



# Mill Cottage Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY317102
<b>Inspection date</b>	03 April 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Elaine Heap
<b>Setting Address</b>	Wakefield Road, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 4HA
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<b>Registered person</b>	Mill Cottage Montessori School Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Mill Cottage Montessori School was registered in October 2005 and operates from four rooms in a purpose built building. It is situated close to junction 25 of the M62 motorway, in Brighouse. A maximum of 38 children may attend the school at any one time. The school is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 and is open for 46 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from 11 months to under 5 years on roll. Of

these, one child receives funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community.

The nursery employs four members of staff. All of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff are Montessori trained. A cook and a maintenance manager are also employed.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health and well being is effectively promoted and given high priority by all staff. Children show a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. For example, they know the importance of hand washing and independently wash their hands after messy activities, using the toilet and before snack. They develop good self care skills in line with the Montessori approach. For example, even the youngest child present, aged 17 months, washes and dries his crockery and cutlery after lunch. The arrangements to care for children in the case of accidents and for the administration of medicines are good as all staff have current first aid certificates.

Children's dietary requirements are met effectively through discussions with parents. They eat a well balanced diet which is healthy and nutritious and freshly prepared daily. Opportunities exist for children to visit the snack area as they wish during the morning session to enjoy healthy, nutritious foods. For example, bowls of raisins and breadsticks are available for self-selection and are regularly replenished. Children independently access small jugs of water to pour drinks for themselves.

Children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and enjoy daily outside play opportunities all year round. They take part in physical activities, such as digging in the garden and enthusiastically copy a member of staff as she leads them in an action game of physical exercise, such as moving their arms, legs or jumping up and down. They understand they need to run around to keep warm when going outside in cold weather. As a result they are learning how physical exercise affects their health and well-being. The staff team have identified the need to develop outdoor equipment to develop children's large motor skills.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Indoor space is organised well to meet the needs of the different age groups of children attending. For example, the use of low level storage for toys and equipment in all of the children's rooms positively ensures children can make choices in their activities and access equipment independently. Children have access to a good range of equipment and resources which are safe, of good quality and give children positive and practical experiences of the environment and the world.

Children's times of arrival are closely monitored and staff introduce visitors to the

children by name which ensures they know why other adults are on the premises. Daily risk assessments of the rooms and equipment ensure that children are able to move around safely and freely. Staff give high priority to keeping children safe. They show children how to handle and carry equipment safely, practise regular fire drills and through discussion develop children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, older children are able to explain what they would do if a member of staff had an accident.

Children are protected well as the staff know and understand to report any concerns to the manager. She equally understands her responsibility in ensuring that child protection concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately. There is a clear child protection statement in place which follows the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children settle well and enjoy their time at the nursery, 2-year-olds are gently introduced to the routine and eagerly participate once established. For example, following the Montessori approach a child self-selects a basket of shells from the resources on the shelves and is encouraged to put them back when finished with. Similarly, under 2s are able to self select from a range of toys which are easily accessible at ground level. They choose between the jigsaws, bricks, and natural materials or eagerly participate in a printing activity which involves yellow paint, yellow fruit and vegetables. Planned activities are age appropriate in each room and skilfully supported by the staff team. As a result, children achieve well because the staff are skilled at understanding and meeting children's individual needs.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from the effective way the Montessori approach is linked to the Foundation Stage. Children are making good progress towards all of the early learning goals as they experience a varied range of activities. The majority of the activities are child led as the staff respond effectively to children's interests and questions. As a result, teaching is consistently interesting and challenging for children. For example, a discussion about Asia, resulted in further research and discussion about volcanoes and lava which developed their language and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's achievements with the Montessori equipment are continually recorded and show how they are developing and where they need further assistance. Children benefit from a range of teaching styles. For example, they are able to work independently at a chosen task, one to one with a member of staff or in small groups. This enables staff to maintain children's interest and independence and good levels of teaching and learning.

Children enter the setting confidently, and quickly settle into the familiar routine. They independently choose from the wide range of tasks and activities available to them. They carefully select their chosen activity and then choose to work at a table or roll a mat out onto the floor, making sure they do not interrupt another child's work or

personal space. They know to wash their hands before hand so that equipment is kept in good condition and carefully put it back for the next child. As a result, they show respect for other children and care for the equipment. They show concentration and perseverance with all activities to a high standard. For example, a 3-year-old perseveres with a layered jigsaw puzzle for a period of time trying at first on her own, then with adult support.

Children are interested and motivated to learn. They listen attentively and actively participate during a discussion and activity about the elements of air, water and earth. A 4-year-old beams with recognition when she makes the connection that water can be found in rain as well as rivers, streams, lakes and oceans. Children return to the same activities of their own choosing to develop their skills and are clearly pleased with their ability to complete tasks from beginning to end. For example, a 3-year-old self-selects the sand paper letters and carefully traces each letter shape correctly and then links other words to the sound 'S'. More competent children are able to write simple words when asked by a member of staff. For example, a 4-year-old confidently copies and writes the day of the week on the calendar.

Children are developing a good understanding of the world and are learning about different countries and their beliefs and traditions. This is supported by a good range of activities and resources which are available to them and through their discussions with the staff. They enjoy exploration and investigation as they look at seeds through magnifying glasses, dig in the soil or plant their own flowers and bulbs. As a result, they are learning about the natural world and living things. Children have some opportunities to research topics of interest on the computer in the office however this is not always freely accessible to them. They are developing a good sense of time through the daily routines which are reinforced by the staff. For example, a member of staff points to the clock and tells them 'It is 12 o' clock, lunch time'. Overall, children make good progress towards the early learning goals given their capability and starting points.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Staff are skilled and sensitive in their management of children and their behaviour and act as good role models. They consistently give explanations to reinforce children's understanding and children follow their example. As a result, children's behaviour is of a good standard. Children express their needs appropriately, and are sensitive and respectful in their interaction with other children and staff. For example, older children show care and consideration for younger children by asking if they would like help, before stepping in to assist them, as they cut and slice melons and bananas.

Children are valued as individuals and the staff team work closely with parents and to ensure each child's individual needs are met and they are able to play an active part in the setting. The activities are well matched to the children's needs to help them gain in confidence and make good progress. For example, a 3-year-old is able to

return to a task and practise her skills until she feels confident and has successfully completed it. Children gain respect for others and their beliefs, cultures and traditions because the staff provide a stimulating and welcoming environment which promotes children's discussion and thinking of the wider community. For example, discussion about countries and continents are supported by real life examples, such as boomerangs, different fruits, and musical instruments. As a result, children are having positive experiences and gaining knowledge and understanding of race, culture and disability and the wider world. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the close partnership between the staff and parents which ensures their individual needs are met. Parents are kept well informed about current topics through newsletters, daily diary sheets and informal discussions with their children's key worker. They are positively welcomed into the group and actively take part in social events. Discussions with parents, grandparents and carers demonstrate the high regard they have for the whole staff team and the positive way they manage children's individual needs, care and development. Praise is given especially for the way behaviour is managed and how the staff promote and foster good manners and develop children's social skills.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a staff team who have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in helping children enjoy and achieve. They understand and follow the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures. Staff who are awaiting clearance are always supervised with the children and there are clear induction procedures in place. Good staff deployment ensures children are well supervised and receive high levels of staff support. This protects children, promotes their well-being and helps them to develop to their full potential. All the legally required documentation is in place. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management is good. The provider and her deputy are excellent role models for the rest of the staff team. There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education. For example, all new staff are shown how to use the Montessori equipment appropriately. They are able to identify development needs within the staff team and have identified and planned additional training for them. An action plan for the development of the nursery is in place. These procedures enable staff to be confident in their roles and responsibilities which reflects in the smooth running of the setting and improves the quality of children's care, safety and learning.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints reported 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.

## **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 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):

- increase opportunities for children to develop their physical skills through access to large equipment such as climbing frames, balancing beams etc (also applies to nursery education)

#### **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):

- increase opportunities for children to develop their information and communication technology skills
- make improvements as indicated in the care section above

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