



Cookham Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY294410
Inspection date	15 September 2005
Inspector	Judith, Mary Butler
Setting Address	The Scout Hall, Grange Road, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 9TH
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Virginia Margaret Roden
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?

Cookham Montessori School is one of 2 privately run nursery schools. It opened under this ownership in 2004. The nursery operates from a scout club building within the Cookham area of Maidenhead. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday during school term times only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 13:30, with an afternoon session from 13:30 to 15:00 one day a week.

There are currently 52 children on roll. this includes 3 and 4-year olds in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of times and sessions. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

There are a total of 7 staff members employed to work directly with the children, of whom 5 hold relevant early years qualifications. The nursery follows the Montessori ethos.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities to develop their large motor skills and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They are developing their confidence in their physical skills using a range of outdoor toys and equipment, such as slides, trampolines and bikes. Staff provide children with planned activities that assist them in controlling their bodies, for example, the physical education session in the hall.

Children are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care and are aware of the importance of personal hygiene. They know, for example, that washing their hands after using the toilet stops the spread of germs. Staff act as good role models and follow procedures to care for the health of themselves and children, such as washing their hands after assisting younger children in the cloakroom. Staff protect children from infection by keeping well informed about health matters. Several staff members hold valid first aid certificates, and all of the required documentation is in place to record accidents. However, staff do not always share completed records with parents to ensure they are fully aware of accidents that have happened to their child.

Water is available throughout the session and children help themselves to it whenever they need. Children have healthy options regarding the snack they have and confidently serve themselves at the snack bar available through the session. Staff discuss and record individual children's dietary needs and parental preferences regarding food. They are very aware of the needs of the individual children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are warm and welcoming. Children enter confidently and happily. New children receive a high level of support from staff, which enables them to leave their main carer with ease. Staff identify and minimise risks to children through extensive daily safety checks. This ensures children can play freely in a safe and secure environment.

Staff prepare the rooms prior to the children arriving in order to create a fun, stimulating and child- centred environment. Children have access to a wide range of

good quality age and stage appropriate toys, resources and activities. They confidently select the equipment they wish to use from the low shelving in all areas of the setting. Children develop an awareness of keeping themselves and others safe within the setting, for example, telling others to hold onto the railing when climbing the steps from the outside area.

Staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and the signs and symptoms of child abuse. They attend training and are clear about the routes to follow should they have concerns regarding a child in their care. This ensures children's welfare and safety is a high priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and secure in their environment. They use the available resources enthusiastically, take part in planned activities and chat confidently to other children and adults. All children are able to select the toys and activities they wish to use from the good range available, and which is attractively displayed in low shelving units. Children are comfortable within their environment and play happily with each other. Older children make friends with their peers and all children develop strong relationships with the staff. Children benefit from the caring, stable staff team. Staff show a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the Birth to Three Matters; they use this to plan an interesting and fun range of activities. Children receive a high level of support from staff in their play and work. They enjoy interacting and working with different staff in one to one, small and large group situations, for example, art and craft activities and the Montessori equipment.

Nursery Education.

The quality of nursery teaching and learning is good. Children are enthusiastic and keen to take part in the good range of activities prepared prior to their arrival. Staff provide a wide range of activities to promote children's learning and allow them to progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. Children's independence skills are developing through the good range of resources and activities provided; they confidently select toys and choose the activities they wish to take part in. Children sit and listen at group times. Staff encourage the children to join in conversations and express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, for example, thinking about the weather and recalling activities they have undertaken at home. Children enjoy books so staff spend time with them looking at books. This is done individually, in small or large group situations. Children especially enjoy looking at and talking about the photographs in albums and on the computer screen. Most children are able to recognise their names and older more able children are aware that print carries meaning. Children have many opportunities to recognise everyday words through labels and posters displayed within all areas of the setting. They are confident in their mark making skills and have many different opportunities within the daily routines to practise these, for example, painting, role play and drawing. Children's imaginative skills develop through a good range of toys and activities, for example, dressing up, role play and art and craft activities.

Children play well together, learn to take turns and co-operate with others in their play and work. For example, a child moves from a chair that another child had been sitting in. Children are confident in their use of numbers and are developing their simple calculations skills. Staff provide children with opportunities to practise skills, such as counting children at register time and number songs. Children show confidence in their use of mathematical language such as bigger, smaller, more and less than. Children learn about the world around them through different resources and themes. They are becoming aware of the cultures and traditions of other people. Children enjoy a good range of physical activities to develop their large and small muscle skills. These activities include using slides, trampolines, sit and ride toys and a good range of tools in their play.

Staff discuss the individual children with parents and have a good knowledge of their preferences, family backgrounds and needs. Planning is in place and covers all areas of learning. Staff undertake daily observations and use these to update their developmental records and identify individual children's next steps in learning. Staff record older children's progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. There is no system of recording this information for the younger children in receipt of funding for nursery education. Staff use good consolidation techniques such as questioning and revisiting topics and activities to reinforce children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals. Staff know the children very well and enjoy good relationships with them. Children have access to a good range of toys, resources and different themes to reflect the society we live in. This enables them to develop a positive attitude towards other people and the wider community. Children behave well. They learn to understand right from wrong through consistent boundaries and through the praise and encouragement they receive from staff throughout the day. There are effective arrangements for the care and support of children with special educational needs although none currently attend. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff and parents work well together to ensure children make the transition from home to nursery smoothly. They verbally communicate at the end of each session to ensure they meet the needs of the individual children. However, there is no entry profile in place to formally record the information parents share with staff when their child starts attending the nursery. Parents receive good information about the setting, its policies, procedures and the daily routines through the prospectus, notice board and regular newsletters.

The partnership between parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education and staff is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage through regular newsletters, notice boards and the daily verbal communication that takes place. Staff invite parents to attend meetings each term to discuss their child's progress and identify their next steps in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff effectively organise the available space within the hall and outside areas to maximise play opportunities for children. Children play confidently; they freely access a good range of toys and resources within their daily routines. Staff have a good knowledge of their individual roles and responsibilities within the setting, with the emphasis being on spending time with the children. The management and staff regularly review the extensive policies and procedures in place. All staff have undertaken the vetting procedures and this ensures children's safety and welfare within the setting. Staff have a sound knowledge of the individual children through discussion with parents, Montessori developmental records and the Foundation Stage profiles.

Leadership and management are good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage, Birth to Three Matters and National Standards for full day care. They confidently apply this in practise to fully support children's learning and development. Staff are encouraged to attend training to update and develop their skills through the induction and appraisal systems in place. Staff attend regular staff meetings. They use these meetings to discuss the day-to-day running of the setting, proposed activities, individual children and staff training needs. Staff use evaluation to plan future activities and themes. They identify children's next steps in learning and their achievements. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 accidents are recorded and formally shared with parents
- improve the partnership with parents by formally recording the information parents share with staff when the child starts the setting

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 a system of recording younger children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

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: www.ofsted.gov.uk