



The Horsham Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY333671
Inspection date	11 January 2007
Inspector	Bridget Richardson
Setting Address	The Scout Hut, Higgins Way, Bennetts Field, Off Brighton Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5DE
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Registered person	Horsham Montessori Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional 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 Horsham Montessori Nursery School opened in the current setting in 2006. It is situated close to the Brighton Road in Horsham. A maximum of 26 children from two to under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:30 to 15:30 term time only. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff. Of these, ten of the staff including managers hold appropriate early years qualifications and three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The environment is clean and tidy and children receive appropriate support to develop good personal hygiene. They are encouraged and reminded to wash their hands prior to handling food, after visiting the toilet and messy play. Liquid soap and paper towels are readily accessible to children in the toilet area to help children to independently access at all times. Children who are infectious do not attend which helps prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

Parents give prior written consent to administer medication that ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. A staff member who holds a current first aid certificate is present at all times. This means they can give appropriate care if there is an accident.

Children receive nutritious snacks that help them understand foods that are good for them. They are able to choose from a range of fresh and dried fruits and a variety of different crackers, which are readily accessible to them. Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet and medical history. This ensures children's individual dietary and medical needs are met. Parents supply lunch boxes for children who attend all day and take responsibility for ensuring all foods supplied are stored appropriately to prevent from spoiling. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and children confidently ask staff for a drink when they are thirsty. This encourages children to think about their own personal needs.

Children regularly enjoy a range of activities that contribute to their health and develop their physical skills. Children have a wide range of opportunities to practice their hand to eye co-ordination through the wealth of appropriate equipment readily accessible to them at all times. They gain great pleasure from their achievements, which they share with staff and each other.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are readily accessible to children at all times and encourage children to be independent. Children observed being able to concentrate on self-chosen activities for suitable periods of time. Staff check the equipment on a daily basis to ensure it is appropriate for children to use.

There are clear systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. Staff deployment is generally effective and helps to ensure children are well-supervised and safe at all times. There are regular risk assessments both indoors and out that enable staff to identify and address any potential hazards. Fire drills are held that help children and staff become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. However, not all staff have had an opportunity to practice the fire drill, which may limit their efficiency in evacuating the children in an emergency. Staff supervise children closely when playing outdoors and ensure all areas are safe before children go out to play.

Staff have an understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures staff quickly recognise when a child is in danger and can act in the child's best interest.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff plan a good range of play activities to promote children's learning and development. They offer effective one-to-one support to children, which enhances their play and helps develop their confidence and self-esteem. For example, child decided to play a game that the children had played before. The child collected together a blind fold and the broom. Once collected the child looked to a staff member sitting close by and put the blindfold on. The child then moved slowly around the hall using the broom as a guide. Each time the broom touched an object the child stopped took off the blind fold and looked to the staff member for support and guidance. The staff member talked with the child about what was happening and praised how well the child was completing the activity.

Staff make observations of what children do and understand, and use these in their future plans to help them to plan for children's next stage of learning. Children relate well to the staff and confidently approach them for support indicating good trusting relationships are built. For example, child brought an activity that involved unclipping pegs from the side of a bowl to a staff member for support. The staff member supported the child's efforts in unclipping the pegs. As the child placed the successfully removed pegs in to her hands, she counted them until all were in her hand. She praised the child's achievement and extended the child's learning by encouraging the child to count the pegs with her. The child successfully counted to six and was praised for this achievement. The child continued to concentrate on the self-chosen activity and replaced the pegs around the bowl.

Nursery Education

Children are actively involved in their learning. They are confident, work well independently, take initiative and show good levels of concentration. They are developing good relationships and get on well with peers and adults. They understand the need to share and take turns when playing together. Children generally behave well and respond to requests for good behaviour. They understand the rules within the setting and abide by them. This ensures good relationships and harmony. Children are beginning to understand difference in their lives to others around them. They talk happily about their home life and family. Children's spoken language is developing well. They learn to negotiate well and to express their imagined experiences. For example, two children decided to bake an imaginary birthday cake, and were able to collect together a range of equipment that they used to represent other things. One child collected a book from the book corner and pretended to read out a recipe for the cake to the other child who pretended to mix the ingredients together. The children confidently negotiated roles and communicate effectively with one another throughout their imaginary game.

Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They spend time sharing books with friends and adults and can relate well-known stories by looking at the pictures. They are taught to write their name and can link sounds and letters. However, opportunities for children to

experiment with writing in a range of situations is limited. This means children do not gain a range of opportunities to use writing for a purpose. Children count confidently and are given a good range of incidental opportunities to practice. For example, staff member talked with the children about the numbers in the puzzle they were completing and extended their knowledge by asking them to count both the fingers in the puzzle and those of their own hands. Children able to count both confidently and recognise that they were the same. Children enjoy using their senses to explore objects in practical activities. For example, sand and water play and by exploring the textures of different materials man made and natural. They have opportunities to find out how things work and to discuss past and present events in their own lives and those of others.

Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They paint, draw and make collages that represent their experiences. They enjoy singing and have a good repertoire of songs and action rhymes. Children respond with all their senses to many experiences, such as planting, harvesting, tasting and smelling food.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. They know the children well and use strategies to support individuals. Staff use appropriate behaviour management strategies and children respond well. Staff make expectations of behaviour clear and give good reasons for request ensuring children understand why certain behaviour is not acceptable. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the areas of learning. They observe the children during free and focussed activities and use their notes to assess children's achievements. This helps staff to identify and plan for children's next stage of learning. Clear written plans are in place that are linked to the six areas of learning and to the Montessori method of teaching. This helps the staff to identify what children are expected to learn from activities. They provide children with a wide range of experiences, which they can access freely. However, children's work and displays are limited in the hall, with none at child height. This means opportunities to promote learning and sense of belonging are overlooked.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a positive attitude towards diversity. Children become aware of their own and other cultures through a range of resources, planned activities and as they celebrate a variety of festivals. They enjoy respectful relationships with adults and each other and are beginning to develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and respect their differences. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are good systems in place to support children who have special needs. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met.

Staff manage children's behaviour calmly and patiently. This encourages children to respond effectively to any guidance and praise. In response, children behave well, benefit from the consistent praise and encouragement and learn important social skills such as sharing and listening to each other.

Partnership with parents is good. There are both formal and informal systems in place for staff and parents to share information about children's individual progress and development. This

enables parents to contribute to children's learning at home. Parents are invited in termly to work together and share information about children's individual progress and development. This helps to ensure children's individual needs are met.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is well laid out to offer children freedom of choice of activities. Staff show a clear understanding of their role in supporting the children in their play and learning. There are suitable contingency plans in place to cover for absences to ensure children always have appropriate supervision. However, clear procedures are not always implemented to ensure students who are under 17 years are supervised appropriately. A high ratio of staff hold a relevant childcare qualification. This ensures they have sufficient knowledge of current childcare practices to support the care and learning of children.

Leadership and management is good. The provider and management team work closely together to ensure the smooth and effective running of the nursery and to minimise any potential risks identified. Induction training ensures staff understand the policies and procedures so that they can contribute to the safety and welfare of the children. Effective systems are in place for the continual assessment and development of staff. Through this process staff training needs are identified and they are encouraged to undertake training. These aims reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education.

All mandatory records are in place, confidential and well maintained. However, these are not always readily accessible to view. This means the management of the setting may not be effective at all times. Some weaknesses remain in staying safe to ensure children's safety at all times. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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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):

- ensure all staff have the opportunity to practice fire drills and that records are easily accessible at all times
- ensure trainees under 17 years of age are supervised at all times
- organise documentation to ensure that it is easily accessible at all times.

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):

- develop opportunities that encourage children to experiment with writing in a range of situations
- provide more displays at children's eye level.

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 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk