



Coolham Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY313759
Inspection date	03 March 2006
Inspector	Maureen Croxford
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Registered person	Susan Anne Tully
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?

Coolham Montessori Nursery School re-registered in 2005. It operates from the local village hall. The nursery serves the local area and the surrounding villages.

There are currently 31 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 13 funded 3 year olds and 5 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has procedures in place to support of children with special needs and for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 8.45am until 12.00 and 12.00 to 14.45 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

There are 7 staff working with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 or 3. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy and staff incorporate this into the curriculum for all children. The setting receives support from a mentor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well-promoted as staff encourage them to wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals and snacks. Staff follow the provision's health and hygiene routines, for example, they wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies.

Children enjoy healthy snacks provided by the setting, including fresh fruit, brown bread and butter, milk and water. They are also learning about healthy eating through well-planned topics. Timetables show snack times as regular and purposeful periods and time planned for children to enjoy their food and drinks as social occasions.

Staff create opportunities for children to enjoy a wide range of physical equipment with confidence and ease. Children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and benefit from the very well-planned play in the hall and fully enclosed playground. All children are developing a good understanding of spatial awareness, both inside and outside, as they move around the setting with confidence. Staff have a good understanding of how young children develop, which contributes to their good health and physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome as staff greet them and their parents at the entrance to the provision. The premises have good safety features, such as a locked front door and a secure, fully enclosed play area. This ensures that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. Good use is made of all areas of the premises. Staff ensure that children feel valued as their artwork is displayed around the provision wherever possible. Children proudly show their artwork and discuss their achievements.

The premises provide adequate space to offer a range of activities, which promote the children's development. The appropriate deployment of staff and the well laid out room ensure that children are safe at all times. The playground area offers children a very safe area for outdoor play. The nursery staff also take children on walks in the adjacent field.

Children are able to access their own resources and toys with ease and in safety, as most are stored in low-level units. All equipment is checked and cleaned regularly and staff ensure it conforms to safety standards to protect the children. Hazards to children are reduced as staff carry out regular risk assessments of the premises to minimise identified risks.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff discuss the provisions rules with them. They are discovering that the provision has boundaries and limits, for example, they understand that they should not run inside the premises. Clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation of the building are understood by staff, who carry out regular fire drills.

Children are protected because staff understand their role and responsibilities in child protection. Appropriate procedures, which staff put into practice when necessary, are readily available to parents. The provider is the designated person and staff understand the importance of confidentiality.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a stimulating range of resources and experiences provided by staff that plan for both the younger children and the curriculum for the educationally funded children. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy and staff incorporate this into the curriculum for all children. Staff have recently introduced a new system for planning and are starting to use the Birth to three matters framework, enhancing the quality of experiences offered to most children. Children benefit from staff working closely with parents and outside agencies, including a mentor from the local authority.

Parents complete an 'All about Me' booklet to help staff meet the needs of the children they care for. Children benefit from consistent routines between home and nursery, which helps to secure children's sense of belonging and emotional well-being.

Staff build warm relationships with children and offer them praise and encouragement when appropriate. They interact well with the children, including conversation, good eye contact, reassurance and cuddles. All children are provided with many opportunities to use their senses to explore a wide range of textures and media, such as compost, sand, water and dough.

Nursery Education

Parents are given very well written information about the Foundation Stage of learning in the prospectus. The learning goals are clearly laid out and supported by good display material around the provision.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals and engage in a wide range of experiences and activities covering all areas of development. The staff are well qualified and

experienced and use their sound knowledge of the foundation stage to plan a stimulating curriculum. As a result, children are well motivated and enjoy many exciting experiences to aid their learning.

Staff monitor children's progress and planning takes into account what most children can do and how they will be sufficiently challenged. Staff extend the children naturally during activities. However, planning does not show how activities are to be extended for more able children.

Children play well together and develop very good relationships with staff and their peers. They co-operate during play, taking turns and negotiating which equipment they wish to use. They are encouraged by staff to be polite and behave very well. Children are interested in their activities and show good levels of perseverance and concentration, for example, when completing puzzles. Most activities and resources are easily accessible to children, which enables them to make choices about their play and develop their independence.

Children practice early reading and writing skills, for example, through the provision of writing materials in role-play situations and self-registration. They have good access to an extensive range of books and listen avidly to stories. Staff extend their vocabulary, which results in children exploring the meaning and sound of words. Staff encourage children to mark-make such as labelling their work. Older children understand that print carries meaning and is read from left to right.

Most children count confidently, solve problems and compare during daily routines and everyday activities, including using Montessori equipment. They use appropriate language to describe and compare size and quantity. Staff encourage children to count in many of their activities. Children show an interest in numbers and counting and enjoy singing simple number rhymes and songs.

Children investigate and find out about living things through the interest table and the wild bird feeding area. Staff take children for walks to explore the local environment and identify features in the place in which they live and the natural world. Planning shows opportunities, such as visits from the local veterinary surgeon and dentist, for children to develop their understanding of the local community and people who help us. Children are developing their skills as they use the computer and other simple electronic toys.

Children move confidently and safely as they travel under, over and around climbing equipment. Most children are able to adjust speed and change direction to avoid obstacles. They show increasing control when using equipment for climbing, balancing and peddling. Children's manipulative skills are well developed and they successfully use a wide range of tools and materials in the many creative activities offered.

Many opportunities are offered for children to use their imagination in role-play, art and music. They enjoy singing, and playing and listening to musical instruments, including music played by a member of staff and visiting parents. Children receive many opportunities to explore texture, colour and shape.

Children make good progress in all areas of learning. This is recorded in photographs, children's work and written observations, which link well into the stepping-stones.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children in the nursery are valued and respected as individuals by staff. They use books, role-play and dolls which reflect diversity of different cultures to help children appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences. Staff are proactive in supporting children with individual needs and ensure that all children are included in the activities, which develops their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Children benefit as staff are consistent in applying the provisions behaviour management procedures, which are shared with parents. Children recognise the difference between right and wrong. Staff help children to understand why some behaviour is not appropriate and talk to them about how it makes each other feel. As a result, children know what is expected of them and show high levels of confidence and self-esteem. This positive approach fosters children spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good information about the provision and children's activities, through clear, well-written and photographic information displayed around the provision. Staff and parents also share information informally on a daily basis as staff make time to talk to parents. However, the provider offers limited information to parents with regard to healthy eating and allergies.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning, for example, the staff provide ideas for extending activities at home and a book lending scheme. Parents and staff regularly discuss the progress of the children who receive nursery education at parent's evenings and informal meetings, using the children's assessment records.

Systems are in place to ensure that all parents' comments and concerns are noted and investigated. The provider keeps comprehensive records, which include the findings of their investigations and actions that have been taken.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Most staff hold appropriate childcare and teaching qualifications and all have experience of caring for children. Staff deployment and knowledge of child development is good and staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of them on a daily basis, helping to promote positive outcomes for children.

The on-going training, for example, first aid, child protection and NVQ training, contribute to the children's health, safety and well-being. Children benefit and make good progress in their learning due to the good knowledge of the staff who extend

activities naturally. Children are well occupied and engaged with many worthwhile play opportunities. Staff organise the daily routines and layout of the room appropriately. As a result, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

All legally required documentation is in place and shared with parents, where appropriate, including records, register, accident and medication records. The provider has a sound understanding of the requirements of the registration and inspection process. Policies and procedures are readily available to staff and parents.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are good. The provider has ensured that all those working with children in receipt of funding for nursery education have a good knowledge of the curriculum guidance. The quality of teaching is monitored to ensure consistency in all areas and systems such as staff appraisals are in place and are being further developed.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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.

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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):

- provide further information for parents with regard to healthy eating and allergies.

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 the use of the children's achievement records to ensure that the individual needs of all children are reflected through planning.

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