

Oakhurst Grange School

— Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY291285
Inspection date	04/07/2008
Inspector	Lisa-Marie Jones

Setting address	160 Stanstead Road, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 6AF
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Telephone number	01883 343344
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E-mail

Registered person	Lynne Coppin
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Type of inspection	Nursery Education
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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 provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

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

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THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oakhurst Grange School is a co-educational independent preparatory school. It has been established since 1957 and is managed by a non-profit making trust. The

school is located in Caterham, which is within the borough of Surrey. It caters for children from the ages of three to 11 years.

The Foundation Stage comprises of a lower kindergarten (nursery) and kindergarten (reception class). Children have access to outdoor play areas, woodland areas, large hall for physical activities as well as an indoor swimming pool. The school is open Monday to Friday, term time only for 35 weeks of the year. The school day starts at 08:30 and finishes at 15.20. The lower kindergarten is open from 8:30 till 12:20, on Tuesday and Thursday they have the option to stay all day. There are 27 children attending the early years department, 24 all of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. They also support children for whom English is an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are four staff working directly with the children, of these, all have early years qualifications. Close links have been formed with the early years development and childcare partnership for support and training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Overall, the setting is very small and informal, therefore staff are able to set realistic goals for children as they know them intimately. They are lead through free flow play to enjoy and experiment with learning at their own pace, but are supported and extended by staff. The children's attitudes to learning, their behaviour and general level of engagement is excellent, aiding them to make exceptional progress towards the early learning goals and in some areas they excel. Meticulous planning takes into account children's individual needs and interests as the next steps of learning are clearly identified and taken into consideration when planning activities. The children further benefit from having additional subjects, for example, music, physical education and swimming taught by specialist teachers.

All children are very engaging, happy children, who thoroughly enjoy play and learning and show great enthusiasm when taking part in activities. They have formed very strong friendships with their peers and are able to initiate imaginary play and conversation very easily. They quickly settle to activities independently and concentrate well to complete tasks. Behaviour is excellent. Staff are skilled in enabling children to problem solve for themselves, which boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

The children are very able and skilled communicators and happily chat and sing during play. Staff themselves are skilled at questioning and extending children's vocabulary. Both lower kindergarten and kindergarten children are becoming very

confident readers, they have access to a good range of books within each classroom, not just for storytelling, but also for referencing. Books are encouraged to be shared at home with parents as a homework task. Kindergarten children make exceptional progress with their handwriting skills and are able to produce very clear handwritten stories using their phonic expertise.

Children are becoming very confident with numerical activities. Older and more able children are beginning to understand the concept of simple addition and subtraction; they can say what is more or less and attempt to add groups of objects and enjoy simple, practical games. They are also being introduced to simple number bonds. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They learn how to use numbers in everyday situations and show that they understand size and shape through lots of practical activities, such as, comparing and estimating and use simple graphs to record their findings. They are also becoming familiar with the concept of time and the meaning of using time.

The children are very skilled in manipulating construction toys, both on a small and large scale. There are very good opportunities for the children to explore computers. Children are beginning to understand past and present, and they discuss people, places and events in their own lives, as well as exploring meaningful historical topics. Children learn about different cultures and beliefs through well planned topic work. This is also enhanced by visitors and trips to the local environment and a great input from parents and extended families. The woodland environments greatly enhances the children's learning as they are able to access on a regular basis and enjoy hunting for bugs and looking at the changes in the seasons. They also enjoy looking at the changes to things they have grown such as potatoes and flowers.

The kindergarten children have the opportunity to use the outside area to create free flow play. This aids their health and physical development. They also have the opportunity to take part in structured physical education sessions and swimming. The outdoor access is an area in which the school are looking to improve to ensure that all children have direct access to promote a free flowing play and learning experience for the children. Children demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently around the whole setting. They have every opportunity to take part in climbing and balancing. They are able to use scissors with precision and control, and have ample opportunities to use a variety of equipment such as pens and pencils, paintbrushes and construction to develop their fine motor skills. They are encouraged to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how the body works and the changes it goes through during physical exercise. They also take part in a purposeful range of ongoing activities, both indoors and outdoors, including being aware of sun safety.

Children play musical instruments and experiment with sound independently, as well as having structured music lessons with a qualified music teacher. Children are skilled in using their imagination in role play situations. Each classroom environment has a role play area set up that is changed to suit the topic that is being explored. They enjoy and independently explore craft and messy activities such as painting, sand, water and play dough, which they have regular daily access to.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Children benefit greatly from concrete relationships between their parents and staff, helping them receive consistent support both individually and as a group. Parents receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage; the information outlines what and how children will learn. This ensures parents have a good understanding that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Staff ensure that they involve parents in their child's learning through regular newsletters, parents' evenings, as well as written information at the end of the academic year. Parents make valuable contributions to their child's assessment during regular parents' meetings and through meaningful activities within the classroom, this contributes significantly to continuity in the children's education.

Parents report that they are more than happy with the education that takes place, and that their children make good progress in all areas of their education. They state that the environment lends itself to being able to challenge the children, through a large variety of activities that makes education fun, while still maintaining a good level of discipline. Therefore children are very well mannered and respectful to others. They feel they have ample opportunities to be involved in their children's education and the planning of their next steps of development.

The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of the funded education is outstanding. There are highly effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the curriculum that is on offer, in order to identify strengths and promptly address areas for improvement. There is a strong commitment to develop and improve the provision and effective use is made of outside support from the local authority. Staff have already begun to take on board the new Early Years Foundation Stage and have attended training. They are already looking at ways of adapting the current strong record keeping and assessment system into the new framework as well as adopting a stronger workshop approach to learning in the lower kindergarten. The management team are extremely effective in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection it was suggested that consideration should be made to implement the review and rewrite of the parents' prospectus to include information on the early learning goals. The prospectus does now give parents information regarding the importance of the Foundation Stage towards children's education, however they are in the process of updating the documentation to include the information relating to the new Foundation Stage framework that will be in operation as from September 2008 within the school.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2473) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk