

Cookham Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY294410
Inspection date 04/11/2009
Inspector Sheena Bankier

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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Cookham Montessori School has been registered since 2004 under private ownership and is one of three settings owned. It operates from the Scout Hall in Cookham, near Maidenhead and has use of all the facilities, including the outdoor area. The nursery has the sole use of the premises during its hours of operation. The nursery school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children can attend from two years of age. The nursery school is registered for a maximum of 36 children at any one time. There are currently 43 children on roll in the early years age group.

The nursery operates Monday to Friday during term time only from 8.30am to 3.00pm. A variety of sessions are offered including a breakfast and early bird club, morning and afternoon sessions, and a lunch club. Children attend from the local and wider surrounding area. Children attend for a variety of times and sessions. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are a total of 11 staff members employed to work directly with the children. Nine members of staff hold relevant early years qualifications. The manager and deputy manager have Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). The nursery follows the Montessori ethos.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff are enthusiastic, keen and demonstrate significant dedication to their roles. As a result, staff promote children's learning and welfare outcomes to a very high standard. Children thrive in the rich, child-centred environment where staff actively respect and incorporate their ideas. The nursery makes excellent use of in-house and outside systems to continually monitor and evaluate its service and recognises the importance of parental input. Cohesive partnerships with parents, carers, other settings, and outside agencies ensure high levels of continuity and consistency for individual children. Thorough risk assessments and policies safeguard children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reviewing the documented procedures in regards to allegations being made.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff very confidently safeguards children. They have significant understanding of the child protection policy and procedure. The induction procedure covers safeguarding and all staff attend further training as part of their role at the nursery. As a result, staff are exceptionally aware of how to safeguard children's welfare. Staff demonstrate excellent understanding of protecting themselves from allegations. The nursery management has a very secure understanding of the steps it would take in the event of allegations, although the nursery policy does not fully document these. Systems in place enable staff to take an active role in protecting children from harm, such as taking on lead roles in health and safety and risk assessment. Staff undertake thorough daily checks both in and out of doors. Regular practises of the emergency evacuation procedure take place. This enables children and staff to be confident in the procedure.

The nursery offers a fully inclusive atmosphere and environment for children. Staff identify and support all children's needs extremely well. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and one to one support staff are highly committed to supporting and extending children's progress and development, for example, they attend appointments with parents and children and seek out on-going training. Excellent partnerships are in place with other parties involved in children's care and educational needs. As a result, staff and other professionals share information to meet children's needs and children benefit from consistent approaches. The nursery celebrates festival and religious dates that reflect those celebrated by the families and children who use its service. This values the diversity of the children and families. The nursery effectively uses the home languages of the children, such as singing songs, and the nursery gains key words from parents to use with the children. This supports all children's awareness of language. Where staff are able to speak the same language, they talk to children in their home language alongside English. This supports children's overall learning and developing use of language and raises children's self-esteem.

The nursery has purposeful and effective communication and partnerships with parents. Staff provide an extremely warm and welcoming atmosphere. Staff greet parents and children individually on arrival and are available to exchange information with. Regular events involve parents and carers in activities at the nursery, such as open evenings and coffee mornings. These provide excellent information to parents and carers, for example, about children's learning and the curriculum in use at the nursery. Parents receive effective information about activities to support and extend children's learning at home. The nursery has a dedicated website and they email weekly newsletters and additional information, such as policies under review out to parents. As a result, parents are extremely well informed and the nursery actively seeks parents' involvement and views.

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

Children quickly settle on arrival and the excellent settling in procedures support new children very well. Staff build children's confidence in being left with them through developing positive rapport with parents. Parents are able to stay to support children to begin with and time spent at the nursery without parents present increases to suit the individual child. The entry profile parents complete, provides staff with extensive information about children's needs, for example, behaviour, development, interests, likes and fears. This enables staff to understand the children's needs well and respond appropriately. Children have excellent relationships with staff. As a result, children feel safe and secure at the nursery.

Children initiate their own learning, play and ideas. Accessible resources enable children to make their own choices and decisions. Children develop excellent independent skills. Staff sensitively acknowledge and fully take into account children's ideas during group activities, effectively using these to extend children's learning and development. Children develop a sense of responsibility as they help take care of their peers and their environment, such as helping friends to put on aprons for painting and tidying up the resources after they have finished using them. Children develop friendships and the older and more able children can negotiate without adult help. Staff gently encourage children's understanding of right from wrong through use of good questions to support children in recognising their behaviour. Children develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence as staff frequently and warmly praise and encourage them. Children's behaviour is overall very good. Helpers and self-registration systems increase children's sense of belonging at the setting.

The garden provides resources to support and extend children's development in all the areas of learning, for example, role play with hard hats, florescent jackets, construction bricks and books about building. This enables children to reflect real and imagined experiences in their play. Children thoroughly enjoy being outdoors and the nursery enables children to freely access the area during core session times. Staff anticipate children's needs very well and ensure tissues are accessible and healthy drink and snack options are available. There is excellent accessibility to resources outside as children have free access to the storage units. These are very well organised so that children can safely see and access different and further resources to use in the garden. The nursery regularly organises outings for children. These enable children to benefit from different experiences, such as going on a train to a nearby town and using the large climbing equipment in the park. The nursery documents these experiences very well, displaying children's own work of the outing and making a photo record book for children to look at in the nursery and to also take home and share with their families.

The nursery has a home literacy scheme in place to support children's communication, language and literacy skills. This includes taking home games, nursery made books about individual letter sounds and simple reading books. The nursery works in conjunction with speech therapists where needed to support individual children's development. Parents, carers and staff use record books to

exchange information about children's progress in this area. This helps to identify children's needs for support or for further challenge. Some of the more able and older children progress very well and read simple sentences. Children use their emergent writing in the setting, such as labelling their pictures. At the role play area children have made signs for the ice cream stall using their emergent writing and using their phonic knowledge. This enables children to write for a purpose. Children made price signs demonstrating their very good understanding of numbers up to 10 and beyond. During role play, staff extend children's understanding of number, such as adding up. Real life experiences, such as making a graph of ice cream flavours children have tried and liked as part of the activity, extend children's mathematical skills.

Staff engage children very well in activities, discussions and play experiences. Staff use very good open questions with children. This enables children to think for themselves and to problem solve. Staff know children exceptionally well as individuals and demonstrate a considerable knowledge of the children's development and progress. This enables staff to extend children's learning and development at an appropriate level. The active key person and co-key person approach ensures planning for children's progress focuses on the individual child and is flexible to accommodate children's changing needs. On-going observations and assessments take place. Staff monitor and track children's progress very closely and as a result, identify children's learning needs. The nursery encourages parents and carers to contribute to children's records of progress both informally and formally. This benefits the nursery as they gain a full picture of children's learning and development.

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

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met