



The Oak Tree Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY264320
Inspection date 02 March 2006
Inspector Mandy Gannon

Setting Address The Oak Tree Nursery & Pre School, Bere Hill, Whitchurch,
Hampshire, RG28 7EB

Telephone number 01256 895577

E-mail

Registered person The Oak Tree Nursery

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Oak Tree Nursery opened in 2004. It is privately owned and is purpose built. The nursery is located in Whitchurch, Hampshire.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 offering full or part time care for children from 3 months to 5 years of age.

There are currently 76 children from 3 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 29

funded 3 and 4-year-olds who receive nursery education funding. The nursery support children who have special needs and for whom English is an additional language.

There are currently 22 staff working with the children and the manager who is supernumerary. The majority of staff have early years qualifications, whilst some are currently on training programmes.

The setting receives support from a teacher / mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYCDP) and the nursery is looking towards accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop an excellent understanding of healthy eating, they have a varied selection of fruit at snack time. They benefit from healthy, nutritious well-balanced meals that are prepared by the cook and staff on site. Practitioners are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet, the effect food has on children's growth and development and the way children thrive and develop. Children are involved in the growing of vegetables and herbs in the garden. They nurture and grow the crops including managing the compost heap to feed their crops and harvest for dinner. All dietary and individual requirements are met, for example the baby food is freshly prepared and chopped or pureed dependant on their needs. All children in the nursery are catered for at all mealtimes. Practitioners are highly effective in supporting younger children to develop their independence, for example learning to feed themselves, and older children are actively involved in setting the tables. Children independently access water and older children develop their skills by pouring their own milk at snack time. Children are aware that milk comes from cows and they often see the cows in the neighbouring field, they enjoy cooking activities including making butter.

Children have exceptional opportunities to engage in physical activities, they recognise the benefits of participating in regular exercise and it contributing to being healthy. They have extensive grounds next to the open countryside and all children have regular daily opportunities to use the outside area, they wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Babies have the opportunity to sleep outside and practitioners have put considerable thought into meeting these needs in a variety of weathers. Children have a wide range of challenging opportunities where they show a high level of confidence, for example as they balance along a wooden beam supported by milk crates. They run up and down a mound and crawl through tunnels, they crawl through long grass which is purposely not cut. Children eagerly pedal bikes and negotiate space when skilfully riding scooters. They dig and plant when cultivating the garden and use equipment skilfully, for example they use a trolley to pull a large bag of potatoes back to the shed. Children are aware of the changes in their bodies and realise they must wrap up warm when they are excitedly getting ready to go outside, as it starts to snow.

Children learn about health and hygiene and how to look after themselves through personal routines, including washing hands before mealtimes and after toileting. They understand to wash their hands after coming in from the garden and taking off their wellingtons. Children in the toddler and pre-school room access the bathroom area independently and are gaining confidence in toileting and hand washing.

Practitioners make effective use of Birth to three matters framework and plan an exciting range of physical activities for young babies and toddlers. They encourage babies to reach out for toys, developing their crawling skills and hold a child's hands when improving their walking skills, they sit close to a cardboard box as a child climbs into it unaided. Babies' individual physical needs are exceptionally well met, for example consistent routines with regards to feeding, changing and sleeping are implemented between home and nursery ensuring children are secure. Highly effective hygiene routines are in place, such as nappy changing, preparation of food and meal times ensuring the spread of infection is minimised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children learn to keep themselves safe in a welcoming, bright and stimulating purpose built building. They have access to an extensive inside and outside learning environment. Practitioners are extremely vigilant about children's safety, for example unknown persons are not allowed into the building until they explain their purpose. Practitioners meticulously implement daily risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed and adapted if necessary, for example the assembly point for evacuation has been moved closer to the rear gate for ease of evacuating the babies. Comprehensive detailed health and safety policies and procedures are in place. Children are aware of safety and talk about the dangers of switching on the plugs and that an adult must do this, when using a hairdryer to dry the wigs. Children are aware of safe practice, for example they must play with balls away from the farmers fence, as if the balls go over they cannot go into his field with the cows.

Children are well protected because practitioners have an in-depth knowledge of child protection, they are aware of their roles and responsibilities and how to implement the nursery and local child protection procedures. All staff, children and visitors to and from the nursery are recorded. Detailed policies for the collection and non-collection of children are in place and staff ensure they are upheld. Practitioners ensure the recording of pre-existing injuries, which contributes to ensuring children are protected from harm.

Children benefit from a vibrant, well organised and stimulating learning environment, where they have access to an extensive range of equipment and resources suitable for the range of children attending. Thorough procedures are in place to ensure equipment is safe and well maintained. All children are able to access resources from low level shelving.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and settled and enjoy their time at nursery. Practitioners know the children well and talk to them about their families. Babies and young children build strong relationships with their key workers and peers helping to secure relationships between children and staff developing a high level of trust. Children are involved in an exciting, wide range of activities and experiences offered to them. Babies are supported to explore their senses as they explore a range of tactile objects including a treasure basket with natural objects and home made shakers. Toddlers show good imagination as they make dinner and cakes when playing with play dough. They enjoy creative activities as they paint, make faces and put in their teeth, they use musical instruments and move to the rhythm at music and movement sessions.

Children communicate very well using words and gestures, which develops their confidence as staff respond to noises they make and are attentive and responsive to their needs. Children show delight and excitement as they cuddle into and sit on a practitioners lap and share a book they have selected from the shelf. Children enthusiastically join in singing sessions, all of which contributes to developing their communication skills. Practitioners working with the children under three years have a strong understanding of child development and make an effective use of the Birth to three matters framework to guide their planning and observations of children's progress. An exciting and stimulating learning environment is provided, in which babies and young children are interested and involved. For example, babies show interest as they crawl across the floor and look at laminated photographs of their family, which have been put on the floor when looking at 'our family.' Although further opportunities for independent learning are required, especially in creative development as many activities are directed by adults, and children have limited ability for individual selection, to express themselves freely.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress as staff have a secure understanding of how children learn. Staff adapt questioning, according to the age and stage of the child. A well developed routine is in place with a good balance of child and adult initiated activities. Staff have varied teaching methods to introduce a wide range of interesting activities and experiences. Staff regularly monitor the quality of teaching and their individual teaching practices.

Children learn about the environment and the seasons and have access to an extensive outside area. They plant and grow their own vegetables and herbs, harvesting to use in their lunch and enter into local growing competitions. They put peelings on the compost heap and learn what goodness compost brings back to the soil. They hide in the willow houses and use them as a jail. They find ice in the tyres which has frozen overnight and negotiate how to get the ice circle out of the tyre, for example 'it's freezing. It won't come out it's stuck' 'we could always break it in half and then we will be able to get it out ' 'how shall we break it?'

Children learn to count at registration, in stories and songs. They use mathematics to solve problems such as counting cups for snack time, how many boys and girls are

here today. Children make pictures of their face and teeth and discuss using positional language. They use their fingers and counting bears to perform early addition and subtraction tasks when working out simple sums. Staff warn children about the passing of time and that activities will finish in a few minutes to develop their understanding of the passing of time.

Children are well behaved and form firm friendships and care for each other. They play well together in imaginary games, making dinner in the home corner. They enjoy stories as a group and listen intently. All children have the opportunity for regular Spanish and French lessons taught by native speakers. They come into the group weekly and children participate with enthusiasm, joining in conversation, listening to stories told with finger puppets and songs. Many children recognise their names, which are written in various ways dependant on the school in which they are to attend. Some children are aware of the sounds of letters in their name and others. Children are developing their ability to write their name and some children are competent. However, children have limited opportunities to select and freely mark make. Children have a wide range of creative activities provided, they make a jointed person when looking at ourselves and make self portraits. However, they have limited opportunity to be independent and select art materials, limiting their individual creatively.

Practitioners observe and monitor children's progress regularly and identify targets for children. Practitioners have realistic expectations and a good knowledge of individual children. They support them to consolidate their learning and move onto the next stage. As a result, the curriculum meets children's individual needs, ensures effective support and sufficient challenges are provided to help children achieve their potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy, settled and extremely confident. They show strong self-esteem, responding well to praise and encouragement, which staff give valuing their achievements. Children are aware of the rules and have a secure understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Children have excellent relationships with each other and the staff, their behaviour is exemplary, they take turns and support each other. They show genuine concern for one another and benefit from the extensive integrated outside learning environment. The environment is bright and welcoming to both adults and children, photographs of the children's activities are taken throughout the day and displayed through the computer in the foyer for parents to see. Children recognise their work is displayed, which increases their self esteem.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging, babies routines are discussed to match home, whilst older children take on responsibilities, such as helping staff put the fruit and vegetable order away in the shed, taking the potatoes back to the shed after the cook has finished with them. All children and their families receive excellent support from practitioners and outside agencies if required, enabling them thrive and flourish, making substantial individual progress. Children gain an extremely well

developed respect for themselves and others as they learn about their community and the wider world and value and celebrate their differences and similarities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Practitioners give high priority to ensure that they establish and secure strong links between home and nursery, ensuring that parents are involved in their child's development and learning. Babies and young children enjoy cuddles and reassurance from practitioners and are extremely self assured, developing high levels of independence and a sense of security and belonging. They benefit from excellent partnership with parents, ensuring that their individual needs are fully met and they make rapid progress in their development. Parents are fully involved in their child's learning and how they can support this at home because comprehensive communication takes place daily, both verbally and through 'me at the tree' diaries. Parents receive information about the curriculum and how children learn through play, and the nursery has provided information evenings to explain this. Practitioners work together with parents to access children's progress and have regular meetings to recognise the child's achievements and progress and look at next steps. This ensures that parents are fully involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work well together, as a team within the provision. A highly effective operational plan is in place ensuring that children receive a consistent high level of support throughout the day and that they thrive. Policies and procedures are implemented to successfully promote children's care and well-being. Management use discussion and regular meetings with staff to consistently monitor and evaluate the setting.

High importance is placed on training and development and the management support and encourage staff to fully access. This ensures that staff develop to their full potential and contribute to promoting positive outcomes for children.

Children's care and learning is enhanced by effective consistent deployment of staff and good leadership and management of nursery education. Staff are knowledgeable about the foundation stage curriculum and use this knowledge to progress children's learning, although children's independence, especially in creativity requires further development.

The leadership and management is good. Management and practitioners have a clear vision for the nursery and are enthusiastic and motivated to constantly improve the environment and their provision. They meet regularly to ensure that policies reflect the working of the nursery, they evaluate their quality of teaching and practise, identifying areas for improvement. This attitude to continual improvement and development helps all to contribute and be a part of the setting and successfully promotes positive outcomes for children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the nursery were asked to ensure that children aged 2 to 3 years could have more free choice of play. Children have many opportunities to independently select toys and resources from low level shelves, they help themselves to a bead maze and puzzles. They select books from a low level book display and enjoy sitting on cushions sharing the books.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. the complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further explore opportunities for children to be independent learners, for example in creativity.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further explore opportunities for children to be independent learners, for example in creativity.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website:

