



Little Learners Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	250087
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Kashma Patel
Setting Address	St Helens Church, St Helens Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 2DA
Telephone number	07778 467103
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Registered person	Pratibha Surelia
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?

Little Learners Montessori School has been established since 1995. It is privately run and is situated in the centre of Solihull. The setting subscribes to the Montessori approach and is located within St Helen's church. Facilities include a large hall which is divided into two rooms, toilets, kitchen and storage facilities. Children have access to the church garden.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 37 children under eight years old. There are currently 30 children on roll, which includes 13 funded three and four year olds. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children with Special Needs and children who use English as an additional language.

Opening times are Monday to Friday during school term time only. Sessions are from 08:30 until 12:00 and 12:15 until 15:00.

Three members of staff work with the children of whom one has an early years qualification and the other has a Montessori teaching qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about good hygiene practices and are aware of the need to clean their hands before food, they remind staff to squirt some anti-bacterial spray on their hands before they have their snack. Children are protected against the possible spread of infection because staff provide paper towels and there is an effective policy for sick children. The children's welfare is promoted as staff respond to accidents appropriately because they all have a current first aid certificate.

Children have an excellent range of activities to promote their physical development. They enjoy balancing on the beams, throwing bean bags in hoops and using the mini gym equipment to develop their gross motor skills. They also enjoy going for walks in their environment where they listen to the birds singing and look for mini-beasts, this ensures they have access to fresh air to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Children are developing their fine motor skills as they handle small pieces of puzzles and thread beads.

Children enjoy healthy snacks of fruit such as apples and bananas which are nutritious and meet their dietary requirements. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks for their children. Snack times are social occasions where children learn about different fruits and vegetables. They commented that they liked to eat cucumbers and raisins. Children are provided with regular drinks of water and juice to ensure they are well-hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a environment which is welcoming, secure and suitable for both children and parents. The premises are well lit and adequately ventilated which enable children to feel comfortable. Staff ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out on the premises to ensure children's safety is promoted. There is a procedure for the safe arrival and collection of children, parents ring the nursery bell to gain entry.

Children access a wide range of good quality toys and resources which are safe, appropriate and well maintained. Children freely access equipment from low level shelves of their choice and return the equipment when they have finished with it. A good range of Montessori equipment was observed which stimulates and promotes children's development in all areas.

Children are well protected because all staff have a sound understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice. Staff have attended training

to help them recognise the indicators for abuse. However one member of staff is not aware of the procedures for allegations made against them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are developing their confidence, independence and their self-esteem in a well organised environment. Staff ensure that children have free access to a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. Children have very good relationships with staff who greet them when they arrive and encourage them to take responsibility for their own play and learning. All children are well supported by staff who know them very well, and plan according to their needs.

All children have a key worker which helps children to feel secure and develop a sense of belonging. Children begin to distinguish right from wrong through staff setting consistent boundaries and supporting the children appropriately.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use long, medium and short-term planning to enable children to experience a broad range of activities which cover the six areas of learning. They use the Montessori approach to teaching which is incorporated with the early learning goals. Children have daily individual plans which ensures that they are appropriately challenged and supported so they can achieve in all areas of their development. Good use is made of observations which are recorded in children's assessments and used for future planning. Children with disabilities are very well cared for, a worker from the Local Authority was observed supporting children on a one to one ratio. Staff ensure that their needs are fully met by adapting activities if required.

Children are confident and show positive attitudes towards learning. They ask staff for work to do and independently select appropriate resources to complete their task. Children observed selecting puzzles and equipment. They are learning to make good relationships with one another are able to work in both small groups. Children enjoy listening to stories in a group, and begin to show confidence and interest when choosing to look at books individually.

Children have good opportunities to develop their writing skills. They enjoy using stencils and completing simple work sheets with writing patterns. Children were observed spelling and writing simple words next to the objects. They have good opportunities to recognise their names as they self register themselves in by finding their name and placing it on a board. More able children are able to write their names clearly.

Children are learning about numbers and shapes because they see them in their environment, they can identify a wide range of shapes including more complicated ones such as sphere, arch and diamond. Children have free access to equipment such as buttons, cotton reels and beads which they thread and match with. They were observed playing with wooden spindles and sorting them into number order. Children are making very good progress in complex activities

with numbers. They are able to independently complete simple sums which involve addition and subtraction by using the abacus, and number rods.

Children are learning about their world through discussions, they look at the world map and talk about countries they have visited. They also celebrate festivals such as Eid and Diwali where children have made "Divas" and have had incense sticks in the Nursery. Children freely access the laptop, they are able to use the keyboard and mouse well, as they listen for instructions through the headphones.

Children have good opportunities to develop physical skills, they were observed hopping and jumping on the dance mat. They enjoy exercising by stretching their bodies and pretending to be animals. There is a good range of equipment to promote fine manipulative skills; children enjoy using tweezers to pick small objects.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing good relationships with both adults and their peers. They feel a strong sense of belonging and are well integrated into the setting. They work harmoniously with others, whilst making their own choices and decisions. Children are learning about diversity through a range of resources which reflect positive images of race, culture and disability. A selection of puzzles, dolls, and books were observed. Children with disabilities are well supported by staff which promotes inclusion.

Children are learning to manage their own behaviour, they are encouraged to tidy up toys when they have finished playing with them, this promotes their safety and independence. Some parents have not been informed of recent changes with regard to the complaints log and procedure which means they are not always kept fully informed. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents have good access to appropriate information about the setting and are kept informed of their children's activities through daily conversations. Parents of funded children are made aware of the Foundation Stage by staff who provide written information. They can also access the nursery website where they can obtain information on recent newsletters, the curriculum and other useful links.

Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress towards the early learning goals through regular discussions and parents meetings. Staff collect children's work and observations to support their assessment records. Parents are kept informed of future topics such as "Being Healthy" through regular newsletters. Parents have limited opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, they are encouraged to borrow books for their children but are not encouraged to be involved in the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well supported by appropriate staff who are well experienced and qualified in both early years and Montessori practice. They ensure that children enjoy their time at the group by providing a well-organised and stimulating environment. Children are able to access a good range of activities and play opportunities because staff make good use of their time and resources.

There is a good range of policies and procedures which support the group. They are shared with parents and staff to promote children's health and well-being. All the required documentation is in place, accessible for inspection and is well maintained. There are good induction and appraisal systems which are effective in identifying areas to be improved in staff.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The team have daily meetings to discuss future topics and children's daily learning tasks, this ensures that they meet the needs of all the children. Staff work well with outside agencies such as the Local Authority to meet the needs of children with disabilities. The group are constantly monitoring and evaluating the quality of care and education in the setting through regular meetings with staff and parents, this ensures that the quality of the educational programme is effective. There is a training schedule in place which ensures that staff are constantly updating their knowledge and skills.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to improve their documentation with regard to recording incidents, to request consent for outings, and to extend children's creative learning and development. Children are safeguarded because all incidents are recorded and shared with parents and prior consent for outings is obtained. Children are making good progress in their creative development because they have free access to a wide range of activities and resources.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- improve staff's knowledge of child protection procedures in relation to allegations made against them
- ensure parents are kept informed of recent changes with regard to the complaint procedures and update policy to reflect the name and address of the regulator.

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):

- extend opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk