



Grayshott Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY252880
Inspection date	22 March 2007
Inspector	Heidi Wilton
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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 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?

Grayshott Montessori Nursery opened in September 2002, when it was re-registered with a new owner. It is a privately run nursery. It operates from a church hall in Grayshott, on the outskirts of Hindhead. The nursery has access to the main church hall, the kitchen, the toilets and a secure outdoor play area. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas.

The nursery is registered to provide care for 20 children aged from two years to five years. There are currently 36 children on roll. This includes 26 who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting currently supports a number of children who have special needs or English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five mornings a week during school term time only. Sessions are from 09.30 to 12.30 everyday with extended hours to 14.45 on a Thursday. Children attend a variety of sessions.

There are seven full and part time staff who work directly with the children. All the staff hold early years qualifications to a minimum of level three. The nursery offers the Montessori Philosophy alongside traditional teaching methods. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and are currently working towards accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children show a good understanding of hygiene procedures as they wash their hands after going to the toilet and before having snack. Children are protected from cross contamination as they dry their hands on separate paper towels. Children independently put their own aprons on for creativity and know they need to wash their hands after 'messy' play. Staff act as good role models as they clean tables and surfaces with antibacterial cleaner and wash their hands before preparing snack.

Children enjoy a snack of a variety of fruits and a drink of milk or water. Their independence is limited at this time as they do not self select the fruit and pour their own drinks. Staff discuss the different fruits with the children and some children state 'fruit is good for us'. Effective systems ensure staff are knowledgeable about all the children's dietary needs and requirements which ensures all children's needs are met.

Good procedures are in place to fully inform parents if their child has had an accident or been administered medication. Over half the staff have appropriate first aid qualifications which ensures children are cared for appropriately in the event of an accident. The pre-school have parental permission to gain emergency medical treatment for all the children which ensures they are treated without delay in an emergency.

Children's physical skills are developed both inside and outside. They play outside in the small garden, climbing up the bars of the climbing frame and sliding down the small slides. They have fun jumping from hoop to hoop and see if they can throw small beanbags inside the hoops. Children become animated as they join in with 'music and movement', creating big and small circle shapes with their arms. They love making necklaces by threading a variety of different sized beads onto different threads and enjoy manipulating play dough to make different objects.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery provides a welcoming environment for the children and their parents. The nursery has one large playroom which is separated into the different areas of learning. Children enter the nursery with confidence and they are greeted warmly by the staff. Children's work and

photographs of things they have been doing is displayed on the walls which gives the children a sense of belonging.

The nursery are vigilant in ensuring all children are kept safe. All doors are secured when not in use and stair gates are in place to make the kitchen area inaccessible. Good staff to child ratios and effective staff deployment ensure children remain safe and their individual needs are met. Robust procedures are in place to ensure parents permission is sought for children to go home with designated people.

A clear and well documented fire evacuation plan is displayed on the notice boards. Staff practise the fire drill with the children every half term to ensure they are knowledgeable about what to do in the event of a fire. Staff keep a log of when the next fire drill is due and regularly tested smoke alarms are in place.

All documentation is in place and understood by all staff should a concern arise over the welfare of a child. Staff are all aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. They are knowledgeable about the procedures to follow and inform parents of the nursery's responsibility with regard to child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are offered an exciting range of appropriate activities and resources. The key worker system enables staff to know their children well and help them to progress. Differentiation is considered in the planning and activities are planned for each individual child according to their stage of development. Children and parents are greeted warmly by the staff and welcomed into the setting. Staff are happy for parents to stay as long as they wish to settle their child, encouraging a smooth transition from the main carer to the setting. Staff offer sensitivity and reassuring hugs to children who become distressed or upset. Children have opportunities to engage in active play, as they play in the garden and join in with music and movement. They can relax and rest, reading and looking at books as they sit on the cushions and rugs. The range of visual materials and activities around the environment enable children to develop their curiosity as learners, developing their mathematical thinking and language skills. Children develop their imagination and social skills as they engage in a variety of role-play activities. Staff listen to what the children say and do and display their art work to show their work is valued.

The quality of teaching and learning for nursery funded children is good. Children are confident when they arrive at the setting and settle into the routine well. Staff are well qualified and demonstrate a good understanding of each individual child's stage of development. Staff observe the children and record what areas need revisiting for consolidation or extending to offer more challenge. They plan activities for the children and include differentiation to demonstrate how the activity can be adapted for all children. Staff know their key worker children very well and have a good understanding of their stages of development alongside the Montessori materials and other activities.

Children are confident and happy within the environment and show a good understanding of the routine of the day. They develop their independence skills as they hang their coats onto their named hanger, carry their own chairs and put on their own aprons. They demonstrate an awareness of caring for the environment as they tidy activities away, such as sweeping the sand into the dustpan to ensure the floor is clean. Their self esteem and concentration is enhanced as they learn self-care skills through using the 'dressing frames' to develop their skills with buttons and buckles.

Children's understanding of letter sounds and letter formation is enhanced through the use of many visual, hands-on materials. Children can access these materials and activities at their own stages of development which ensures the needs of all children are met. For example, younger children learn about one or two letter sounds and use sandpaper letters to gain an understanding of how they are formed. Older children can be extended to word building, as they choose from the visual cut out letters from the 'large moveable alphabet' to sound out the letters and make simple words. Children's pencil control and letter direction is developed as they enjoy drawing around 'inset shapes'. Children are confidently able to select their names for registration and enjoy listening to stories, interacting and pointing at the pictures.

Children's understanding of counting is supported by staff incidentally through everyday activities. Staff encourage children to count how many children are sitting at group time. They extend the activity for older children by developing calculating skills such as how many more boys are there than girls and many of the older children are successful. Children learn about written formation of numbers through the use of sandpaper numerals. These can be accessed at the child's individual stage of development, progressing through the numbers as they become successful. Older children are extended through the use of visual aids, such as the 'spindle box'. This activity supports children's learning of the written formation of numbers linked with the quantity as they successfully put the correct amount of spindles into the correct numbered compartments. Children's mathematical thinking is developed as they weigh different amounts of play dough on the scales and use words such as 'heavier' and 'lighter' as they watch the scales go up and down.

Children have lots of fun playing with the tools and objects in the sand tray. They confidently talk to the visitor, showing her how the sand makes the cogs turn and giggle as they state how the sand feels cold. Children enjoy exploring using the magnetic fishing rods as they laugh and state how the 'magnets stick together'. Children learn about the wider world as they explore different types of animals and enjoy sorting them into categories of where they live. Their concept of time is developed as they discuss daily the days of the week and have a visual knowledge of their birthdays through the brightly coloured 'birthday calendar' on the wall.

Children enjoy opportunities to engage in a variety of structured creative activities. They love making Easter cards for their families and have fun painting at the easel throughout the session. However, children are not given opportunities to develop their imaginations by choosing to do spontaneous art and craft activities. Children have structured times when they practice their cutting skills and this is differentiated for each child with more complex cutting for older children. Children enjoy partaking with familiar rhymes and songs and all children join in with the actions. They have opportunities to engage in imaginary play. They use their imaginations

as they iron pieces of cloth stating 'this is making it straight' and cook meals for each other at the toy kitchen.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all treated as individuals by the staff. They have opportunities to foster a learning about different cultures through celebrating festivals such as Chinese new year and Hanukah. Children are able to embrace new experiences in a positive way through gaining awareness about what is happening around them. For example, children who have a new baby sibling or who are starting school soon. Staff recognise these events in the children's lives and access resources, such as story books linked to these themes. This gives children an understanding of how to manage their feelings when faced with changes in their lives.

Children with additional needs are well supported. The nursery works closely with outside agencies and parents to ensure all children are supported effectively. Staff communicate with parents and agencies in order to devise strategies and individual learning plans to enable children to access all of the activities.

Children behave well and staff consistently focus on the 'positives'. Children's good behaviour is acknowledged as staff 'reward' them by giving them 'special' jobs to do around the environment. The nursery have ten behavioural rules and staff gently remind children to follow these. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff serve as good role models, giving praise and thanks for specific achievements. Documentation is in place to ensure parents are aware of the nursery's behavioural management policy and ensures both staff and parents are working consistently.

Parents value the nursery and state how happy their children are when attending the setting. New parents are welcomed warmly from the outset through an 'open afternoon' before their child starts at the setting. This is effective as parents gain an awareness of the environment their child will be in and gain information regarding the setting's policies, procedures and education provision. In addition, parents also receive a prospectus which outlines the routine. Parents warmly welcome the 'settling in' visits when their child first starts and feel they can approach the staff at any time. Parents and children enjoy taking the 'nursery teddy' on holidays with them, taking photos of the teddy to share with the nursery on their return. This offers a good link for the children between the nursery and their home. Parents are informed of the complaints policy from the outset to ensure they are knowledgeable should they have a concern.

The partnership with parents for children who are in receipt of funded nursery education is good. Parents and carers are well informed about their child's development through daily discussion at the end of the day. In addition, parents feel the 'two-way' communication of the home books gives them additional feedback about their child's learning and value the opportunity to add comments themselves. Parents welcome parents evenings where they can discuss their child's learning and developmental milestones with the key worker. They feel they are given good information regarding their child's stages of development but are not always clear how the Montessori materials and other activities link to the Foundation Stage. Staff have a good understanding of the children's developmental milestones but the links are not concise

for parents looking at their child's developmental records. Staff display the weekly plans on the notice boards showing what stepping stones the activities are working towards and inform parents in advance of the topics planned for the year. This allows parents to be part of their child's learning and enables them to continue themes and topics at home. Parents receive half-termly newsletters informing them of events, topics and other information, such as outings the nursery are planning. They are actively encouraged to join the nursery on outings, enabling them to be part of the setting and their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is well supported by the organisation and nursery routines. Staff to child ratios are always maintained and staff are deployed effectively to ensure the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Staff know all the children well and work together to support the children they care for. Staff have a good knowledge of policies and procedures as these form part of their induction process. The manager has robust vetting procedures to ensure adults are suitable to work with children and never leaves adults alone who are not vetted. Required documentation is in place and attendance registers are kept up-to-date and maintained.

The leadership and management are good. The manager is responsible for the day to day running of the setting and acts as a good role model by attending regular training to further her professional expertise. She supports the staff team and ensures they all attend regular training to enhance their skills. The manager monitors the staff on a daily basis and through annual appraisals. The team all have early years qualifications and work well together ensuring children's well-being and education is fostered. Staff meet together every morning before the children arrive to discuss issues, changes and important information. The manager discusses the National Standards and policies and procedures with the staff on a regular basis, making alterations as necessary to ensure they are adhering to current legislation.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery school were asked to devise and implement procedures for the event of a lost child. The nursery now have a lost child policy to ensure staff and parents are fully informed of procedures to follow. This ensures correct procedures will be followed to find the child quickly.

The nursery school were asked to gain details of all visitors who attend the setting. The nursery now gain details from visitors which ensures staff are vigilant and never leave visitors alone with the children. Visitors are also identified and accounted for in the event of a fire.

The nursery school were asked to ensure parents sign to acknowledge the administration of medicine. The nursery now gain written parental permission to administer medication and gain parents signatures at the end of the day to acknowledge the administered medication. This ensures children are kept safe and healthy.

The nursery school were asked to make the complaints procedure available to parents. Parents are informed of the complaints procedure from the outset and can access the policy at any time. This ensures parents are fully informed of routes to follow should they have a concern regarding their child's welfare and education.

At the last education inspection the nursery school were asked to provide programmable toys on a regular basis to help support and extend children's learning. The nursery have some computerised interacting games and a computer where children develop their key board, early mathematical and early language skills.

The nursery were asked to provide opportunities for parents to make written contributions about their child's learning at home. Parents are provided with home books which serve as a two-way communication. They can add comments to the book to share their child's experience and learning from home. This benefits the children as continuity in their learning can be achieved.

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):

- develop opportunities for children to further increase their independence at snack times by pouring their own drinks and self selecting the fruit.

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):

- develop opportunities for children to choose freely and express themselves through creative activities

- refine children's developmental records to clearly inform parents how Montessori materials and other activities link to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

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