



Windsor Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	108435
Inspection date	21 November 2005
Inspector	Jean Williams
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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 outstanding.

At the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Windsor Montessori School, Home Park, has been established since 1980. It operates from a single storey building situated in Home Park, Windsor. The accommodation comprises three rooms used by the children, as well as toilet facilities and a kitchen. The setting is situated close to Windsor town centre and is

within easy reach of transport links.

There are currently 25 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 13 funded 3-year-olds and 4 funded 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The school supports children who have special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:30, 13:30 until 15:30 and full day care from 09:30 to 15:30.

There are four staff work with the children who all have relevant child care qualifications.

The setting receives support from the Local Authority. The setting is registered with Montessori Education United Kingdom (U.K.) and is currently in the process of becoming accredited to The Montessori Education U.K. quality assurance programme. In the past the school took part in the Effective Early Learning Programme conducted by the University of Worcester.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from playing in a healthy environment due to the staff's skills in promoting positive hygiene practices, such as, reminding children to wash their hands before eating food and to use tissues to make sure their noses are clean. Children also have their own individual towels which reduces the spread of cross infection.

Staff have relevant first aid training which means that they have the knowledge to deal with any accidents that may happen. Procedures are in place to ensure accidents and the administration of medication are recorded as required.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating through the discussions shared with staff members about the merits of eating fruit at snack time, as opposed to eating biscuits and the importance of regular drinks. Children are encouraged to try different tastes and enjoyed the variety of fruit on offer at snack time which included pomegranate seeds, kiwi fruit and tangerines.

Staff talk with the children about the importance of being properly dressed for the seasons. An interesting discussion took place about the need to wear hats and gloves during the cold weather, one child reminded the group of how she enjoyed playing in the paddling pool in the summer wearing a swim suit.

Children are becoming aware of changes that happen to their bodies during exercise. When returning from a walk in the park they compared the warmth of their hands after wearing gloves to the coldness of their faces which had been exposed to the air.

Children enjoy a variety of physical activities such as music and movement, ballet classes and swimming lessons at the local Leisure Centre, as well as opportunities to use the park to run and play; all of these stimulate and encourage their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the use of three spacious rooms, one is used for the younger children, one for art and creative activities and the main room where children carry out activities of their choice. The premises are well maintained, clean and comfortable for the children. The rooms are attractively presented and prepared for the children on their arrival which helps them to be motivated in their activities and learning. Children negotiate the space confidently and are reminded by the staff to walk around the edges of the room so that children working on the mats on the floor are not disturbed.

The setting has a wide range of Montessori equipment that is stored on low-level shelving giving children easy access. They are able to self-select their chosen activity. Materials and resources are clean, safe and well maintained which means that children enjoy using safe, good quality equipment.

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of their role with regard to child protection issues and how to implement local procedures. There are effective systems in place for the collection of children. Fire drills are carried out regularly, but are not fully recorded. Staff members ensure that risk assessments are completed to make sure the rooms and most of the equipment that the children use are safe. The electrical equipment such as the tape recorder used by the children, the television and the domestic appliances such as the kettle, used by the staff, do not carry current notification that they have been tested to prove their safety. Staff have good procedures in place to ensure children's safety when on walks in the park or on outings. Systems are also in place for the safe collection of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children relish their time in a vibrant setting where their relationships with staff are excellent. Children are well motivated by the wide range of Montessori equipment available to them and very confidently initiate their own learning. They experience the ability to self-select their choice of activity in an extremely well organised setting.

The nursery has plenty of space for children to work undisturbed and they are able to move around the setting freely.

Children are able to use the garden and outdoor spaces to enjoy the natural environment and develop their physical skills by walking and using the nursery equipment, such as, the climbing frame and tunnels, to perfect their climbing and

balancing skills.

Children take initiative and organise their own learning, they play independently, in small groups as well as enjoying opportunities to work more directly with staff; for example, during a craft activity or when participating in a group music and movement session.

Children confidently ask questions and are interested in how and why things work. They ask visitors what they are doing in the group and why they are there. One child was quite keen to see the inspector's computer and for her to see the trains which he informed her "were taking people to London." Staff value what children have to say and encourage them to participate in group discussions by listening and contributing when they feel able.

Children's individual progress is observed, and information gained is used to influence the next stages of their learning. Children with special educational needs are extremely well supported by staff who work together with parents and relevant professionals to ensure children make good progress towards their individual targets.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning are outstanding. Staff build on the children's positive attitudes to learning and enthusiasm to participate in the activities of their choice. Staff are very skilled at observing the children whilst they are engaged in their chosen activity and know when to offer guidance and direction. Children enjoy playing individually and in small groups. When working in small groups they plan together and negotiate how they are going to accomplish their chosen tasks. Most children achieve the early learning goals and beyond by the end of the Foundation Stage. The staff create a climate where curiosity is encouraged and where children enjoy a wide range of experiences and responsibility for their own learning.

Children show high levels of concentration and are able to sit attentively during large group discussions. They become very involved in their activities and engage to a high level, playing an active role in their learning as they make their own choices about what they play with. It is amazing to observe how quickly they decide what they wish to play with and settle down to complete their chosen task. Children develop very good relationships with staff and their peers. They learn to be polite to everyone in the nursery, share, take turns and negotiate.

As is common in the Montessori ethos, all children are responsible for tidying away and cleaning any mess or spills they make. Children demonstrate a high level of independence in personal care and self-help skills and are confident to seek help when necessary.

Children actively contribute to group discussions. They enjoy looking at books independently and in small groups with their friends, as well as listening to stories in a group. Children are familiar with some stories and enjoy predicting what comes next. There is much evidence of emergent writing when children use the object boxes and choose an item and make the word such as taking a pig out of the object box and writing the word with the letters and then copying the word they have made.

They are provided with a wide range of writing materials such as pencils, crayons and felt tip pens.

Excellent use is made of every day situations and Montessori equipment to explore and reinforce number and counting, such as the sand box, where children learn the shape of numbers and then continue with the cards and counters. From there they progress with the decimal system. Staff make good use of registration time to encourage children to count the number of children present at registration and compare numbers through using the calendar and discussing the day and date. Children talk about the number that comes before and after today's date and select the correct numeral from a range of numbers. Children are able to recognise numbers 1 to 10 and there are good opportunities for calculation through practical activities, such as, cooking and model making. Through activities such as using the farm animals, children estimate and compare 'how many?'. They use appropriate mathematical language such as more than or less than to compare and share.

Children learn about the natural world and living things through planned and spontaneous activities. They eagerly note similarities and differences; for example, the difference between the leaves they had collected during their walk in the park. Staff use correct language in discussions with the children and give good explanations. While children enjoyed observing a squirrel sitting in the tree, eating a nut or seed, discussion took place with a staff member about what the squirrel ate and comparisons were made with the food the children were eating. Children have regular access to the computer and use equipment to listen to stories and music.

Children are able to express their creativity through paint, collage and a wide variety of craft activities. One child was totally immersed in her experimentation with colour whilst in the painting area. She observed the changes happening as she applied the different colours of paint and used different methods of application; first she dripped the paint to make a pattern, then she folded it over to make a butterfly print, then she used the roller to see what would happen, all of this was carried out at the child's own pace.

Children's art work is attractively mounted and displayed throughout the setting giving them motivation to work and ownership of the setting which builds their confidence and self-esteem.

Children's creative development is also encouraged through music and movement, the use of musical instruments and from ballet classes that are held by a visiting teacher.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show high levels of confidence and self-esteem and value themselves and one another. They have a clear understanding of their own needs and respect for the needs of others. Children are caring towards one another and recognise that they each have different needs, in particular the way they respond to children with special

educational needs. They become aware of their own and others' needs through discussions with staff and themed activities about themselves and the wider society. For example, children learn about a variety of cultures and explore different traditions such as Diwali. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Children's behaviour is very good; they know what is expected of them and are clear about what is right and wrong. They recognise that some children do not have the same understanding as themselves, in particular in relation to knowing how to behave, and are sensitive to their needs. Children understand responsible behaviour and confidently take on roles and responsibilities within the group, such as checking the weather and reminding one another how to set up and put the equipment they have been using away.

Children benefit from friendly relationships between staff and parents. Parents are invited to play an active role in the nursery; for example, through attending social activities and observing their children within the group. Staff value parental interest in the nursery and operate an open door policy which means parents are able to visit at any time during the session. The nursery also runs a parent and toddler group so that parents and children can become familiar with the group prior to the children starting at the nursery.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is outstanding. Parents receive useful information about the nursery through the prospectus. They are kept informed about activities their child is involved in through regular newsletters, and informal discussions. Children benefit as their achievements in the sessions are shared between staff and parents. Parents are welcome to speak with staff to discuss their child's progress at any time. They are invited to attend meetings throughout the year where more formal discussions take place about their children's progress and receive information about their next steps for development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging because the nursery is well organised and staff work with parents to ensure they have a good knowledge of children's individual home and family circumstances.

The staff's knowledge about children's individual family and home circumstances, helps to secure positive relationships within the nursery, it enhances children's confidence and self-esteem which impacts on the relationships they build with their peers. Most required documentation is in place, registers are kept, but there are no records of children who arrive late to the group, or leave early.

Leadership and management is outstanding.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging within the nursery. Staff are supported by the manager through regular meetings and feedback, both formal and informal. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the nursery.

Staff deployment is good, ensuring all children are secure and happily engaged in activities. Staff work very well as a team with children's learning promoted through excellent leadership and management of nursery education. As a result, the needs of the range of children who attend the setting are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to write a policy for procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or a volunteer.

This has now been achieved and means that children's protection has been increased and staff are aware of the procedures to follow should an allegation be made against them.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

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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 that all fire drills are properly recorded
- ensure all portable equipment is safe
- ensure that a visitors book is kept documenting times of arrival and departure

and make sure that children's arrival and departure times are recorded

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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