



Epping Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127806
Inspection date	04 July 2006
Inspector	Cheryl Langley
Setting Address	Catholic Church Hall, Church Hill, Epping, CM16 4RA
Telephone number	01992 577636
E-mail	
Registered person	Jennifer Timms
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Epping Montessori Nursery is one of two privately owned nurseries. It opened in 1992 and operates from a large hall within a Catholic Church in the town of Epping in Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:30 during school term times.

There are currently 37 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 30

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider catchment areas. The nursery welcomes children with learning and/or physical disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery incorporates the Montessori teaching methods into its programme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment. Staff follow suitable hygiene routines to prevent the spread of infection. Children are aware of the importance of good personal hygiene through well organised routines and activities. They wash their hands before eating snacks, after messy play and using the toilet. Children take part in routines to help tidy up and sometimes assist with washing up. They put aprons on to keep clean during art and craft activities. Children use tissues to blow their nose and put their hand over the mouth when they cough to prevent the spread of germs. They know it is important to wear 'sun cream' to stop their skin from burning in the sunshine.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks. They help themselves to drinking water at any time. Children are encouraged to eat a balanced diet and choose from a broad selection of different fresh fruits and vegetables. Specific dietary requirements are respected by staff, who ensure all foods comply with children's individual dietary needs, so that they remain healthy. Children are beginning to learn about the benefits of healthy food and a balanced diet through discussions and topic based activities. Brightly coloured paintings of different fruit and vegetables are displayed in the hall with reminders to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Children have fun reading about 'Mr. Large' and his family eating foods to keep them healthy and exercising to keep fit.

Children take part in a variety of activities which develop and enhance their physical skills. They become adept at using utensils and tools. For example, children move conkers with tongs, transfer water with a pipette and open and close different types of fasteners. They cut tissue paper with scissors and manipulate the computer mouse to transfer images on the screen. Children balance and co-ordinate their bodies to move the parachute around and run under it, they climb up and down the climbing frame and use bean bags to catch and throw. They have fun following the actions to simple songs and regularly play musical instruments. The routine for each session and organisation of the room offers space and appropriate areas for quiet activities.

Procedures are in place to help staff act in the children's best interests should they require medical attention. For example, all the necessary documentation, including written parental consents, policies and procedures are in place to permit staff to act quickly if children become ill or if there is a medical emergency. There is always a member of staff with a current first aid qualification on site.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are kept safe at the nursery. They move around freely to play and access resources and accidental injury is minimised. Children use a varied range of good quality, developmentally appropriate toys and equipment which are cleaned and checked frequently to make sure they are safe for the children to use. Effective procedures ensure children remain free from harm. For example, risk assessments are carried out regularly, staff are deployed to supervise the children at all times and visitors to the hall can only access the premises under supervision.

Children learn to protect themselves. Through regular discussions, planned activities and interesting books to reinforce safety messages, children become aware of codes to cross the road safely. They have fun decorating the hall with a large 'road safety frieze', share information books about using a zebra crossing and know to look all around before they cross. Children adhere to nursery rules to keep them safe, they remind their peers that only four children can use the sand-tray at once. They sweep up spilt sand to prevent people slipping on it. Staff use sensitive reminders to explain safe practices, such as why children should not run, so they do not fall, and to be careful not to hurt others when they use large equipment. Children know why they must leave the building in the event of a fire as they participate in regular fire drills.

There is a designated member of staff responsible for Child Protection who has attended training in this area. All staff are aware of the nursery's child protection procedure which incorporates the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, the correct procedures required by the National Standards to ensure the children's and staff's welfare is effectively safeguarded have not been followed on one occasion.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in a supportive and caring environment. They become confident and learn to socialise, making positive relationships with the other children and staff. Children enjoy their time at the nursery and take part in a range of interesting and stimulating activities. They receive adult guidance to give them extra support if is needed. Children respond positively to challenges. For example, they work through activity books at appropriate levels to increase their knowledge of numbers, letters and shapes.

They benefit from a range of activities which develop their abilities and skills. For example, children learn to recognise different colours when they choose and compare coloured beads. They count as they sing nursery rhymes. Children use mathematical language, comparing the 'smallest' or 'biggest' cylinders. They learn matching and sequencing with card games and interesting puzzles. Completing the weather chart each day teaches them about the natural environment. Regular use of creative materials such as pencils, paint and play dough, encourages the children to represent their ideas in a variety of ways. They enjoy painting pictures freely to take

home for their parents. Children use their imaginations to become different characters when they dress up or act out scenarios in the home-play corner.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are progressing well, supported by staff that have a competent understanding of the Foundation Stage. Plans cover all six areas of learning and there is a good observation and assessment system in place. Both the plans and children's assessments link closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. The level of challenge is sufficient to interest all of the children and more able children's learning is extended. Staff are attentive, ask children questions and at every opportunity reinforce their skills in maths and literacy and encourage them to use their initiative.

Children become involved in their play. They respond to what they see, smell and touch as they explore flour and sand, observe natural objects with a magnifying glass and feel different types of fabric. There are lots of opportunities to practise mark making. They write lists, copy simple sentences, write in anniversary cards or create letters which they post to their home. Children are developing an understanding of sounds and letters as they trace sandpaper letters with their finger and sound them out. Some can identify the first letter of their name, while others read their name confidently. More able children write recognisable letters to form their name and label their own art-work independently. They create pictures and sentences to describe their experiences to their news books. Children listen attentively with enthusiasm at story time or enjoy looking at books on their own. They speak confidently in small or large groups to report their news. Children develop simple counting and calculation skills. They participate during songs, nursery rhymes and daily routines, counting in sequence or taking one away. Children count their peers at registration to ten and beyond. They cut fruit into the right amount of pieces to share with their peers and recognise symbols, such as 'plus'. Children link pictures to the correct amount in their workbooks. For example matching the number six to six bees. More able children name shapes and follow instructions to colour them correctly. They become aware of size, using the correct vocabulary, such as 'small' or 'tall' as they compare height.

Children explore changes as observe the seasons and growing plants. They enjoy the story of the 'Hungry Caterpillar' and create pictures of the life cycle of a butterfly. They build and construct using different types bricks to make a house or an aeroplane. Using their initiative they successfully build a tower to approximately 2 metres and are able to suggest ways to balance the smallest pieces without them falling. Children develop a sense of place and caring for others through topics and activities. They are very enthusiastic about their fund raising project to care for a retired pony at a local stables. Children bring in unwanted toys to sell and collect money for the charity. They celebrate festivals. Children enjoy making pancakes for Shrove Tuesday and create pictures of dragons to mark Chinese New Year.

Children become able to move all parts of their bodies with confidence. They climb, balance and go through, over and under the climbing frame. Children enjoy impromptu or regular music and movement sessions. They sing their favourite songs

and join in with the appropriate actions. There are extensive opportunities for children to develop their hand-eye co-ordination using a range of craft materials, mark making and other equipment, toys and puzzles. There are some opportunities to develop the children's designing and making skills using a range of objects through planned activities. Children mix paint to make different colours. They paint zeros on the paper being careful not to go over the line and form straight black line to copy the pattern of a zebra crossing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children receive a warm welcome and take part in the full range of activities. They develop a sense of belonging through the positive relationships fostered between themselves and the staff. The flexible settling-in procedure makes sure staff have the opportunity to get to know the children and their parents well so that they can meet their individual needs. They encourage children to talk about their feelings and experiences. Children become confident and independent. They respond positively to responsibilities, such as tidying up, helping at registration or snack time and remind their peers of the nursery rules to keep each other safe.

Children behave well. They are learning right from wrong due to the positive role models of the staff and their ability to manage behaviour effectively. For example, they offer lots of praise and encouragement and value children's achievements. Children work harmoniously together as they share, take turns and negotiate their roles during play and activities. Children develop respect for others. The sensitive staff encourage children to understand that their behaviour has an impact on other people. A meaningful range of activities and resources promote a positive view of the wider world and increase children's awareness of diversity.

Children benefit from the partnership with parents which supports their care. Parents receive information about the setting and the activities available to their children. They are encouraged to work closely with the nursery and provide details which will enable staff to care for their children appropriately. Procedures are in place so that all necessary information about the children can be shared to promote their welfare and meet their individual needs. All of the provisions policies and procedures are shared with parents at the outset and a termly newsletter and the children's day books keep them up to date. However, the complaints procedure has not been updated to include a system to record or share appropriate action regarding a complaint and ensure parents' concerns are respected or acknowledged and the children's welfare fully monitored.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents receive information about the Nursery Education provided. They are informed of the current topics being covered through the regular newsletter and notice board. Parents are invited to attend consultations with their keyworker, make comments in the day book and attend social gatherings to share their children's progress and achievements. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning by sharing topic related items and books. They have the opportunity to

exchange information about their children on a daily basis with the experienced and friendly staff. Parents receive a full report regarding their children's achievements at the end of their placement. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The organisation of the sessions ensures children enjoy a balance of large and small group times as well as one-to-one support if required. They benefit from a range of planned activities and free choice of the resources available. Staff evaluate their practice regularly and strive to improve on the opportunities made available to the children and make sure they are stimulated and sufficiently challenged. They are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for children up to the age of 3 years and this is incorporated in their planning.

Children benefit from the robust recruitment and vetting procedures which ensure they are cared for by staff who are suitable to work with children and have a knowledge and understanding of child development. All of the staff have early years qualifications and two have current first aid certificates. Policies and procedures are in place to allow the effective running of the play group and to keep children healthy and safe. In most cases these procedures are followed by all staff. For example, there is a suitable system in place which ensures children are not released to unauthorised persons. However, the requirement to notify Ofsted of a significant incident on one occasion has not been followed. Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the children.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory.

The manager promotes the professional development of all staff and encourages them to attend training courses. Regular appraisals take place to identify strengths and training needs. Staff having weekly and termly meetings to discuss planning. The provision and the curriculum are monitored and evaluated regularly. All staff work together to plan activities and play for children to learn and make progress through the Foundation Stage.

Children are well prepared for entry into school or nursery after their attendance at Epping Montessori Nursery because the manager and her dedicated staff team work well together. They have developed positive working relationships and are committed to promoting an inclusive environment for all of the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to a number of recommendations to support the care and improve the nursery education for the children. Incident records are recorded on separate pages to ensure confidentiality when sharing information with parents. This is to respect individual children and parents and make sure sensitive information is not passed on inappropriately. A statement on bullying is included in

the behaviour policy. This is to acknowledge that bullying is not acceptable behaviour and will be taken seriously. Appropriate strategies are used to deal with bullying to protect children and manage behaviour to prevent it reoccurring. The accident book is signed by staff when an entry is made to ensure there is consistency in care and clear information shared with parents.

To develop the staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, enabling them to link planning and assessment to the stepping stones, staff have regular appraisals to identify strengths and training needs and attend seminars regarding the Foundation Stage. Planning and assessment is included at regular staff meetings to evaluate practice and ensure clear links are made to the stepping stones.

To make sure the link between assessment records and short term planning provides a clear indication of the next steps of learning of the individual child, the assessment system has been updated and observations by keyworkers are used to determine activities for individual children. This makes sure they develop at their own pace and make progress through the stepping stones.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was received by the Nursery in February 2006 alleging that inappropriate strategies were used on one occasion to manage behaviour (Standard 11) and possible handling of a child causing bruising (Standard 13). Ofsted were not informed of this significant incident at the time (Standard 14). According to the information provided by the Nursery, discussions between the staff and person who raised the concern agree that it was not possible to have occurred at the Nursery. Ofsted have raised two actions, one under Standard 13 and one under Standard 14 following receipt of this information at inspection on 4 July 2006.

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- make sure the correct procedures are followed, as per the National Standards, in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer and ensure these procedures are shared with parents before children start to attend the nursery
- notify Ofsted of any allegations of abuse by a member of staff or volunteer, or any abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- provide more opportunities to develop design and making skills, enabling children to build and construct independently using a wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources and adapting their work where necessary.

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