



Casa del Bambini (Montessori)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY344219
Inspection date	23 February 2007
Inspector	Lilyanne Taylor
Setting Address	Beechcroft, Ryde United Reformed Church, Upton Road, Ryde, Isle Of Wight, PO33 3LE
Telephone number	07766904833
E-mail	
Registered person	Christine Archer
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?

Casa del Bambini (Montessori) registered in 2006. It is a privately owned provision and operates within the premises of Beechgrove, at the United Reformed Church in the Haylands area of Ryde on the Isle of Wight. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 35 children may attend at any one time and the setting is open each weekday from 08.30 to 16.00 during term time only. Currently there are 24 children on roll, of these 15 receive funding for nursery education. The proprietor works in the setting alongside two members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting uses some aspects of the Montessori method of teaching.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and dietary needs are met because staff find out from parents what they are and keep a record of all known allergies, likes and dislikes children have. Children enjoy a healthy range of snacks, these consist of various pieces of fresh fruit and sandwiches which they bring in from home. Children are offered the choice of water or milk to drink at snack time and they are able to access drinking water throughout a session which ensures they do not go thirsty.

Children are protected from the spread of illness through the clear policies in place regarding the attendance of sick children. Children who become sick while attending the setting are cared for sensitively while waiting to be collected by their parents. In addition to this, parents are informed of any communicable diseases which their children may have come into contact with in the provision.

Children are becoming aware of the importance of good hygiene practices through the consistent guidance and support they receive from staff. They are carefully reminded to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and they use paper towels to dry their hands. The premises are maintained in a satisfactory state of cleanliness. All eating surfaces are wiped with an anti-bacterial spray prior to and after use and all toys are cleaned on a regular basis.

Staff have a very clear understanding of the procedures to record all accidents that occur on the premises. Parents sign to acknowledge that they have been informed, helping to keep children healthy. Children are able to receive appropriate treatment if an accident occurs as all staff hold current first aid certificates and parents give their written consent for staff to seek emergency medical treatment and advice if necessary. Although staff only administer medication to children if their parents have given their written permission, they do not request parents to sign the record book to acknowledge the entry. As a result children's welfare is not fully protected.

Children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise. Although children have limited opportunities to play outdoors during the winter months due to the grassed area being slippery, staff ensure children have daily opportunities to engage in physical activities indoors. For example, children show good co-ordination when using large equipment such as a climbing frame and slide. While walking along stepping stones they use their arms to maintain their balance and when they reach the end they confidently jump off using both feet to land. Children show a good sense of space and move around confidently with control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. Although staff are only able to display a limited amount of information on the notice board in the entrance lobby, they compensate this well with the wall hangings they erect in the main play room. These include

samples of children's work, posters and photographs that have been taken of children while they play.

Staff check the premises both indoors and outdoors prior to children attending and access to the building is closely monitored. The entrance to the premises is kept secure and all visitors have to ring a bell to gain access. Most visitors are required to sign in and out of the building. Although there are no boundary fences erected outdoors, the effective deployment and vigilance of staff ensures all children are able to play safely.

The wide range of resources and toys that are available to children are maintained in a good condition and safe for their use. Children are able to safely access available resources independently as resources are stored in low level units or boxes on the floor.

Children are protected because they are always cared for by adults that are suitable and they are only allowed to be collected by persons their parents have authorised. In the event of a child not being collected at the end of a session, procedures are in place to ensure they are kept safe. All children are aware of the procedures they should follow for evacuating the premises in the event of an emergency; fire drills are regularly practised and recorded. Although systems are in place to record the number of children present these are not regularly updated throughout a session. Consequently children's safety is compromised as it is not always clear to see how many children are being cared for at anyone time.

Children's welfare is fully protected. Staff have a very clear understanding of child protection issues and the procedures they should follow if abuse of a child was suspected. All pre-existing injuries of children are recorded and shared with parents. Systems in place ensure that should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff appropriate action would be taken.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff greet the children by their name and make themselves available to chat to parents as they help to settle their children. Older children are encouraged to hang up their coats and bags, increasing their independence, while staff and parents ensure younger children are assisted as necessary. Children are happy and they laugh and giggle throughout activities, for example, when they sing their favourite nursery rhymes or join in with musical movement activities. Children share conversations with staff, who readily listen to them and take an interest in what they have to say.

Children feel secure; they are cared for by a consistent staff team. Children make friendships with other children and play well alongside one another. Snack and meal times are relaxed and unhurried; children are allowed to take their time to eat their food. They sit at tables alongside their friends and staff, sharing conversations with one another. Staff interact extremely well with the children and play at their level. They ask open-ended questions, encouraging them to think about what they are trying to achieve. Younger children are developing good communication skills as they contribute to group discussions and are becoming competent learners as they are integrated into older groups.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and develop, providing children with a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities and resources throughout the session. Staff record details of children's progress and development throughout the session, using both general and formal observations to assess children's progress. The information gathered is recorded within the children's records of achievement and used to evaluate progress and identify the next steps in learning. Staff know all the children well and adapt activities to further develop children according to their identified next steps in learning. Planning of the sessions links to the early learning goals and provides children with many learning opportunities.

Staff work very well together as a team. The planning of the sessions ensures that staff are aware of their role for the day and are fully aware of the intended learning outcome of the activities. Effective staff deployment means children remain fully supervised and supported throughout the sessions. A flexible approach to the session and activities means that children are able to play freely, without unnecessary interruption. Staff quickly build strong relationships with children; spending time talking to and questioning them, to extend their learning. Staff's positive and encouraging approach promotes children's self esteem effectively.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They enter the setting keen to begin, seeking out friends and activities to take part in. Children are beginning to recognise their own names; they find their own name card when they arrive at the setting and post it in a post box. They concentrate well during activities, for instance, when threading cotton reels onto laces, placing rectangles and circles of differing sizes onto pegs ensuring the largest is on the bottom and smallest on the top and when listening to stories being read.

Many children happily speak in a familiar group. At registration time children talk about items they have bought in from home. Children use language such as gooey, sour, soft, hard, smooth and rough to describe what they see, feel and taste. For example, they discuss and explore items such as hard boiled eggs, lemons, porridge oats and suet. Children are learning to link sounds to letters and naming some of the sounds of the alphabet; children find the initial letter of their name and then identify an object that begins with the same letter. Although children enjoy having stories read and sit attentively to listen, staff do not tell children the book corner is an area they can choose to go to if they wish during free choice sessions. Consequently, children rarely look at books for pleasure.

Many children quite ably count to 10 and beyond and some children are able to recognise written numbers. Children enjoy sorting laminated card-board cut outs of socks into pairs, for example, they find two socks that have the same number written on them, then, using a peg they hang them on the washing line. Children have many opportunities to measure using scales, spoons and cups. For example, they weigh the ingredients they require when making bread and cakes and weigh the parcels they have made while studying the role of a postman.

Children use their imagination well and are able to express their own thoughts and ideas. For example, children make robots using a range of re-cycled materials, each created to their own specification.

Children are proud of their achievements and enjoy showing others the photographs that they have taken which are displayed around the room. Children use a digital camera to take a photograph of the work they have completed or that of others. Children thoroughly enjoy music and movement activities and join in with actions to songs they know well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a very clear understanding of equal opportunities. The settings policies are implemented effectively ensuring children's individual needs are being met. Children are respected as individuals and receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff, which helps them to settle and raises their confidence and self esteem. Staff take the time to get to know the children and their families well.

Children are beginning to understand right from wrong through the sensitive methods used by staff, for example, gentle reminders to share, take turns and to be kind to each other. Children are beginning to show respect for the toys and resources as they tidy up one thing before selecting another. Children benefit from the good relationships staff establish with parents; parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child when they join the setting. Flexible arrangements for the induction of new children ensure all children's transition from home to the setting is smooth and staff are well informed about children's individual needs and requirements.

Systems in place ensure children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate support from staff.

Children learn about the wider world through planned activities that are linked to cultural festivals and resources that represent diversity of culture, ethnicity and disability.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good.

Parents receive detailed information about the setting and the curriculum offered via a prospectus and newsletters. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Newsletters inform parents of the topics their children are studying, the areas of learning being covered and some of the activities their children will be engaging in. As a result parents are able to extend or consolidate their children's learning at home if they wish by doing the same or similar activities.

Children's individual progress and achievements are discussed with parents daily. In addition to this children's written records of progress are available for parents to view at any time and they are able to take them home to share with other members of the family. These consist of

samples of children's work, observations staff have made and show the stage of development children are at as they work towards achieving the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage.

Parents are aware of the procedures they should follow if they have any concerns regarding the care their child is receiving. The clear procedure that management has in place to deal with complaints ensures parents will have their concerns acknowledged and responded to within the set regulatory timescales. In addition to this, included in the prospectus is the regulatory bodies contact details should parents wish to express to them any concerns or views they have of the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff. A high adult to child ratio is maintained at all times and there are effective systems in place to cover staff absenteeism and emergency situations. Staff provide a calm, relaxed and friendly atmosphere. They work well as a team and communicate very well with each other. The good organisation of space ensures all children experience a wide range of different activities. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and their effective deployment ensures all children are kept safe. Although all documentation is in place it is not always completed in sufficient detail. The setting display their certificate of registration so it is clear for parents to see how many children can be cared for at any one time.

Leadership and management is good. The proprietor /manager of the setting is very supportive of staff. Staff's strengths, skills and areas for further development are identified through the effective appraisal systems in place. Regular meetings ensure the individual care and learning needs of all children are met.

The curriculum planning is tracked over the period of a year to ensure all stepping stones are being covered, providing a well-balanced programme for the children. All staff contribute towards the planning and make good use of regular meetings to monitor the curriculum and the impact on children's individual progress. Staff observe children and takes notes. This information is used to inform next stages of planning, helping children to reach their full potential. The management and staff are committed to ensuring that the quality of care and education is continually improved for all children. All staff help support children's well-being and education, which enables them to achieve their individual potential during their time at the setting.

The setting 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 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 may 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 good.

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 parents written acknowledgment is sought for any medication administered
- ensure children's records of attendance are updated throughout the session to show the actual number of children present at any one time and the actual times of their arrival and departure

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):

- ensure children are provided with opportunities to look at books for pleasure throughout a session if they so wish

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