



Discoveries Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127146
Inspection date	16 January 2007
Inspector	Jackie Liffen
Setting Address	Brenchley Scout Headquarters, Brenchley Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NX
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Discoveries Montessori Nursery School opened in 1999 and operates from a large room in a scout hut. It is situated within the parish playing fields of Brenchley, Kent. A maximum of 12 children may attend the nursery school at any one time. The nursery school is open five days a week during school term times from 09:00 until 15:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and 09:00 until 12:00 on Fridays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 22 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area around Brenchley.

The nursery school supports some children with special needs. It employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from the Kent Early Years Department.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to learn about simple good health and hygiene practices when they are reminded to wash their hands before eating. They are well protected from infection by staff who ensure that all surfaces are regularly wiped with an anti-bacterial cleanser. Children rest according to their needs on comfortable, cushions laid out in the book corner. When children fall asleep staff put clean linen slips under their heads to protect them from the spread of germs. Children have good spatial awareness as they move around the room. They enjoy the fresh air and exercise when they play outside on the various apparatus. Staff contribute to children's good health by ensuring that any medicines are brought in by parents who ensure that the containers are clearly labelled, and give written instructions for administration.

Children are well nourished by staff who provide snacks such as fruit which children help themselves to whenever they are hungry. Children pour themselves a drink of milk or water whenever they are thirsty from an easily accessed jug. However, some are unclear where to dispose of the residue. Staff ensure that the children's packed lunches are in good condition by storing them in a fridge.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff make regular risk assessments to ensure that children are cared for in a welcoming, secure, child-friendly, and safe environment. Children explore and play freely in the available space which is comfortably warm and suitable for them. Children mainly use Montessori equipment, which is in good condition. They experience little difficulty in helping themselves from the easily accessed range and are becoming competent in seeing to their own needs within the safe environment. All children are included as they easily use the child-sized furniture. Children are learning to avoid accidents within the group because they are taught to recognise common dangers such as broken glass, and cope with tasks, such as clearing up, in a competent manner. Children are unable to exit the premises unaided, or enter the kitchen. They tend not to have accidents within the setting because staff quickly erase potential dangers such as a wet floor, and they keep covers on the electrical sockets. Outside, staff carefully watch as children happily and energetically play on the well maintained apparatus which are sited on a safety surface of bark. Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who have a good knowledge of child protection procedures and ensure that anyone who is not vetted is not left alone with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children quickly settle in the comfortable environment where they easily explore and experiment with the various activities on offer. They enjoy the happy, purposeful atmosphere where the

poem on the door about smiling typifies the ethos of the group. The setting is especially prepared to teach children using the Montessori materials and methods. As a result children are involved in a broad range of planned activities which promote their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good as children are carefully introduced to a range of activities to support and extend their progress. They work quietly and harmoniously with others because they tend to have a specific project or task to focus on. Children move forward at their own pace by exploring activities which are graded according to their difficulty. They are challenged and helped to reach their potential. For example, a child is asked to recognise a number and then helped to count until that number is reached. Sessions are based on children developing their own enjoyment of learning so that they are becoming confident enough to make choices and take decisions. Staff often crouch or sit at children's level to speak with them and children usually respond appropriately, appreciating the attention. The high ratio of staff to children means that each child receives 1:1 attention at some point during the session. Children are making good progress towards the Foundation Stage because the system of learning offers challenges and learning opportunities relative to their abilities. Although planning for group activities is minimal, each child has a play plan and the staff ensure that they use suitable recording methods to help each one individually.

Children are making good progress in all areas of learning; they recognise their own needs and are developing autonomy. Most children use the toilet independently, wash their own hands and help themselves to food and drink. Children are also learning to clear up after themselves and often sweep the floor or wash it with a mop and water. Children are beginning to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they play with an interactive globe, although the range of technological toys used on a regular basis is limited. They are becoming very familiar with basic home tasks and sometimes meet visitors who work in a variety of occupations, such as a fireman. Children easily help themselves to books and show enjoyment as they sit comfortably in the book corner where staff sometimes join them to read stories. They are developing language as the leaders gently question and talk to them about a variety of relevant topics such as the weather. Children have a number of opportunities to explore media such as painting and soon become absorbed in what they are doing. They quietly create paintings and are left to explore texture, design and colour until they finish the creation. Children often join in spontaneous singing as they play happily and some are developing a very good sense of rhythm when using the musical instruments to accompany nursery rhymes. Children are becoming familiar with mathematical concepts such as space, size, shape and pattern because they frequently undertake specific graded tasks designed to help them learn. Children's fine motor skills are enhanced by a number of activities within the group such as using tweezers to move soft shapes from one bowl to another. Outside they extend their fitness, dexterity, co-ordination and physical skills when playing on the suitable apparatus.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Each child is valued, respected and included within the group. Staff follow an equal opportunities policy regarding admissions, employment, resources, and the curriculum so that stereotypes

are avoided and all children settle and receive the care they need. Children are beginning to have an awareness of the diversity of our society, helped by staff who introduce them to books depicting children from other countries. They also celebrate festivals and use a globe from time to time. Overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are learning to respect others and to consider the consequences of their words and actions because staff encourage and promote a positive attitude. For example, they sometimes suggest that everyone should clap a child who has achieved something. Most children have their specific needs addressed within the group although disabled children experience some difficulty in accessing the building. Children behave well because staff take every opportunity to guide them in the right direction and to offer positive reinforcement and praise. As a result children are involved and stimulated so that they act and react in an appropriate manner. Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The leader makes every effort to introduce and involve carers into the group so that children's security is enhanced by a mutual understanding. Although, some parents are not receiving up to date copies of the policies and procedures, generally they are very pleased with the setting and especially with the contact books which help children benefit from continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's security and development is improved because the staff have a clear sense of purpose and undertake a number of extra training courses. Most adults hold a suitable first aid certificate so that children's good health is maintained as they deal with accidents in the most appropriate manner. Children's welfare is protected because all staff hold clear Criminal Records Bureau enhanced checks and the provider ensures that they are suitable to work with children. Leadership and management is good. The owner works with staff to contribute to children's progress towards the early learning goals by identifying each child's needs in forming a play plan; they ensure that all areas are covered during children's time in the group.

Children's well-being is enhanced because adults give high regard to organising the group so that there is a very high adult:child ratio. This means that all children are happy and content because they have plenty of attention. The provider positively supports children's care, learning and play by making sure that she puts all regulations into place. For example, she checks that the complaints policy is up to date and sufficient to inform parents. Children's security is enhanced because all documentation is in place; the owner makes sure that the register indicates the times that children enter and leave the building and displays the registration certificate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to obtain parental permission to access emergency medical advice and treatment; this is now included on the registration form. She was also asked to enhance children's safety by carrying out risk assessments. These are now carried out on a daily basis. The provider was also asked to ensure that nappy changing facilities are in place and to up-date the complaints procedure. She now provides suitable nappy changing facilities

and has an up to date complaints policy, both of which contribute towards her good care of children.

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):

- ensure that children are clear about where to dispose of unwanted food and drink
- consider how to improve access for the disabled
- up-date policies and ensure that parents are aware of them.

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):

- enable children to play with technological toys on a regular basis.

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