



## **Burnham Montessori School**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY337023
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Keriann Belcher
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Burnham Montessori School registered in 2006 with new owners, there has been a Montessori school on this site since 1991. It operates in the main hall, with kitchen and toilet facilities, in Dropmore Parish Hall in Burnham near Slough, Berkshire. It is open each weekday during school term time from 09.00 until 15.30. Sessions run from 09.30 until 12.30 and 13.15 until 15.30, children may attend for the whole day. The children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 34 children aged from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 28 children, receive funding for nursery education. The school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties. The setting employs five staff, three of whom hold an appropriate early years qualifications. The school follows the Montessori philosophy.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from good hygiene routines to help them learn about personal care and the importance of a clean environment. For example, children help to set up and clean away after lunch, they wash their hands before lunch and when using the bathroom. There are clear systems in place to prevent cross infection such as the regular cleaning of chairs, tables and toys. Measures are taken to ensure that children are kept at home when they are ill and this is discussed with parents.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks during the sessions and bring a packed lunch which they eat at midday. Meal times are happy, social occasions where the staff sit with the children. Most children help themselves to drinks from jugs of juice or water when they are thirsty, and to fresh fruit. However, there is no system to ensure all children have regular drinks throughout the day to ensure they do not become dehydrated.

Children enjoy a range of physical activity to help them learn about our bodies when active such as, dance classes involving stretching and movement. There are topic discussions to help children learn about how to keep healthy; this is further enhanced by visits from the doctor and the dentist to help children develop an understanding of how to care for themselves and keep well.

Children are developing good co-ordination and control when using small equipment, such as scissors, pencils and staplers. They have lots of opportunities to practise and refine these skills. However, large movement skills are less well provided for. This aspect of development is not planned for effectively.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure setting and are well supervised. They use the space with confidence and are able to play in safety and comfort as staff take good practical precautions to protect them. Children enjoy using a range of equipment that is safe and well maintained. They benefit from the good overall safety awareness of staff who effectively minimise the risk of accidents.

Good practical precautions are also taken when accompanying children on trips. Road safety is well managed and children learn about potential hazards.

The overall welfare of children is positively safeguarded. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and there are up to date written procedures to follow if there are any concerns about a child.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and secure. Their interaction with staff is warm and children are confident to ask the adults for help. They are becoming familiar with the staff and the routines that are in place. This helps them to settle and feel part of the group.

Children are mostly well occupied and engage in a variety of activities that are available for them. They benefit from being able to freely access the toys and are beginning to make some decisions about what they would like to do next. For example, children move from playing with play-doh to select a pair of scissors and become totally engrossed in cutting tiny pieces of paper. However, some of the very young or new children do not know what the available choices of activities are and lack direction. There are limited experiences for children to explore and investigate natural materials, such as sand and water. The day is generally well planned to include a balance of active and quiet activities. For example, outdoor play time or focused group work, but there is not a cosy area for younger children to rest if they become tired or to look at books.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the foundation stage which ensures that an age appropriate curriculum is provided. They have developed a system for assessment and planning where the Montessori method and the stepping stones of learning merge well, with all areas of learning covered. Achievements and learning intentions are accurately recorded and staff are highly supportive of the children. As a result, children are offered an interesting and varied range of activities to capture their interests and help them learn; adults and children become equally engrossed in activities which ensures that children concentrate well. For example, when children are completing the life cycle of a butterfly, they use photographs and cross reference to the book of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. Staff ask open ended questions.

Children engage in some meaningful activities with great enthusiasm and staff are clear about what children can learn. However, there are areas in which children are making less progress as some aspects of each learning area are not regularly planned for. This is particularly so in regard to children's large physical skills.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is progressing well. They are confident and greet each other with pleasure. Their behaviour is generally good and disputes are quickly resolved with good staff support. Their self esteem is enhanced by a reward system. For example, children are given a star sticker for completing a task on the computer which they proudly show to their parents. Children are independent and able to make choices. They are able to sustain their concentration and to see things through, during the free play times. They learn to care for others as they look after distressed children in the class. Children reassure each other that "Mummy will be back soon". Children show a high level of independence as they pour their own drinks and coats.

Children can communicate clearly. They are able to listen to others and contribute their own ideas in group times. They enjoy looking at books independently and with staff. However, the book corner is not inviting and rarely used by the children. Children's literacy is encouraged effectively. They know the names and sounds of many letters of the alphabet and are beginning to write.

Children count and recognise written numbers. Older children have opportunities to add and subtract as part of practical activities, games and when using Montessori equipment. They have access to a computer are able to develop mouse control skills, for example, clicking and dragging to match shapes.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing well. Children explore different materials and learn about the natural world through the use of Montessori equipment, books and discussion. They learn about different countries and different cultures. Children enjoy doing art activities to celebrate their own and others cultures. They enjoy exploring the natural environment when going for a nature walk through the woods. For example, jumping in muddy puddles and identifying horse foot prints in the ground.

Creativity is developing well; role play and children modelling during classroom activities. Colourful artwork is displayed. However, there is no sand or water play available which means it limits children's opportunities to explore natural and sensory materials.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They are able to co-operate and share. This is helped by the positive strategies and role models the staff provide. At lunchtime and tidying up times children co-operate well in helping. Staff support children as they learn to share, providing them with good explanations. All children are beginning to learn good manners as they are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank-you' at snack time.

The nursery provide a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the world such as books, displays, dolls and costumes that show people from different cultures and occupations. However, there is not a designated member of staff for behaviour management.

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

The staff have a satisfactory understanding of children's learning and developmental needs, ensuring they meet any child's special needs, for example, developing individual care plans, if required. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator works with outside agencies to ensure good support is provided within the setting.

The partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the opportunities parents have to discuss their children's individual needs and progress with the head teacher. This happens both on a daily basis and prior to the children moving onto school when records staff keep on children are shared with parents. However, the information that parents receive about the Foundation

Stage of Learning is limited. Parents are able to read about special events and to learn of the themes children are exploring through regular newsletters. Positive comments were made by parents receiving the service.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

There are sound systems in place to ensure that staff working with children have been checked and are suitable. Individual files demonstrate staff's suitability to work with children. There is a clear induction procedure for new staff to ensure that policies are discussed and understood.

Children are grouped in a mixed aged classroom. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure that sufficient staff work directly with the children and during free-play times. This ensures that children have good support as they are cared for by staff they know well.

The operational plan includes a balance of active and quiet activities. However, the outdoor area is not reflected in the planning for all children which limits their potential for learning. Children generally have good opportunities to choose activities, but there are limited natural resources for children to explore. Younger children and new children lack the confidence or do not know what activities they can request; this reduces their opportunities to access the resources fully.

Children's individual needs are generally well met, although there is not a system to monitor that all children have regular drinks, so they do not become dehydrated. Children's behaviour is managed appropriately and therefore they benefit from the positive staff attitude to equal opportunities. However, there is no designated named person with responsibility for behaviour management.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff are led by a committed manager who is a cheerful and positive role model. As a result, staff work well as a team to provide a stimulating and challenging environment for children. She carefully monitors and evaluates the quality of care and education provided by regularly appraising staff and identifying any training needs. There is an effective communication system between the team. However, there is limited information available to parents about the Foundation Stage of learning.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

### **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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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):

- appoint a named designated person for behaviour management
- ensure the book corner is made inviting to the children[this also applies to nursery education]
- review the activities to ensure children are able make independent choices
- devise a system to ensure children have regular drinks to ensure they do not become dehydrated
- provide children with the opportunities to explore natural materials[this also applies to nursery education]

#### 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 that outdoor activities are included in the planning[this also includes care]
- enhance the information available to parents with regard to the Foundation Stage 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)