



Lilliput Montessori Day Nursery (Coalville)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	223230
Inspection date	21 March 2006
Inspector	Christine Holmes
Setting Address	Railway House, Hotel Street, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 3EQ
Telephone number	01530 815888
E-mail	
Registered person	Lilliput Day Nurseries Ltd
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lilliput Montessori Day Nursery is one of 4 nurseries run by Lilliput Day Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 1999 and operates from a converted hotel near the centre of Coalville in the district of North West Leicestershire. A maximum of 66 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07:30 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 75 children on roll. Of these 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and have arrangements in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 11 childcare staff based at the nursery. Of these 10 hold recognised early years qualifications including Montessori training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in clean and welcoming surroundings. They are protected from the risk of infection as staff have clear procedures in place and in general carry out effective hygiene practice. High emphasis is placed on children learning good personal hygiene. Children willingly join in with the cleaning routine after meals. Older children brush their teeth after meals and they know why they wash their hands before eating. Even the very young children in the nursery are encouraged to know when and how they need to use a tissue to wipe their nose. This helps to minimise cross infection and protects children's good health.

Children's medical needs are met well. There are clear written policies that staff adhere to. All necessary written consent is in place to ensure children's needs are met effectively in emergency medical situations. Early detection of some childhood minor ailments is facilitated through information displayed for parents and carers in the nursery and on the nursery website. As a result children's good health is supported and protected.

A growing emphasis is placed on developing a healthy diet for children. Meals are nutritious, using mostly fresh produce and including fresh fruit and vegetables. Children develop healthy appetites, they learn that milk will help them grow and receive praise for trying new types of fruit. This helps children to develop healthy eating habits. However, children are not provided with fresh drinking water throughout the day and this is a compromise to their good health.

Children have good opportunities for rest and sleep. The designated sleeping areas ensure children can sleep undisturbed. All children with the exception of children in the baby room have daily opportunities to go outdoors to benefit from fresh air and exercise.

Children in receipt of nursery education funding enjoy physical activities which contribute to them developing positive attitudes to exercise. Daily opportunities to use equipment such as small bikes and pedal cars help children to gain an awareness of space and develop co-ordination as they negotiate up and down the paths and around each other. Younger, less able children are given additional support which develops their confidence and their skills of jumping and climbing. Children develop finer control of their body through Montessori practical life skills and star box activities. However, with a lack of planning, the children are not always benefiting

from having their play extended and meet new challenges. The record of the children's current achievements is not fully used to move their development forward in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a mostly safe and secure environment. The buildings entrance is kept very secure and children are well supervised, in sight of staff at all times. However, the identified hazards from low level open windows around the nursery have not yet been fully minimised. The good condition and efficient use of safety equipment such as stair gates, door shields and radiator covers reduces potential hazards to children. However, the risk assessment of the building and outdoor play area is not comprehensive. It does not identify all hazards. As a result children's risk of accidental injury is not fully minimised.

Children's awareness of safety is promoted through their every day activities. Older children know to walk and hold the rail as they climb the stairs up to their play room. Staff respond well to emergency evacuations and children learn to follow the calm instructions of staff. Children are encouraged to tidy up their toys to prevent them falling and hurting themselves. This helps children to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Children benefit from the meaningful organisation of resources linked to the Montessori teaching method. Resources are safe, well made and of good quality, many in natural materials. Equipment is regularly checked and children willingly join in the cleaning routine.

Children's welfare is safeguarded. Staff have attended child protection training and this has ensured they have the necessary awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They are confident to report concerns and are able to put necessary procedures into practice. However, the written policy does not contain all the necessary information and is not readily available to all parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

A consistent routine is followed that helps children to feel confident and develop a sense of belonging. Throughout the day, children are often praised, building on their self-esteem and helping them become confident. Children have positive relationships with staff and receive comfort and attention when they need support. However, children do not benefit from having a key worker who is mainly responsible for their care and responsible for liaising with parents to identify and meet individual needs. As a consequence consistency of care for the very youngest children in the nursery and for new children settling into the nursery is not always fully established.

Children's language and communication skills are promoted by staff through activities

such as singing, story telling, conversation, questions and individual attention. Consequently children learn to speak clearly and express their needs.

Children aged two to three in the nursery are settled and play happily together using resources such as musical instruments. Children explore sounds they can make as they blow the mouth organs, bang the drums and ring the bells. In the connecting creative room children enjoy exploration with paint, sticking, model making, sand and water. This helps children represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Children choose freely from a range of resources that are age appropriate and hold the children's interest for suitable periods of time. This promotes independence and allows children to follow their own interests.

Children up to two years are developing a sense of self-assurance. They show good levels of independence and confidence as they walk unaided through the nursery to the bathroom area. They enjoy exploring a wide range of activities that are interesting and stimulating to their senses. They explore materials such as sand, paint and shredded paper. They respond with great excitement to activities such as "the ball shooter" and play hide and seek and peek a boo in the caterpillar tunnel. These type of activities help children to become competent learners.

Although there are records of children's achievements, these are not used to fully inform the planning of activities. They are not yet used to identify children's individual learning needs. As a consequence, at times, children do not benefit from meeting new challenges in order to move their development forward. This reflects weaknesses in staff's knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff understand how children learn and how they can help progress steps in their development. They support all children and have high expectations, explain clearly and encourage children to think. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Montessori Method and sufficient knowledge of how this links with the Foundation Stage. However, there are areas in which children are making less progress. Aspects in some learning areas are not regularly planned for, observed or monitored. This is particularly so in regard to children's physical skills, creativity and design, and simple calculations. This reflects weaknesses in staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage guidance.

Children are happy to participate in a wide range of activities which promote their all round learning. They concentrate and persevere well when completing complex jigsaws and they are eager to join in circle time conversation about the days of the week and the weather. Children develop good independence in their personal care. They are able to put on their own socks and slippers, their own aprons, help to clear away after snack and manage their own toilet needs. They are confident to make choices in their play and in general are able to choose the direction of their play. In most instances behaviour is managed effectively. This results in a calm and caring environment where children taking turns, share and show concern for others. However, staff have too high expectations of children's behaviour during meal times. This at times results in staff using an inappropriate volume and tone of voice. On these occasions children's self-confidence and self-esteem is undermined.

There is an effective approach to developing children's skills and understanding in early literacy. Good value is attached to talk. Children respond well to staff who encourage them to talk about their activities to extend their language so that they can share their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Children are developing a good understanding that print carries meaning. Children recognise their names and other children's names and show a good interest in the print around them. They learn letter sounds and develop an awareness of sounds and rhymes in words. They are encouraged to develop a keen interest in books. They listen to stories well, joining in the part they know. Children are able to develop their confidence as writers in the writing area, where they are provided with a good range of resources. Taken together, these provide children with a firm foundation for learning to read and write.

Many children have a good knowledge of 2D shapes and staff plan activities to introduce 3D shapes for children to progress to. Children can count to 21 and some children know 22 follows 21. Staff create some good opportunities to extend children's knowledge of number such as looking at the numerals in the date, using fingers to represent the number of children who can play in each area and displaying number labels. However, children confident in using numbers are not challenged enough to solve problems such as how many plates and chairs they need for snack. They are not being encouraged enough to add and subtract as part of practical activities and when using Montessori equipment. Consequently, more able children are not fully challenged and their knowledge is not fully extended.

Children learn about the past and present as they talk about the days of the week and delight as they guess correctly. They are developing the skills of focused observation. They look at the change that takes place growing grass seeds in containers in their playroom and in their play area outdoors. However, children are not fully challenged to record their observations and look at why the seeds did not grow as well outdoors. Children learn to build and construct. However, they are not free to experiment freely with a wide range of materials.

Children's imagination flourishes as they make camp and come across the creatures hiding in the role play camp site area. They show great enjoyment joining in songs and rhymes and have some access to musical instruments. However, children have very limited opportunities to enhance their own creativity. Although there is a well resourced creative room, children do not have daily access to this. There are too few opportunities for children to be able to paint and make constructions for their own purpose and to reflect their own ideas. Therefore the potential for children's progress in this area is not maximised.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. All children are greeted warmly by staff and any children feeling insecure are given appropriate support. Staff have a good awareness of how to include children with special needs. Children develop good independence in their personal care, they enjoy being given responsibilities such as clearing their plates after mealtimes and cleaning the tables.

This contribution helps develop children's self-esteem and helps to boost their confidence.

In general children enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other. Throughout the day children are often praised, building on their self-esteem and helping them become confident. In most instances behaviour is managed effectively. This results in a calm and caring environment where children taking turns, share and show concern for others.

Children celebrate festivals which helps to develops their knowledge of the wider world. There is a range of resources which are used to positively represent the wider community, although these are not yet developed enough to provide children with continual visual images in order to fully promote their awareness of diversity.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are provided with information which explains the care and education that is provided for their children. They receive information about the 'Montessori' methods of teaching and how it is promoted. However, parents do not receive enough information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Consequently they are not fully able to support their children's development in all the six areas of learning. Parents are invited to parents evening where they receive information about the progress their children are making and information is exchanged daily. Parents commented that they were generally happy with the amount of information they receive and they are pleased with the progress their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall the range of children's needs are met. The setting provides a stimulating and interesting environment conducive to care, teaching and learning. In general the organisation of staff and the use of the premises contribute to meeting children's needs. Records which are required for the efficient safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare care and learning of children are maintained. There are effective recruitment procedures which ensure staff are appropriately vetted and there is a suitable level of qualified staff who work with the children. Induction training and appropriate policies and procedures work generally well in practice. However, some procedures need updating and some procedures are not transferring well into practice. In general, there is commitment to continual improvement and ongoing staff development. Staff have recently attended training relating to child protection, but they have not yet accessed "Birth to three matters" training.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. Staff are clear about their roles and work together as a team. There is commitment to making improvements, staff have recently attended some training and further training is planned. There is an action plan for improvements which identifies how these will be monitored. However, sound curriculum evaluation is not yet in place to ensure any weaknesses are identified and addressed. Moreover the planning and monitoring of children's learning does not ensure they are progressing in all aspects of each

learning area.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to conduct a risk assessment of the premises, to include the outside play area and the windows in the out of school care room, identifying action(s) to be taken to minimize identified risks. The risk assessment conducted by the nursery remains an area requiring further improvement as it is not comprehensive enough to ensure children's safety and to minimise the risk of accidental injury.

The nursery was also asked to ensure that the child protection procedure for the nursery includes procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and complies with local Area Child Protection Committee Procedures. Improvement in this area has ensured staff would act accordingly. However, the written statement still requires improvement.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received a complaint which raised concerns in respect of National Standards 13 (Child Protection) and 14 (Documentation). A visit to the provision was conducted to discuss the concerns. As a result of the investigation, the provider was asked to demonstrate how improvements would be made to ensure the local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) would be fully complied with and how the setting would ensure that all adults working or looking after children in the provision would be able to put the procedures into practice. The setting was also asked to demonstrate how they would notify Ofsted of any significant event.

A response was received from the provision detailing what action had been taken. This information was reviewed by a senior childcare inspector. Following this action the provision continues to meet the National Standards for under 8s day care.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve children's opportunities to access fresh drinking water and ensure children in the baby room benefit from going outdoors
- complete a comprehensive risk assessment of the building and outdoor play area, identify all hazards and minimise all risks
- improve the quality of children's individual care through the implementation of a key worker system and "Birth to three matters"
- ensure the written behaviour management policy is fully understood and implemented consistently by all staff

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):

- improve opportunities for children to be creative in art and design and be able to work for their own purpose using a range of different materials
- improve the current planning, observation and assessment systems by following the guidance for the Foundation Stage in order to implement individual learning programmes for children
- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and further develop curriculum evaluation to ensure any weaknesses are identified and addressed.

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