



Bright Sparks Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY334579
Inspection date	30 November 2006
Inspector	Julia Lynn Freemantle
Setting Address	Gilbert Road, Frimley, Surrey, GU16 7RE
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Registered person	Deborah Ann Sharpe
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?

Bright Sparks Montessori School registered at this site in 2002 and was taken over by new management in 2006. It previously operated on 2 separate sites in Bagshot and Camberley. The nursery school operates from self-contained premises in Frimley, Surrey and serves families from the local community. The school accepts a maximum of 40 children aged two to five years. The children are accommodated in two groups of 20 in separate rooms. They share an enclosed outside play area. The school is open Monday to Friday during term time only from 09:00 until 13:00 or 09:20 until 13:20, times of attendance differ between the two groups. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. A packed lunch, provided by parents, is taken at each session. The majority of staff hold a relevant child care qualification. A minimum of three staff, in each group, are present at each session. The school is in receipt of nursery education funding and welcomes children with special needs or those who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about how to keep their bodies healthy through the variety of physical activities the nursery group provide and through the healthy eating policy the group have.

Children benefit from daily physical play and fresh air. They participate with joy in activities that develop their co-ordination and skills. For example, during play times in the outdoor area they use wheeled toys and follow a chalk road way, climb on, and crawl through the caterpillar tunnel. On other occasions they take part in physical play inside the nursery play rooms. For example, they use the bean bags and soft balls for a PE session, use the parachute for games and use the indoor slide.

Children recognise when they are hungry and thirsty, they help themselves to snack, drinking water and milk throughout the session. Children make their own decision about when and what they have for their snack as they freely access the snack area during the session. Children have access to a good variety of healthy foods; they include a selection of fruit, vegetable sticks, dried fruit and rice cakes. Each week children are encouraged to try two new healthy snacks. Staff write on the snack board in the play rooms and in the entrance hall which country the new foods come from and encourage the children to talk about the country and the new food with staff, parents and their peers.

Children benefit from the effective hygiene procedures the staff follow. For example, staff deal appropriately with accidents and when changing nappies. Staff have relevant first aid training. Children follow good personal hygiene routines that encourage them to be independent in their own personal care and help prevent the spread of infection. Staff consistently remind children to wash their hands before lunch and after going to the toilet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is promoted, they are able to move safely around the play area because staff pay high attention to ensure that risks and hazards are minimised. Children show a good understanding of safety issues. For example, they know if they are able to play outside during the session by counting the number of nursery gilets that are left hanging on the door; they ask a member of staff before going outside.

Children move confidently around a very welcoming environment both inside and out, making choices about their play. They develop confidence and independence. Space is organised well in three rooms and children use it effectively to allow them opportunities to be active and occupied. For example, the children use the outdoor play equipment and the Montessori equipment on mats. Children enjoy a variety of play areas. For example, on table tops and on the floor, they laugh, enjoy and share books together and with staff and their peers in a comfortable carpet area with cushions.

Children access a very good range of play equipment and resources which include a range of Montessori equipment; most is presented on low level storage shelves and storage trolleys to enable the children to be independent in their choice of activity which enhances their learning opportunities.

Children are protected as the staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children and child protection issues. For example, the staff have the required policies and documents in place to safe guard children. Staff have relevant safeguarding children training. A clear arrival and departure procedure is in place to ensure children are only released to authorised known carers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery group. They arrive happy and confident and quickly settle into the routine of making choices about their play. Children are supported well by staff at this time. For example, a child who was unhappy about leaving her parent was quickly comforted by a member of staff; she was distracted and then encouraged to join other children at a table activity and supported until she was settled.

Children are confident and secure in their relationship with the staff, they receive consistent meaningful praise, which increases their sense of belonging and encourages them to be independent. Children benefit from the relationship the staff have with their parents; staff talk to the parents prior to the children starting nursery about their child, this information is updated regularly through daily feedback and home diaries. This interaction, and the implementation of a successful key worker system, helps to secure relationships between children and staff; this develops a strong sense of trust. Children are happy to work alone but are confident in asking for help.

Children develop very good communication skills as they contribute to group discussions at "show and tell" times. They take turns and listen to each other. They become competent learners. For example, they self select Montessori equipment from the shelves and complete the task, the children choose to keep their work to show their parents at the end of the session. They actively occupy themselves playing independently, in pairs and in small groups. Children enjoy opportunities to express imagination through role play and telling stories. For example, children play in the Santa's Grotto role play area. Children explore their senses through the use of a range of media and materials. For example, they independently access a trolley storage unit of craft materials and enjoy an adult led painting activity. Children benefit from staff monitoring and recording their progress, staff plan for the children's next step of development and share this information with their parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good individual progress because staff have a secure understanding of how children learn effectively, they use their chosen play to extend their learning; staff adapt their questioning according to the age and ability of the child. Staff encourage children to lead their own learning with the use of a well developed

routine and a good balance of child and adult initiated activities. Children use the Montessori equipment well.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is strength of the nursery. Children are confident and independent and have good self esteem as a result of the constant praise and encouragement they regularly receive from staff throughout the session. Children play happily together and behave very well. They are confident speakers and are happy to engage in conversation. Children enjoy books in a large group at story time and independently when they visit the book area. For example, children understand print carries meaning and enjoy opportunities for mark marking at set activities. Staff use opportunities as they arise to consolidate children's counting skills, as a result children gain confidence with numbers. For example, when talking about the date, "yesterday was the 28th, what number comes after 28, 29, yes, well done". Children have opportunities to gain confidence with size, shape and colour through a range of Montessori equipment. Children enjoy singing times, however during this time children are called by the staff to go to the toilet before lunch, this means that these sessions are not fully valued and the children's enjoyment is restricted.

Children learn about the natural world through planned topic work. For example, the children plant herbs and bulbs in the garden. Visitors to the nursery group help develop and build on the children's knowledge of the wider world. For example, the children enjoyed a visit from the police officers and a visiting rabbit. Visits out to the fire station and the train station help the children develop a sense of belonging to the local community. Children develop ICT skills with the use of the computer and a programmable toy, however the opportunities are limited across all areas of learning.

Staff use a range of teaching strategies to reinforce and further develop children's knowledge and skills. Children are constantly reassured as they work and are told that they are doing well, they benefit from the good relationships staff have with them. Children's contributions are valued by the staff. For example, when they show items of interest they have bought from home at circle time. Staff regularly observe, monitor and record children's progress in a variety of ways and use these to identify individual targets for the children to work towards. Staff have realistic expectations of children and good individual knowledge helps children to consolidate their learning before moving onto the next stage. As a result children's individual needs are effectively supported and sufficient challenges are provided to help them achieve their individual potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All the children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery group because staff value each child as an individual. Children are extremely confident and show good self esteem, they respond well to continual praise and encouragement. Children know what is expected of them, they share and take turns. For example, when using toys and equipment. Children show care and concern for others and know right from wrong as staff act as positive role models. Staff continually thank the children for stopping their play to listen to instructions and requests. Children learn about themselves and the wider world through planned activities and discussions. For example, the children talk about Diwali with a visiting parent and have access to books,

money, artefacts and pictures from and about other countries. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children show signs of enjoyment as they set free butterflies they have watched grow from caterpillars. Staff use discussions to help children understand and value the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Children with learning difficulties and who have English as an additional language are very well supported by staff who work with the children within the main group and with small groups of children who have similar needs. They work in close partnership with parents and outside agencies when appropriate, to ensure their needs are met.

Children behave well, they are polite and show care and concern for each other. The nursery group has realistic expectations and are consistent in their approach. Good use of praise and encouragement helps build children's self esteem and manage children's behaviour. Children's achievements, kindness and helpfulness is shared and celebrated at the end of every session.

The partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the positive partnership staff have with their parents, they work together in the interest of the children. Parents and their children benefit from the induction meeting and settling in visits to the nursery prior to the children starting. Parents receive regular and detailed information regarding their child and the nursery group through daily informal verbal exchanges, a home/school diary, more formal meetings with their child's key worker, regular newsletters and notices. The nursery benefits from the input of the parents association. The nursery group encourages parents to support their child's learning by becoming actively involved in the group, many help during the sessions. Parents feel very well informed about their child and the nursery group and are happy with the care and education the nursery provide.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children settle quickly and are very happy within the nursery group. Staff organise the nursery group well in two groups to create a welcoming learning environment for all children. Children's care and learning is enhanced by the effective deployment of staff and the good leadership and management of the nursery group. Staff are knowledgeable in the foundation stage and of the outcomes for children.

The leadership and management is good. Suitable recruitment and vetting systems ensure staff have suitable qualifications and relevant experience, knowledge and skills to care for children. There are effective induction procedures and staff receive ongoing support. For example, all of the staff have regular self appraisals and are encouraged to attend training to keep their knowledge updated. The children benefit from good quality nursery care and education as management place high importance on training and ensure all staff contribute fully to the nursery group through regular whole staff meetings.

Detailed policies and procedures are implemented effectively to promote children's health, safety and welfare. However the complaints information is incorrect in regard to the contact numbers for parents.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required Ofsted to investigate and for the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standards 1, 3, 12, 13 and 14. Concerns were raised about the toileting practice, and that parents concerns were not dealt with appropriately. Ofsted asked the registered person to investigate the concerns and report their finding to us. The registered person carried out a full investigation and provided Ofsted with the nursery policy regarding toileting, and provided us with documentation relating to the concerns raised. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider remained qualified for registration at the time the investigations were closed.

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):

- update details in the procedure for complaints in regard to correct contact details for parents

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):

- review the organisation of song-time to ensure that these sessions are fully valued and that children's enjoyment is not restricted
- provide more opportunities for children to use ICT and develop skills across the areas of 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