work and discussion. Good progress is made in physical development and children benefit from the excellent resources both in the Nursery room and outside. A stimulating range of activities helps ensure the good development of investigation and creative skills. Slower learners and those with learning difficulties benefit from well-targeted support and make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

'Put this here' and 'Let us build this (bit) again' were just some of the enthusiastic comments made by two girls and a boy building a transformer. It is typical of the high level of co-operation and collaboration seen in the activities children choose for themselves, both in and outside the Nursery room, and contributes very effectively to their good achievement. The use of a shared space by toddlers who are going to join the Nursery give them confidence to work with others and familiarise themselves with routines. Consequently, they settle happily. Attendance at the Nursery is good because children greatly enjoy the activities. They are confident in choosing what and how they want to learn.

Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They work well together in small groups and appreciate the needs of others. They have very well developed ideas about safe practices and ask visitors who they are and why they are watching them. They play their part in helping the Nursery run smoothly by getting equipment out and tidying up at the end of the session. Children are developing a good understanding of the need to keep healthy through regular outdoor activities and sharing fruit and milk at snack time. Behaviour is excellent. They relate very well to one another and are keen to help each other because the adults are such good role models. Children are developing a good understanding of how they can play a part in their community, for example displaying their artwork in the art gallery that is part of the community centre. They really enjoy their time in the Nursery and for some, the day is just too short, as demonstrated by a child who arrived with pyjamas so he could stay overnight!

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Children's learning is good because they experience a good balance of activities, some of which are led by adults and some they choose for themselves. Good use is made of the resources to engage the children's interest and to support the teaching of key skills. Staff are well deployed to support the range of activities. Through their gentle questioning, they help children develop their own thoughts. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend more able children's reading development, for example by pointing to the words when reading a story or extending ideas about what might come next. Planning is good. Activities are modified or extended for individuals, depending on need. This is a major improvement since the last inspection.

Very good teamwork has resulted in improved assessment and evaluations that point the way forward. These are carefully recorded in the children's 'play plans', enabling parents to make a useful contribution to their child's achievement.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned to build effectively on what children have already learned and can do. The weekly cycle of observing, evaluating and planning ensures that a range of practical activities, visits and play provide children with lots of opportunities to explore experiment and investigate. Good use is made of the outside area to stimulate active and imaginative play. Close attention is paid also to promoting children's creativity through role-play, art activities and music sessions. Visits to the art gallery and theatre further enrich children's experiences in this area. Visitors to school help extend children's understanding of the world of work. Successful attention is paid to promoting early literacy and numeracy skills through good use of stories, discussions and practical activities, but there is not enough emphasis on providing writing areas for older and more able children to explore early writing skills.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The excellent links with other groups involved in the centre and high quality relationships with parents ensure particularly effective support for health and social care. All children are known well, and attention to their individual needs is exceptionally thorough. High levels of supervision effectively promote children's safety and welfare and uncomplicated routines make them feel secure even when staff are temporary. Parents and carers get good information on their children's progress and they are encouraged to share with the staff how they can help at home.

Recent training for all staff has ensured that there are consistent approaches to tracking progress and noting significant steps in learning. Consequently, those children with

learning difficulties are identified early and supported through special activities. Those children at an early stage of learning English as an additional language benefit from the constant attention to developing the spoken language of all children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The head of the Children's Centre has a very clear vision for the growth of the centre and has been instrumental in its successful establishment. A wide range of services has been successfully drawn together to provide support for children and their parents and carers. Educational provision at the Nursery is effectively enhanced by the opportunity to have access to all day care facilities, including during the holidays. The headteacher is supported well by local authority staff, centre staff and governors who are sharply focused on ensuring the best possible learning opportunities and even higher attainment.

Moving to the new accommodation has not stopped staff continually seeking to improve their performance. For example, they have developed a tight link between assessment and planning in the use of individual 'play plans'. The individual play plan is a powerful tool for ensuring that children's achievements are carefully tracked and ensures effective use of resources and deployment of adults. A further benefit of the 'play plan' is that parents can be flexible in their choice of sessions, confident in the knowledge that all staff regularly share information on their child's progress. Good use is being made of data on children's attainment to keep a track of progress. The information gives the Nursery an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and sets the right priorities for improvement. However, there is no established system for checking on the strengths and weaknesses of teaching to enable better evaluation of what works best in promoting learning.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We really did enjoy our visit to your Nursery last week. How lucky you are to have such a good Nursery! We could see how much you all enjoy the lovely things you can do in your beautiful new building. I am writing a letter to tell you what I found out when we spent the day with you.

These are the things we liked most about your Nursery:

- your behaviour is brilliant!
- the outside area is wonderful and I loved seeing the garden you had and all the fabulous buildings you can play in
- it was good fun watching you learn together and you are so good at getting things out and putting them away
- you concentrate and listen so well when the adults are talking with you
- all the grown ups who work with you do a great job as they help you learn new things and take excellent care of you
- the people in charge work hard to make the Nursery run so well
- your mums and dads are very pleased with how well you are getting on and we agree.

There are just two things we think your Nursery needs to do now. These are:

- make sure that they help you more with your reading and writing when you are working and playing
- make sure they keep a check on how well they are teaching you.

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome. We hope you continue to enjoy your learning.