



Phoenix Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259576
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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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Phoenix Montessori Nursery School opened in 1986. It operates from two rooms within the Kings Lynn Hospital Social Club in the hospital grounds on the outskirts of the town. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 08.45 to 16.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 42 children aged from two and a half to five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because there are good hygiene procedures in place. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and after playing outside. Staff talk to children about hygiene and they know that they need to wash their hands because of germs, which could make them ill. Staff also talk to children about dental hygiene and other health issues so that children are learning how to keep themselves healthy. They are able to use the toilets and sinks independently and individual paper towels are available to minimise the risk of cross infection. The premises are cleaned every day and staff clean floors during the session to maintain the environment. There are systems in place to keep toys and equipment clean.

Children's medical needs are met as the necessary information is obtained from parents on their record forms. Parents are informed about the sickness procedures and advised that they need to exclude sick children to minimise the risk of infection. There are procedures in place to look after children who become ill at the setting. First aid kits are available in both rooms and all staff have First Aid training so that they can deal with minor accidents and injuries appropriately. There is a system in place for the recording of medication although this is not maintained to observe confidentiality, which means that confidential details about children's medication may be seen by other parents. An accurate record of all accidents is maintained. Consent has been obtained from parents to seek emergency treatment or advice so that help can be sought in the event of an emergency.

Children are able to rest, if they need to, as the book corner has some soft cushions. A mattress is also available for children who may need a sleep. Children have plenty of fresh air and exercise as they have free access to the outside area throughout the session and go out every day in most weathers.

Children's physical development is promoted well as they are able to be active in the outdoor area throughout the session, if they choose. They are able to develop co-ordination and balance as they can climb on the quadro or the climbing frame, use balancing equipment or play with bean bags and hoops to develop hand and eye co-ordination. They enjoy building obstacle courses and then using them. They can ride tricycles or push toys along in the covered paved area. They are developing manipulative skills as they use the Montessori equipment or use tools with the sand or play dough. They learn to use knives to cut up fruit and vegetables and have opportunities for threading and construction activities.

Children are provided with healthy snacks of fruit and cheese. Parents provide packed lunches. A healthy eating display reminds children and their families about the benefits of a healthy diet and the nursery works with parents to encourage them to provide healthy options for their children. Snack and meal times are pleasant social occasions with staff sitting down with and chatting to children. Children's dietary needs are met as information on allergies and cultural preferences is obtained and recorded on a list for staff to refer to in the kitchen area. Children are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water at all times from a tray by the snack table.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in premises which are safe and suitable. There are good security systems in place. The door is kept locked when children are inside and the outside gate is bolted when children play outside. There are procedures to challenge unauthorised visitors and a system to record all visitors to the setting. The environment is made welcoming to children and families as there are interesting displays on all the walls including many examples of children's own work. A range of stimulating activities are available to children as they come in. Toys are safe and age-appropriate. Any faulty items are discarded.

Children are kept safe as staff are well deployed and supervise children effectively. A thorough risk assessment is carried out and daily safety checks to ensure that children are protected. Children begin to develop an awareness of safety issues because explanations are given, for example 'only one at a time on the trampoline or you might wobble off'. There are good procedures in place to keep children safe on outings and a risk assessment is carried out in advance. The necessary permissions for outings are obtained from parents. Children are protected from the risk of fire as there is a clear written fire evacuation procedure which is displayed on the door. Regular drills are carried out so that children and staff know what to do in the event of a fire and fire equipment is tested regularly by the hospital.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and are aware of their duty to report concerns. They have all attended child protection training and know where to go for the necessary information which is easily accessible in the group. The child protection policy has recently been updated to reflect changes in procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are eager to attend the setting and settle quickly when they arrive. They are greeted warmly by staff and choose from a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities. They are able to choose whether to play outside or in as the outside area is equipped with a full range of play activities including imaginative play, painting, sand and writing area as well as a small garden and physical equipment. The environment is organised to promote children's choice and independence. They can access all of the resources easily and can move some items within the nursery to develop their play independently. The sand pit outside is positioned near the cooker and picnic table so children can use the sand for pretend cooking. Staff position themselves at activities inside and out to support and extend children's play and make suggestions when necessary, for example, children have been reading 'Jumanji' outside and go in to say that they need a dice. Staff ask if they want to make one or use one. They then find an inflatable dice for the children to take outside to use with the book.

Children develop excellent relationships with staff and with each other. Staff are warm and caring and give praise and affection so that children develop high levels of self-esteem. Children develop self-confidence as they are able to make choices and be independent in their play and learning. Their independence is also promoted as they are encouraged to do things for themselves such as washing hands, putting coats on and doing them up, using tissues and

disposing of them, and tidying up. They are able to fetch resources for themselves, put their art work away in labelled drawers and respond well to simple requests and instructions. They enjoy being given responsibility and are involved in the running of the setting, helping to prepare the fruit for snack time and washing up the cups afterwards. They are given opportunities to pour their drinks and put their plates and cups away after snack.

Children under three are given excellent play opportunities. They are able to access all of the activities. Staff know children well and so adapt activities and provide challenges for all children according to their age and stage of development. Staff have started training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework pack and are using it to plan for children under three. Observations of children's achievements, in line with the framework, are made and recorded in scrap books with photographs to share with parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff demonstrate expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and develop. The learning environment is planned to provide children with a wide range of dynamic and stimulating activities both indoors and out. Children are able to take responsibility and make choices in their learning supported by staff. They are able to access resources and activities freely and make decisions. They decide when to stop for their snack so the flow of their play is not interrupted.

Children communicate confidently with staff and with each other and use language to express ideas and communicate their needs. The environment is rich in examples of the printed word and children are recognising print as they pick their names off the board at snack time or put work away in labelled drawers. They have excellent opportunities to mark make in their play as there is a writing area both inside and out and writing materials in the role play area. Children can chalk on boards and on the slabs outside. Staff encourage children to write for a purpose. Children who play making cakes are asked if they would like to write the recipe down. Children then fetch paper and pencil and write down their ideas. They make their own books which contain drawings and comments they have made, scribed by staff. They enjoy stories inside and out in small groups and individually and listen to stories on a compact disc player.

Children are given many opportunities to count as they play. Staff also encourage them to do simple calculations, asking 'if we take one away, now how many have we got?'. Children are using the language of size and shape. When dressing dolls, they are asked 'will this one fit or is it too big?'. Children are using mathematical language confidently. They tell staff 'we are playing matching'. They recognise complex three dimensional shapes such as a cube. A display on the wall shows spirals and triangles made by the children with straws.

Children can express themselves using a range of media from paint and chalk to glue, which they can access freely. They use their imaginations as they play with small world equipment such as farm animals or trains. Imaginative play is further developed in the exceptional role play area where children initiate their own ideas and play independently. The role play area or 'Spooky corner' is equipped with technological equipment, phone, torches, paper and pencils, mini-beasts, and sensory experiences for the children such as smelling pots and dried leaves

on the floor. They are engrossed and absorbed in their play here, manufacturing magical stars or playing astronauts.

Children learn about their environment as they have excellent opportunities to explore and investigate. They play with ice in a builders tray and watch it slowly melt. They observe the changes taking place and see what happens when mixed with glitter or shaving foam. They learn about the wider world through the celebration of festivals from other cultures. Children are highly motivated because they are offered varied and stimulating activities which provide them with challenge and promote their independence. They concentrate well and show interest and curiosity. They form friendships with each other and with the staff and are beginning to respect the needs of others.

Staff are skilled in using sensitive and open-ended questioning to develop children's thinking and concentration. Displays in the room remind staff of the words to use to extend children's learning and vocabulary. They listen to what children have to say and help them to develop their ideas. They use unplanned opportunities well to help children learn. For example children stand on the climbing equipment and watch fire engines parked at the hospital. At other times they watch the hospital helicopter land. Activities are adapted to provide challenges for more able children. The ice play is extended with animals such as penguins and books about Polar regions. Assessment is rigorous and the information gained is used effectively to guide planning. The key workers make observations of children's achievements and from these plan next steps to help children progress. The next step planners are pinned up in the room and referred to frequently so staff are aware of what they aim to achieve with each child. This enables all children to be challenged and helped to progress in their learning. Observations are then transferred into the children's records.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are extremely well met as the nursery gathers information about their physical and care needs as well as seeking information about their family and cultural backgrounds so that they can be cared for effectively. Parents and children complete an 'All about me' book, when they start, which provides details of their home background and the child's preferences. This is complemented by observations of children so that staff begin to get to know them well. Excellent settling in procedures are in place and visiting children are invited to get to know the setting at times when the nursery is quieter. In the morning entrance to the nursery is staggered over half an hour providing flexibility for parents and ensuring that children can be given more individual attention as they settle in. Children from a diverse range of backgrounds are made to feel welcome as displays in the room reflect other cultures and languages. Children are learning about other cultures as the nursery celebrates festivals such as Divali and Eid and draws on the expertise of children and families so that they are able to share with the other children their cultural background and feel fully included in the life of the setting.

Children are given excellent levels of support. The nursery ensures that children who need additional help receive it so that they are included in all activities and key staff monitor their development in order to help them to progress. They work closely with parents and external

agencies to ensure that children can fulfil their potential. The setting supports a number of children with English as an additional language. The nursery obtains information on children's key words from parents so that they can communicate and staff use gesture and eye contact to communicate effectively with children. They also try to make all children aware of differences in language by displaying words with different scripts and in different languages and by providing dual language books in the book corner.

Children behave extremely well because they are able to make choices and be independent in their play. They are well occupied and interested in the wide range of stimulating activities on offer. Staff use positive methods to manage children's behaviour and help children to learn to share and negotiate. They recognise that some children need more support than others in learning to share resources and take turns. A comprehensive behaviour policy is in place so that parents are aware of the methods used to manage behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their independence is promoted, they become aware of the needs of others and learn about other cultures and life-styles.

The nursery has a superb relationship with parents. Parents are made to feel welcome as they come in to settle children or collect them. They are given information in the form of a brochure, regular newsletters and parents evenings. A notice board outside displays details of staff, a poster giving the details of Ofsted and the curriculum plans. They are informed that a full set of policies and procedures are available for them to see if they wish. The complaints procedure includes the name and contact number of the regulator and the complaints record has been set up in line with recent changes in regulations. Parents are invited to share their skills and interests with the children, for example coming in to celebrate festivals with them.

The partnership with the parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. The nursery conducts an introductory evening for new parents to explain the Foundation Stage and the group's record keeping systems. Once children have started parents are invited to a parents evening when they are able to go through their children's records. Evaluation forms received back from these evenings show that parents find them useful and informative. They are also aware that they can look at the records at any other time. In addition to the children's records staff keep a weekly diary of their key children which goes home every week so that parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress. This enables parents to be aware of what the nursery is aiming for with their children and to make their own contributions to the diaries so that in turn the staff have a better understanding of the children. When children leave, the nursery compiles a final report for parents to share with the next setting. Parents and children add their own contributions to these reports.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by experienced and qualified staff. There are good systems in place to ensure that all staff have the necessary checks and clearances before working with children. All staff have undertaken training on child protection and First Aid and they are encouraged to go on a range of courses and workshops to update their knowledge and skills.

The environment is well organised to provide children with a range of exciting and stimulating play experiences and to promote their safety and well being. Staff are well deployed and a key worker system is in place to ensure that children have consistent care.

The leadership and management of the funded children is outstanding. The nursery carries out continual and rigorous monitoring to maintain a high standard of teaching. A detailed self-evaluation is in place and an action plan from the last inspection. The manager involves the whole team in evaluating their practice through regular staff meetings. Staff are well supported through appraisal and induction and the team works well together. All staff are encouraged to attend regular training to update their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and invited to cascade new ideas to the rest of the team. The manager is committed to developing good practice and works closely with other agencies to implement improvements. The group is currently working to achieve the Norfolk Quality Accreditation scheme. They are also involved in sharing their good practice with other providers.

All of the required documentation is in place and is maintained in an accessible and orderly fashion. A thorough operational plan includes a set of policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are up to date and reflect the practices of the nursery. Overall the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to develop the organisation of the sessions to meet the needs of children, particularly those attending all day. The nursery has re-organised sessions to enable children to have maximum choice and independence and as a result children's needs including those staying all day are met extremely effectively. They were also asked to make arrangements to keep premises clean after outside play times. As children have free access to the outdoor area and are coming in and out frequently the floors get dirty. Staff mop the floors at regular intervals to maintain cleanliness.

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.

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 outstanding.

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 the medication record so that confidentiality is maintained.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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