

Oxhey Early Years Centre

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 117077 |
| Local Authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 338944 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 November 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Nina Bee |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 2–4 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 78 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mike Chambers |
| Headteacher | Cathy Gunning |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 February 2007 |
| School address | Eastbury Road Oxhey Watford |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed the provision for children by visiting four sessions. They held meetings with governors, staff and parents. They talked with children, observed the work of the nursery, and looked at the way children's progress is tracked, the nursery development plan and the 36 questionnaires submitted by the parents and 13 from the staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether all groups of children make outstanding progress
- the effectiveness of the provision for information and communication technology (ICT)
- how well staff and governors are involved in nursery development planning.

Information about the school

The large majority of children in the nursery are from White British families. In addition, several ethnic groups are represented in small numbers. The number of children who start the nursery with little English has increased since the previous inspection, and is above average. The number of children identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Provision before and after school, as well as day care, is offered all through the year. This provision is part of the Centre but not managed by the nursery school. A few nursery children use this provision.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The nursery provides an exceptionally stimulating, caring and supportive environment where children flourish and develop a thirst for learning. The children's happy faces and their enthusiasm for all that is on offer say it all. In addition, parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of all that the nursery does to support their children. As one parent wrote, 'This place is truly amazing. Staff always have time to speak to us. The place is effectively run and the children settle in easily and quickly and love coming each day.'

Achievement is outstanding. Children who have been identified as having special educational needs do extremely well because their needs are very well catered for. Children who are at an early stage of learning English do as well as their peers because their needs are assessed quickly and they are sensitively supported. Levels of attainment on entry are broadly as expected for children of this age but they are lower for aspects of communication, language and problem-solving, reasoning and number. School tracking data show that the current nursery children have got off to a very good start and are on course to exceed the goals set for children of nursery age. Progress is excellent because the expertly planned curriculum focuses particularly well on all areas of learning but especially in relation to the development of early language, literacy and numeracy skills and on children's personal, social and emotional development. The valuable skills that children develop in these specific areas particularly support their future economic well-being. As a result, children are extremely well prepared for their next school.

Teaching is of a high quality. Adults work hard to ensure that activities are firmly based on children's interests and needs so that they quickly develop very positive attitudes to learning and always do their best. Hence, learning is excellent. Adults have an exceptionally good understanding of how young children learn. Consequently, in all activities, children are encouraged and supported to investigate and discover new things for themselves. The way adults intervene to allow this to happen is skilfully done. They sensitively make observations that engage children's interest which, in turn, sets them off on a new trail to explore. This was evident when a child was taking photographs and the intervention from an adult allowed her to press another button on the camera and look at previous photos she had taken. The way children are looked after and cared for is outstanding. This results in children feeling safe and secure and quickly developing in confidence as they move from activity to activity. Their learning journey books, which parents love, show the excellent support they receive as they learn and play. The nursery's highly inclusive ethos ensures that all children are exceptionally well provided for. Children's progress is regularly tracked. Plans are now in place for staff to develop

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and improve their system further by being more rigorous in monitoring and tracking all children's progress.

The headteacher has an excellent understanding of how young children learn and strives for outstanding provision that enables all children to achieve their very best. She has created a wonderful team spirit that runs through all parts of the nursery. As a result, morale is high, staff and governors are all involved in the work of the nursery and everyone feels valued. The nursery makes a good contribution to community cohesion by ensuring that children have lots of opportunities to learn about other cultures. A suitable community cohesion plan has been drawn up and reviewed. This identifies the need to develop more links with the wider world. Self-evaluation is of top quality because of the on-going focus on adjusting and refining provision to meet children's changing needs. Developments both inside and out have improved the provision since the last inspection. Provision for the teaching of ICT has improved particularly with regard to developing teachers' confidence when teaching the subject. High standards have been maintained in teaching, learning, achievement and behaviour. These successes show that the nursery has an excellent capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen staff skills in collating and monitoring information on children' progress in order to further support their evaluation of how individuals and groups of children are doing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

In all activities observed, both inside and out, children were seen to have excellent relationships with the adults who help them learn. Individual needs are very well catered for. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English, achieve exceptionally well. The secure and exciting outdoor areas are interesting places to learn and play. Children thoroughly enjoy all that is on offer. They were seen playing safely and with great enjoyment on the relatively new climbing equipment. Other children were seen being very well supported by an adult as they built towers of bricks. Learning was extended expertly as the names of shapes were reinforced as they played. The inside environment is magical. Children want to get involved because everything is so inviting and child-friendly. An activity that focused on magnetism attracted lots of interest. When asked what he was doing, one boy said, 'My magnet is catching these screws because they are made of metal.' He correctly knew why the magnet would pick up the metal spoon and not the plastic fork. Learning was excellent in this activity because it was extremely well resourced and the adult intervened expertly to extend learning. Teamwork amongst the adults is exemplary and this contributes very significantly to the good and often outstanding learning that takes place. Enjoyment, enthusiasm and much excitement are evident wherever the children are learning and playing. By the end of their time in nursery, children's attainment greatly exceeds the levels expected for their ages.

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Children from different backgrounds get on extremely well. They quickly learn to share and take turns because adults promote the development of personal and social skills in all that they do. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well catered for and the traditions and values of many are celebrated. For example, children have recently talked about Diwali and made sparkling diva lamps to reinforce their understanding. Snack and meal times are excellent social occasions. Children are very aware of why they should eat the healthy snacks and lunches that are prepared for them. Adults do not miss opportunities to promote basic language and number skills during these sessions. For example, children were asked to count out three raisins and six grapes during a snack time. Children learn to work together as a team as they tidy up at the end of sessions. When they raise money for others, children become aware that not all people may be as well off as they are. Attendance is good. Children attend regularly and are punctual to sessions.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 1 |
| Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹ | 1 |
| The quality of children's learning and their progress | 1 |
| The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 1 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 1 |
| Children's behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |
| Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Each session is extremely well organised and resourced with a good variety of child-initiated activities and those that are adult-focused. Activities are exceptionally well planned by adults, who are highly skilled practitioners. The way they capitalise on children's interests and promote independence is excellent. Children were seen confidently using computers and the large interactive whiteboard to reinforce and develop their ICT skills as they focused on literacy, numeracy and art programs. Areas where children can use their imagination and play are made exciting. Children were seen playing with great enthusiasm and excitement as they pretended to have a tea party in a den which had been made outside. Thoughtful discussion that children have with each other and adults, as they play, helps them to develop effective communication skills. Children's excellent creative and cultural development is promoted through the many opportunities for role play, music and art activities. Children of all abilities were seen thoroughly enjoying themselves as they played percussion instruments whilst listening to Greek music. Parents feel that the nursery keeps their children very safe and secure. Inspection evidence agrees with the parents. The way children are looked after and cared for is outstanding. A special feature of the nursery is that adults know the needs of each child extremely well. All children are treated as individuals and specific needs are extremely well catered for. As a result, children grow in confidence by the day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|---|----------|
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The quality of teaching | 1 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is exceptionally successful in ensuring that the work of the nursery is of high quality. This vision has been shared very well with the staff and governors. As a result, all are ambitious and have a strong commitment to improvement. A new lead teacher has recently been appointed. She has got off to a good start by improving the assessment procedures for children who speak English as an additional language and have low levels of English. Staff are very well involved in school development planning. For example, staff have completed an evaluation of enabling environments. This made everyone think carefully about the environment that was being offered to children and staff. Staff and governors make a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. They recognised that global links are limited and have plans to develop these further. Governors are well informed and so are able to support and challenge the school effectively. Steps that are taken to support the needs of each child mean that the

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equality of opportunity the nursery provides is outstanding. Relationships between parents and carers and the nursery are excellent. Outstanding links with others, especially those in the Centre and external agencies, ensure that all pupils, including those with specific needs, are very well supported. The health and safety of the children is taken very seriously. Parents are overwhelmingly in agreement over this. Policies and documentation relating to safeguarding are of a very high quality and safeguarding requirements are fully met. Staff and governors work very effectively together to ensure that children learn and play in a very safe and secure environment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who returned questionnaires and those who spoke to inspectors are very happy with the work of the nursery. They say that their children really enjoy coming to the nursery and some even want to come at the weekend. They feel that children's individual needs are very well catered for. Everyone feels that their children enjoy attending and are safe. They feel well informed about how well their children are doing. Parents and carers also feel that their concerns and suggestions are listened to, that unacceptable behaviour is effectively dealt with and that the school is well led and managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Oxhey Early Years Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspectors received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 children registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 31 | 86 | 5 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 32 | 89 | 4 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 23 | 64 | 10 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 25 | 69 | 8 | 22 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 28 | 78 | 7 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 23 | 64 | 11 | 31 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 20 | 56 | 16 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 15 | 42 | 15 | 42 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 25 | 69 | 8 | 22 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 19 | 53 | 11 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 21 | 58 | 12 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 26 | 72 | 10 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 32 | 89 | 4 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|---|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves |

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a child in their learning and development. |
| Attainment: | in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 November 2009

Dear Children,

Inspection of Oxhey Early Years Centre, Watford WD19 4RL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your wonderful nursery. We think it is an outstanding place to learn and those who look after you at home agree with us. You are so lucky to have such interesting activities planned for you by the adults who help you learn and play. We could see from your smiling, happy faces that you enjoy all of the time you spend in nursery.

These are the things we found out about your school

Teaching is always good and often outstanding and that is why you learn so well and have such an exciting time.

Your behaviour is excellent. You are all friendly and kind towards each other and very polite to visitors.

We were very impressed with how much you have learnt about why you should eat up your lunch and how you know the names of vegetables such as broccoli and sweet-corn. It was good to see that you have learnt lots about safety. You use scissors very sensibly and know that you do not run in the classroom.

The way you are cared for and looked after is outstanding.

By the time you leave nursery, most of you reach levels that are well above those expected for your ages.

We have asked the school to do one thing to improve the education you receive

Adults are very good at checking how well you are doing and have a new system for doing this. We have asked them to get used to it and to make sure everyone understands how it works.

Keep smiling as you learn and play.

Best wishes

Nina Bee

Lead inspector

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