



Milton Hall Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY313948
Inspection date	20 March 2006
Inspector	Patricia Jane Daniels
Setting Address	Englefield Green Social Hall, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0QT
Telephone number	01753 526 357
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Registered person	Sutindarjit Lal
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Milton Hall Montessori was registered with its current owner in 2005. It operates from 2 rooms in the Social Hall at Englefield Green, located in Victoria Street. There is provision for outdoor play.

The group is registered to care for 26 children aged from 2 to 5 years of age. There are currently 20 children on roll. Of these, 2 receive funding for nursery education.

The group is open from 09:00 - 15:30, Monday to Friday during term times and offers sessional and full day care. It supports children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. A total of 5 staff work with the children. 4 staff have Montessori diploma child care qualifications, the 5th member of staff is training. The group serves the local community and surrounding area.

The group is run in accordance with Montessori principles.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where staff follow procedures to reduce potential cross infection. For example, staff wipe tables with anti-bacterial spray and use disposable gloves when changing children's nappies. Children follow good routines such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet. However, children do not always wash their hands before eating to fully develop and understand good hygiene.

Some staff hold first aid certificates that include training in caring for children. However, it is not clear whether these courses are sufficiently relevant to working with young children. A suitable sick child policy ensures that children who are infectious do not attend, thus preventing the spread of contagious ailments.

The group requests that lunch boxes contain healthy options with no crisps or sweets and children are provided with a range of healthy snacks during the sessions. This encourages the children to develop healthy eating practices and ensures they are well nourished. Fresh drinking water is available for children at all times.

Young children receive lots of affection from staff. This helps them develop the warm relationships needed to help them feel secure and support their emotional wellbeing.

Children have regular opportunities for outdoor play, when they can practice their developing physical skills and enjoy the benefits of exercise. They cycle around the play area and change direction to avoid each other. During sessions when there is no outside play the children take part in activities such as yoga, when they combine and repeat a range of movements imaginatively. For example, they pretend to be a camel or a washing machine, and join in enthusiastically. Children construct models with large materials and use malleable materials such as clay. They show respect for others' physical space, for example when using the mats for Montessori work. They use a variety of tools such as tweezers, scissors and paintbrushes skilfully.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a large hall that is organised into several areas related to specific activity and learning themes, with toys and equipment displayed. Children have easy and safe access to suitable resources selected and presented by the staff. They help

themselves to the Montessori equipment and know to return it correctly after use. The staff maintain the toys and equipment in a safe, clean condition for the children. The environment is made welcoming for children through the presentation of toys and equipment and displays of artwork.

A risk assessment is in place and steps have been taken to reduce potential hazards for children. However, fire drills are not held with sufficient frequency to ensure that staff and children become familiar with the procedures. The premises are secure and staff make sure that children are not able to leave unsupervised. The premises have some shared use in a different area of the building and staff ensure this has no impact upon the children's safety. Staff help children to develop an awareness of safety. For example they teach children to carry their chairs safely and warn them not to run on the wooden floor in case they slip.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. Parents are made aware of the group's responsibilities regarding child protection. These factors support the children's wellbeing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children relate well to staff and approach them freely for cuddles and assistance with activities, indicating that trusting relationships have developed. These positive relationships help the youngest children develop the skills needed for communication. Children are encouraged to master skills such as putting on their own coats and shoes. They choose freely from the activities presented. These factors help children to develop independence. Children spend time concentrating on their chosen activities and investigating. They join in the larger group activities such as yoga with enthusiasm, although some children are not fully engaged when cassette tapes are used at group story time.

Staff regularly observe the children's achievements when they use the Montessori equipment and use these observations to decide when children are ready to move onto the next stage. This means that the children remain challenged and interested. The daily routine includes a balance of active play and quieter times for the children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a system for recording their observations of children's abilities and use these to plan the next steps in learning. The observations and planning are linked to both the Montessori and Foundation Stage curriculum. Some staff are not completely secure in their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children develop a positive attitude towards learning because staff present the activities in an enthusiastic and positive way. Staff ask open-ended questions to help children organise their thoughts. They respond to children's interests and work cooperatively with the children to extend the activities. For example, a member of staff follows a child's directions when he makes a tall rocket structure. She then makes additional suggestions to the child so that the

activity is extended and further learning opportunities develop.

Children concentrate well on their chosen activities and select freely from the range presented. They separate confidently from their carers and are settled in the group. They are developing good relationships with adults and other children in the nursery. They behave very well and understand the rules within the group, learning to take turns and respect each other.

Children speak confidently to peers and adults and some engage the inspector in conversation. They talk about themselves and their families. They learn how to recognise letters and sounds and spend time looking at books with their friends. Children practise their writing and mark making, for example by tracing letters in their workbooks. They take part in activities that develop hand-eye coordination, such as play with graduated cylinders and scissors.

Children enjoy a broad range of practical activities and use free play to promote an understanding of shape and number. They join in counting activities and have opportunities for calculation during their play, with staff asking for solutions to number problems. They use mathematical language during play. For example, they use words like "bigger, tall, next to" when talking to others.

Children learn about themselves and the world around them through planned activities and themed topic work. For example, children have recently made a book about a seed growing into a tree, which included the changes in the seasons. Children learn about their own cultures and beliefs, and those of other people, through planned activities. There are limited opportunities for children to learn about technology.

Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They paint, draw and make collages that represent their experiences. For example, a child discusses that he has painted "a dinosaur". Children enjoy music and respond enthusiastically during the sessions, joining in action songs and exploring the sounds made by musical instruments. They use their imagination during play, pretending that one object represents another.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children can take part in all the activities offered. Staff treat children as individuals and acknowledge their preferences. For example, on the day of inspection a child did not want to make a clay pig alongside the other children so an alternative activity was offered. The staff promote respect and consideration for others because they are good role models for the children and treat them gently and with respect. Children learn about the world through resources and planned activities that introduce them to other cultures. The group supports children for whom English is an additional language. Staff learn some words in the children's home language so they can understand basic requests. There are systems in place to support children who have special needs.

Children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and from some basic ground rules that are consistently applied. Staff support younger children in sharing and turn taking and offer explanations so that the children learn the reasons for good behaviour. Appropriate strategies, according to the age and stage of development, help children understand right from wrong. Children's behaviour is managed positively and their efforts are valued, which makes them feel good about themselves and promotes their self-esteem. For example, on the day of inspection two children constructed a tall tower together, working cooperatively. The staff took a photograph of the children and their tower to show to parents. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents feel welcomed in the group and relationships are friendly. Parents initially receive a brochure outlining basic information about the group and receive information about their children's progress at parent's evenings and during workshops. Staff are available to every day to share any information with parents and an appointment can be made to discuss issues, as required. Regular discussions ensure continuity of care for children.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. A parents' workshop is held to inform parents of the foundation stage and parents' evenings give formal opportunities to reflect on the children's progress and development. This sharing of information enhances children's learning. There is no written information regarding the Foundation Stage displayed informally for parents' guidance.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a well-organised routine where they receive good adult support to help them feel secure and confident. An appropriate system for recruiting and checking staff is in place, although some staff have not yet completed the required system of checks. All staff are newly recruited and the induction process ensures that they understand the policies and procedures within the group from the start. There is currently no named deputy within the group to assist the owner with management tasks.

Some of the required documentation is not in place. Some staff details are not available and on several occasions, an accurate register of the attendance of children and staff has not been maintained. These are a breach of regulations. A lack of staff details means that an unsuitable adult might care for children. In the event of evacuation, it may not be possible to ensure every child is accounted for and protected if the attendance register is inaccurate.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The manager has a clear objective for the group and ensures that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting and promoting the children's learning. As a result, children receive a consistent approach from the staff. Staff training needs are identified through discussion and they attend workshops and courses to update their knowledge. The manager has identified the need to ensure all staff have a good understanding of the foundation stage curriculum and has arranged training to

improve knowledge in this area. The professional development of staff benefits the children's learning.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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):

- ensure staff hold approved first aid qualifications, provide a suitable named deputy, maintain an accurate register of attendance of staff and children and ensure records of staff details are in place and accessible.

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):

- implement a system to provide parents with written information about the Foundation Stage curriculum
- further develop the staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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