



Sunshine Montessori Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337337
Inspection date	18 January 2007
Inspector	Silvia Richardson
Setting Address	St John's Church Rooms, Park Grove, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3HR
Telephone number	07958 275 189
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Registered person	Sophie Lawrence
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?

Sunshine Montessori Pre-School opened in 1977 and was registered to new owners in 2006. It operates from one room in church premises and children have use of an enclosed outside play area. The group mostly serves the local area, with a few children attending from further a field. The pre-school group is registered to provide care for 20 children aged from two years to under five years and there are currently 58 children aged from two to five years on roll. This includes 35 children in receipt of funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language. The group opens five days a week during term times. Sessions are from 09:15 to 12:15, Monday to Friday and, on Monday and Thursday, from 13:00 to 16:00. There is also a parent and toddler group on Wednesdays from 13:00 to 15:00. Four staff work with the children. All have early years qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 2 or 3, including the manager. The setting also accepts Montessori trainees as volunteers. The pre-school uses the Montessori

method of education and all staff have Montessori qualifications. Staff have access to training courses and support services run by Bromley Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have use of hygienic bathroom facilities, because good routines are ensuring they are cleaned and maintained between sessions, including the emptying of paper towel bins, promoting children's welfare. Children play comfortably in the main hall, although carpeted floor play areas are grimy around the edges. Children's hands are on the floor as they play and they are not consistently washing them before handling food, compromising their health. Children handle a wide range of learning resources and these are well maintained in clean and hygienic condition, including water activities.

Children are learning about healthy eating and healthy options, because they bring in suitable snacks from home and talk about the benefits of these during the session. They understand the importance of hand washing to avoid germs and know they should wash them regularly, although routines are inconsistent in developing good personal hygiene habits. Children talk about the importance of exercise to their health and enjoy a balanced range of active play experiences, including dancing and movement to music. They have opportunities to practise and develop physical skills in the outside play area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and move around the setting safely, because adults talk to children about safety rules. They know how to avoid tripping hazards by picking things up off the floor and how to sit safely on their chairs. Children use resources safely and appropriately, because adults spend time with children on a 1:1 basis to help them learn. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe when playing, being aware of others and walking and carrying items carefully. Children are kept safe and protected because adults provide good levels of support and supervision. Adults are helping children to become safety conscious and self-disciplined, through discussion of safety issues and gentle guidance.

Some good fire safety precautions are in place including extinguishes, fire blanket in the kitchen, fire safety notices and regular practice of fire drills, so that children stay safe and protected; and adults and children know how to respond appropriately in the event of emergency evacuation of the premises. Children are kept safe should child protection concerns arise, because adults know what to look out for and how to make an appropriate referral. Children's safety and security are promoted well, because good systems are in place, especially at arrival and departure times. Children's safety is also promoted through appropriate records being kept, including details of any accidents that may occur.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly and happily to play on arrival, because resources are attractively set out, motivating and encouraging use. Children make selections and choices from a range of Montessori activities and demonstrate a high degree of competency in independent learning. Children concentrate well, because the balance and range of play materials is more than sufficient to hold and sustain their interest. Children's skill acquisition is promoted effectively, through adults working with children on a 1:1 basis when they join the group.

Children are developing confidence working on their own and in small groups, because they are well supported and positively encouraged. Children's care needs are met well, because the routine is well balanced and affords opportunities for both quiet and active play times. Children are refreshed by the provision of drinks and snacks and enjoy whole group play experiences, such as movement to music and listening to stories. Free play sessions provide some scope for creative and role-play, so that children's all round developmental needs are catered for across a weekly plan.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have very positive attitudes towards learning, because adults present an excellent range of exciting and stimulating activities. Resources are well arranged in sets, each having a purpose, with children mastering specific skills over a period of time. Children know what they like and have favourite activities. They are persistent and independent learners, because adults provide appropriate levels of support and guidance. Children use their initiative and take responsibility for their activity, such as selecting, using and returning items to their designated place. Children are confident and self-assured, because adults are calm, warm and positive in their approach to children's learning.

Children are making good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, because their attainments are consistently monitored and reviewed, enabling adults to plan appropriately for next steps. Adults consider children's starting points and build on these through provision of an appropriate range of activities and play experiences. Adults have a very good knowledge and understanding of the six areas of learning, particularly in maths, communication, language and literacy, so that children are developing very well in these areas. Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured well, so that they are chatty, sociable, confident and relate well to others.

There are some small gaps in children's learning, because they do not have regular access to information and communication technology. They do understand how electronic and programmable toys work and have a good knowledge and understanding of the world, promoted mostly through planning and provision of themed activities. Opportunities to express themselves artistically are limited, because creative play materials, such as paint and glue and resources for making things of their own choosing, are not provided every session. Children are developing fine motor skills, because an excellent range of tools, such as tongs, are available for use every day. Children engage in some kind of physical activity each session, such as balancing, movement

to music or games with balls, hoops and beanbags, so that they have a good awareness of space and bodily control.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop strong relationships with adults, because they relate to children positively. Children are well adjusted and behave sociably in the setting, because adults have a warm and calm approach to children. Children learn acceptable ways of behaving, as adults engage in reasoned discussion with children and guide them gently. Children take turns and share well, develop confidence and independence, because adults provide caring support as needed. Children are helped to become aware of others and their surroundings, to practise good manners, show respect and courteously, making a positive contribution to the group.

Children are valued and their individual needs respected, through provision of a range of resources and activities reflecting diversity and positive images of cultural and racial differences. Adults understand and are prepared to work with children presenting with specific needs or disabilities, positively promoting inclusion. Equality of opportunity is promoted through acknowledgement of children's individual contributions. Special stickers are awarded in recognition of children's contributions, such as, for being very kind, so that all children experience affirmation and a sense of belonging. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of partnerships with parents and carers is good. Parents are made very welcome in the setting, so that children settle well, making a smooth transition into the group. There are good opportunities to meet with adults and talk about their children, so that needs are met appropriately. Some good information is available to parents about the Montessori method of education and the Early years curriculum, so that they understand what and how their children will learn. Parents are actively involved in the group and encouraged to make contributions to themed activities, promoting children's learning. A parent representative helps to create home/group links and facilitates partnerships with the adults working in the setting, so that parents and carers are involved and reassured about children's care, learning and development. Regular meetings, both formally and informally, verbal and written reports, support effective communication, so that children's needs are identified, addressed and met appropriately, helping children to make good progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Adults are properly vetted, ensuring their suitability to work with children. They hold appropriate qualifications in Montessori teaching, Early years and first aid and also have relevant childcare experience, so that children's care, learning and welfare needs are effectively met. Policies and procedures are implemented well, contributing to the effectiveness of the setting in providing appropriate care and good learning experiences. Suitable records are kept, including children's details, registers and progress files, demonstrating responsibility and accountability.

The setting is very well organised, with play and learning areas divided to create quiet space, encouraging thought and concentration. Pictures, books and other resources are well arranged at child eye level and easily accessible, creating an interactive environment, motivating and supporting learning experiences. Children organise themselves well in small groups around tables, developing their social skills. The routine is well organised and balanced, so that children have periods of guided and independent play, free play sessions, active and rest times. Arrangements for drinks and snacks are less well organised, as they do not fully extend children's abilities in serving themselves to further their personal development and independence. This is because adults hand out the children's snack boxes and pour drinks for the children. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The quality of Leadership and Management is good. The leader sets clear directions for the setting, so that improvements are attainable. There is a strong focus on children's independent learning, enabling them to become confident and self-assured. Adults working with children are well supported and led, so that childcare practice is consistently warm and caring, contributing to the effectiveness of children's learning. The leader acts as a good role model and builds a committed staff team, so that delivery of the Early years curriculum is effective in helping children to reach the early learning goals. Planning takes proper account of all six areas of learning, although some aspects are covered less frequently than others, such as children's access to Information and communication technology.

Management is committed to monitoring the effectiveness of the provision, so that they can build on strengths and identify and address weaknesses. The setting endeavours to promote an inclusive environment, in which every child matters, so that individual and specific needs or disabilities are met. Good links are made with outside agencies, such as speech therapist, to support children in the setting as required, assisting integration. The group has been in operation for many years and having been registered in recent months to new management, has successfully achieved continuity and stability in the staff group and in the provision of good quality care and learning experiences for children.

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 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 floor play areas are maintained clean and hygienic and promote hand washing routines prior to children handling food

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):

- provide children with regular opportunities to practise and develop skills in information and communication technology
- organise the session for drinks and snacks, creating further opportunities for children to develop self help skills

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