

Oaklea Montessori at the Windmill Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Lynn Denise Smith

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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

The Oaklea Montessori at the Windmill Children's Centre is operated by Oaklea Montessori Community Interest Company. It opened in 2009 in Ramsey, Essex, operating from three age and stage appropriate rooms within purpose-built premises, where children have access to a secure outdoor play area. A maximum of 40 children may attend the setting, registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, at any one time. The setting opens every weekday from 08.00am until 6.00pm, with children from the local community and surrounding areas attending for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are currently 64 children on roll.

There are 10 members of staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ Level 2 and all are training towards a level four qualification. The manager has Early Years Professional Status. The setting operates in line with the Montessori philosophy and receives support from the local authority and from the other professionals within the Children's Centre.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are unique and individual within this provision. Staff knowledge of their individual requirements is good and effective practices enable staff to meet children's needs proficiently. Children benefit from being provided with a wide range of activities and resources which enable them to make progress across all six areas of learning. The provision has good capacity to maintain continuous improvement as the staff and owner have devised a development plan and are working towards meeting all of their intended goals within the set time frame. Good working relationships are in place between staff and parents and between the setting and other agencies working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop a system of using information gained from parents as an aid to planning to help individual children make progress towards the early learning goals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Since opening in July 2009, this provision has grown and developed. The staff team is working well and staff are gaining knowledge about each other's strengths, working patterns and skills. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place and staff

are constantly developing their knowledge of safeguarding issues. All visitors to the setting are monitored and a clear record of their attendance is recorded. Staff suitability is effectively checked prior to their appointment and information regarding their suitability is held on file and reviewed in line with the annual appraisal system. Children are safe and effective systems are in place for checking the safety and security of the premises on a daily basis.

The owner of the provision has clear plans for the future which have been collated from staff meetings and regular evaluations of the practices and procedures. Staff reflect upon the success of activities throughout the week and feedback their thoughts to the owner on a regular basis. Staff enthusiastically try new ideas and suggestions and are confident about feeding their thoughts back to the owner regarding the effectiveness of activities and approaches. Parents are not yet actively involved in the setting's self-evaluation process, however, they do have opportunities to provide feedback to the setting by way of a suggestions box. The owner intends to use her development plan as a means for parents and staff to become actively involved in the self-evaluation process.

Resources and equipment are very effectively presented to enable children to develop sound independence skills and to promote decision making. The three playrooms and toilets are interconnected, enabling children to move between the rooms with adult supervision. Large viewing panels between the rooms provide staff with good opportunities to assess where they are most needed. Staff deployment is good and staff effectively cover each other's lunch breaks. The setting is welcoming and staff actively promote equality. They demonstrate sound knowledge of the individual children in their care and work effectively with the children's families to gain relevant knowledge about their home backgrounds and cultures.

Parental feedback obtained at the time of the inspection provides very positive feedback about the provision, how children are enjoying their time at the nursery and how approachable parents find staff. Clear and well-presented written information informs parents about the setting and its ethos and principles. Staff provide parents with good verbal accounts of their children's day and proficiently inform them about the activities they have participated in and what they have enjoyed. Staff are forming very good relationships with other agencies especially those connected to the Children's Centre on whose site the setting is situated. Links are also in place with the local school which is adjacent to the nursery and the main feeder school for the provision.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children enjoy their time at this provision. They independently guide their own play and learning whilst being effectively supported by caring and professional adults. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn. Children achieve well and make good progress across all six areas of learning. Staff systematically observe children's play and learning and use their observations to inform their future planning. The current system for recording

and logging observations is a computerised process which maps children's learning and provides clear information on children's next steps. At present this and verbal communication between the staff and parents is the only means of sharing information with parents about their children's achievements. Staff are developing learning journals which will provide an additional means of collating evidence on children's learning to share with parents and will also enable parents to provide staff with feedback on their children's progress both at the nursery and at home. The nursery operates to the Montessori method of teaching which provides children with good opportunities to safely self-select activities and resources from the interesting selection available and effectively presented at their height. Children enjoy constructing with a range of wooden bricks in the specially prepared construction area. They learn from real life experiences, such as, watching builders construct a concrete platform for a new garden playhouse. Staff effectively support their interests in this activity by facilitating their observations and using new and appropriate language to help them to benefit from the experience. Children are creative and thoroughly enjoy freely accessing the craft materials on offer to them. They explore with the paint both on paper and on their hands, feeling the cold wet mixture run through their fingers.

Children develop a clear understanding about keeping themselves safe as they follow the staff's sound guidance. They know that it is dangerous to climb on chairs and that they need to put resources back on the storage shelves when they have finished playing with them. Children take care of their environment and play materials and know that pushing their chairs back under the table keeps the play space safe and free from hazards. Children talk proficiently about the necessity to put Wellington boots on to play outside as the grass is wet and slippery. Children are actively encouraged to use real life objects such as glasses to drink from and cutters to safely cut their apples into segments. Healthy eating and good nutrition is encouraged throughout the setting and children are provided with an exciting and well-balanced menu. Children have the opportunity to eat breakfast, mid session snack, lunch and tea at the nursery according to whatever section of the day they attend. Mealtimes are a pleasant, sharing experience whereby staff and children sit together and chat calmly whilst enjoying their meal. Children's independence is greatly extended at mealtimes as staff enable them to serve their own meals and pour their own drinks. Children are very fit and active. They enjoy outdoor play throughout the year and understand that there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing. The nursery has a good selection of all-in-one waterproof suits to help facilitate this. Children develop sound knowledge about healthy habits such as hand washing before meals and after using the toilet.

Children are provided with good opportunities to explore other people's differing needs and cultures through a range of festivals and activities. They listen to music from around the world and participate in themes and topics which enable them to learn about other countries, for example, they have been studying how families celebrate Christmas in different countries and have benefited from some of the children's parents visiting the nursery to share their knowledge of their home country. Children form strong relationships with staff and other children as they are proficiently guided and supported by caring and considerate staff. Staff act as excellent role models for the children, speaking to them and each other in a kind and calm manner. Children demonstrate a good sense of responsibility for their

behaviour and are well-behaved. Children develop good skills for the future. They access an exciting range of resources which enables them to explore pre-reading and writing skills. They use the well-presented Montessori equipment to learn about solving problems and developing mathematical concepts.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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