

# Oaklands School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY395599  
**Inspection date** 28/11/2011  
**Inspector** Sheila Harrison

**Setting address** Oaklands Preparatory School, 8 Albion Hill, LOUGHTON,  
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**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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**

Oaklands School is run by Oak Tree Schools Ltd, and the Lower Kindergarten was registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register in 2009. It is part of Oaklands School, a co-educational, independent school which was established in 1937 and was bought by the present proprietors in 1982. The setting is situated in Loughton, Essex. The premises for the Lower Kindergarten is on the ground floor of Oak House and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The Lower Kindergarten also has use of the some school classrooms and the whole of the school grounds.

The setting mainly serves the local area but some children attend from the wider locality. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am to 12 noon, there is the option for lunch and the afternoon sessions are from 1pm to 3pm. Children are able to attend for a morning only, whole day or afternoon only sessions. A maximum of 20 children may attend the setting at any one time and there are currently 12 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs three members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and two have a qualification at level 3. They are supported by qualified teaching staff and the headmistress. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is Outstanding.

The setting provides high quality education and care, ensuring children thrive and make significant gains in their learning. Children are totally secure and form strong emotional attachments with the staff. The setting has admirable procedures to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. There are excellent partnerships between the setting, parents and other agencies to ensure children's individual needs are recognised. All staff are closely focused on making the provision the best it can be, which means that the setting has outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- enhancing opportunities for children to freely explore a range of media and materials.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are safeguarded effectively because the staff team have an excellent understanding of child protection procedures and know how to implement them to protect the children in their care. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that everyone working with the children is suitable to do so. The ongoing suitability of all staff is monitored through regular meetings and appraisals. All staff are fully aware of how the setting works and the high expectations of the management team. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place, including rigorous risk assessments, which are reviewed regularly. Consistent staff vigilance ensures children are extremely safe and secure at all times. There are robust collection procedures to ensure only specifically designated people collect the children. Children display an excellent awareness of safety issues and recognise and understand how to keep themselves safe.

The school provides clear and an ambitious ethos which aims for children to develop 'a love of learning' and to 'fulfil their potential'. Monitoring and evaluation are robust, which contributes to maintaining and improving the setting's effectiveness. Staff have a clear understanding of what the setting does well and are wholly committed to continuous improvement. Staff are highly skilled in ensuring that all children are well integrated and they are highly effective in taking steps to close identified gaps in children's achievements. Excellent partnership working takes place to ensure every child receives high levels of support at an early stage. The Lower Kindergarten has the valuable support of specialist teachers and a special needs department to ensure children make as much progress as they can. The setting effectively and actively promotes equality and diversity to ensure that individuals and communities are valued and respected. Staff bring their knowledge, skills and various artefacts from home to extend children's learning. Staff visit each child in their home and family photographs are displayed in the learning journeys. This contributes to staff having an exceptional knowledge of each child's backgrounds and needs.

Children's welfare is significantly enhanced and they clearly benefit from the setting they are in. Staff are effectively deployed so there is a constant focus on the learning and well-being of all children. Staff plan sensitive and positive experiences for children as they move into the next classroom to ensure that they have a smooth and effective transition. The accommodation is well suited to its purpose. The rooms are comfortable and stimulating. Children access safe and exciting outside areas. Furniture and equipment is of high quality, is well maintained and supports all areas of learning. Partnerships with parents are exemplary. Staff develop excellent knowledge and understanding of the best way to meet each child's needs through listening closely to the parents. Parents have comprehensive information on the Early Years Foundation Stage and the achievements of their children. Many parents reported during the inspection that they were extremely happy with the setting and their child's progress.

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

All children thrive and are eager to learn. The educational programme is rich and varied to meet the needs of all children exceedingly well, and specialist teachers organise a varied range of activities that stimulate children's interest and help to develop enquiring minds. Staff have embraced the Early Years Foundation Stage with enthusiasm. They have a very good understanding of the requirements, and their planning ensures all aspects of the framework are covered. They carefully track each child's progress through detailed observations and keep comprehensive records, including notes, samples of work and photographs. These are used to create a carefully annotated, ongoing record of each child's learning.

Children develop a very strong sense of belonging, with many opportunities to see their photographs and names throughout the classroom. They greatly enjoy taking the class bear home and they record the weekend in the diary. This also helps them see and use print for a purpose. Appropriate praise and support encourages children to become resilient and confident learners. Staff's calm approach and warm, playful interactions motivate young children well. Staff have developed good strategies to help children succeed and they encourage them to respect and help each other. Older children assist the younger children to find and put on their coats, and they remember to say please and thank you.

Children gain confidence in the challenging play equipment during PE lessons with the close support of staff they know well. Staff are diligent in supporting learning through conversation and questioning which helps to develop and extend communication skills. They use a toy butterfly to help children take turns and speak assuredly in a small group. Children are successful in sorting the large and small bears into circles. They freely return to this activity to reinforce and extend their own learning. Older and more able children are excellently challenged through the activities such as following and making patterns and can describe a wider range of colours.

Children are learning about the society in which they live. They take a full part in the life of the school. They attend small assemblies and enthusiastically present their concert dress rehearsal to the other early years class. Children are very well prepared to sing and play musical instruments for the Christmas concert for their parents. The music teacher explains to the parents the great benefit to children's learning and the wide range of skills they master during their music lessons. Children greatly enjoy the celebrations of the festivals important to them and their friends. They become fully involved in the festival of Diwali, dressing up in suitable clothes and sharing what they have learned with the school in assembly. Children have many opportunities to play imaginatively in the small wooded area as they act out stories, and they exercise vigorously outside during playtime. There are a wide range of art and craft materials and children are enjoying completing the pictures of Father Christmas, although the craft activities are very adult directed and lack the opportunities for children to freely explore the properties of a range of materials and mediums, such as glue, glitter and felt.

## 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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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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