



## Rocking Horse Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY339096
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 February 2007
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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?

Rocking Horse Montessori Nursery School registered in October 2006. The nursery is privately owned. It operates from dedicated rooms within a residential property in Caversham, near Reading. The children have access to an enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The nursery is open every week day morning between 9.15 and 12.30 and for a full day on Wednesdays until 15.00, during term time only. A maximum of 16 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 15 children on roll, 11 of whom receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and those who have English as an additional language.

Four members of staff work directly with the children. Of these staff, three hold teaching qualifications and the fourth NVQ level 3.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn how to keep themselves healthy through the daily routines and hygiene practices. They know to wash their hands before snack, after messy play such as painting and after toileting. They know the importance of using tissues and disposing of them appropriately. Staff follow good procedures to prevent the spread of infection such as cleaning the tables thoroughly before snack time.

Staff have good knowledge of each child's medical and dietary needs, so promote the children's well-being and health. Staff have training in first aid and know the procedures to follow if a child is unwell. Supporting documentation, such as accident records are in place and countersigned by parents. This ensures that they are fully aware of accidents that have happened to their child. However children's full names are not used and staff initial the records rather than sign.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, which encourages them to develop healthy eating habits. Children help the staff to prepare the snack. Snack time is a social occasion where children learn to develop their independence skills by selecting their own snack, carefully spooning the food onto their own individual plates, pouring their own drinks and washing up their own plates and glasses after use.

Children enjoy being outside in the fresh air and regularly play outside daily, if the weather permits. Children are encouraged to go outside but are not pressured to do so if they do not want to. All children enjoy being able to help with the rabbits, stroking them gently and feeding them. The children have opportunities to dig in the garden and rake the soil as well as using a range of equipment such as the balancing beam and climbing frame. Indoors, they choose from a good range of resources that develop their physical skills, for example practical life resources and Montessori equipment.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are clean, well maintained and welcoming for the children. Staff undertake daily informal safety checks, which ensures that the areas used by the children are safe. Children know the rules in place for keeping themselves safe, for example, not running indoors and making sure that their chairs are tucked in under the table. Staff give the children reminders about safety issues and are vigilant in their supervision of the children, especially when outside. The staff are aware of the hazards in the outside area. The outside area is to be landscaped and staff know that they need to ensure the children's safety when this happens.

The staff know the routes of escape should evacuation be needed from the building. However children do not take part in regular evacuation practises, so are unfamiliar with the procedure.

Children move around easily and safely around the well laid out environment. They choose age and stage appropriate resources and activities. They have a good range to choose from and reach these easily from the low-level shelving units within the rooms.

Staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child, which ensures that the children's welfare is safe-guarded. However, the child protection policy does not include the procedures to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

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

The provision is good.

The children enter the setting confidently and settle well to activities. The staff greet the children individually by name as they arrive. Staff shake hands with them and say good afternoon when they leave which makes each child feel important and valued. The children independently select the toys and resources they wish to use, directing their own play. Staff make suggestions if children appear not to have made a decision.

Children benefit from the consistent routine, which enables them to identify different times in the day, so making them feel settled. The staff know each child's individual stage of development and learning and encourage them to progress at their own pace. They have positive relationships with the children and support the children's learning and development. They encourage and extend the children's learning by asking questions and using assessments, particularly when working individually with the children.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are becoming independent as they select their own resources, carry them carefully to a table or mat, do the activity and then put the resources away. They are independent in their self-care skills for example, taking themselves to the toilet, washing hands, getting their own snack, and putting on their own coats and boots.

At group times, the children sit for a long time and some children become disruptive which spoils the enjoyment of others. Children initiate conversations and talk confidently with others. They use language well to communicate their thoughts, feelings and to express themselves. They are learning about different letters and sounds through activities for example I Spy game with objects beginning with 'K'. The children see their names in print on cards for example on their pegs and when they self register for snack. The children enjoy mark making using different tools such as painting and colouring with crayons but have few opportunities to practise emergent writing. They enjoy reading books and know how to use these correctly.

The children count confidently for instance when taking part in rhymes and songs, adding and subtracting with the staff when using the Montessori equipment. They use a good range of mathematical language appropriately and they are beginning to explore mathematical concepts such as bigger and smaller. The children learn about different shapes and can name these correctly for example an oval, which a child describes as like an egg.

The children have opportunities to engage in physical activities daily during outside play, which they enjoy. They enjoy practical life activities such as raking and digging in the garden. They have opportunities for climbing and balancing. They move confidently around the environment both in and out of doors. They show limited spatial awareness when sitting in the circle at story time not allowing enough space for each other to sit comfortably. However at other times they use the space available well, choosing different sizes of mats to use on the tables with their activities and pieces of blanket on the floor. They carry trays and items competently and fold blankets up neatly when they have finished. They use the Montessori equipment confidently and items such as glue sticks, paint brushes and pencils correctly and with good control.

The children learn about their own and different cultures through themes, for example the afternoon children are learning about the Inuit people and their way of life, using a story as a basis. The children use a globe to find out where other countries are and attempt complicated puzzles of the European countries.

The children are learning about the animal world as they help to care for the rabbits and have made fat balls to put out for the birds. They know that kangaroos are found in Australia where it is hot and sunny and that penguins live in Antarctica where it is very cold and icy.

The children are learning about themselves and can identify the parts of their bodies. They understand the need to wrap up warm when they go outside to play. They are beginning to understand and use technology such as the telephones and the headsets. They enjoy investigating, exploring and experimenting, for example, how the sand and chalk separate when they are sifted and why they cannot dig the garden because the ground is too hard as it is frosty.

The children enjoy singing songs and rhymes and can sing these from memory. They like choosing the rhymes and ask questions about these, for example asking what a Dame is when singing Baa, Baa Black sheep. They join in with the actions to the action songs. The children enjoy imaginative play especially in the garden where they pretend they are going on trips and that they are gardeners like mummy. They have opportunities to use different mediums during art activities but some activities are adult led, so the children do not use their own creativity.

The staff have secure knowledge of the early learning goals and how children learn. An effective curriculum is in place, which gives children a wide range of experiences. The Montessori curriculum is cross-referenced to both the Foundation Stage early learning goals and Birth to three matters, to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all the children. The planning is displayed for parents to see.

The individual needs of the children are known by the staff, who identify the next steps for each child's learning. Their achievements are recorded for the different areas, for example practical life and maths, so all staff know where to guide the children and observe next. The staff share the records with parents on an informal basis and are implementing regular meetings to discuss the progress of each child with their parents.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have positive relationships with the staff and other children. Staff meet and greet the children and parents individually which gives them a sense of belonging. The children know the rules in place for their safety, for example walking in the playrooms, putting their chairs under the tables and putting back resources in the correct place when they have finished an activity. The children generally behave well but children displaying disruptive behaviour spoil the enjoyment for others, particularly at story time. Staff are calm in their approach to managing behaviour, however not all are consistent when dealing with disruption. The staff know the children's individual needs and support the children well. They use praise and encouragement of the children's efforts and achievements, which builds on their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Children have access to a good range of resources that reflect positive images of different cultures and abilities, which increases their understanding of the diversity of society. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff and parents exchange information at the beginning and end of sessions. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting, the Montessori curriculum and the Foundation Stage. However formal records have not yet been shared with parents.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the good organisation of the setting. The environment is very well organised for the children to use and allows them to independently select resources. The sessions are well planned. However group time in the morning is too long for the younger children and others become disruptive as space is limited.

The staff work well together as a team. They deploy themselves around the rooms effectively and support the children well. They demonstrate good knowledge of the early learning goals and child development, so enabling them to meet each child's individual needs. The staff are confident in the understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The procedure in place for the recruiting and the checking of staff safeguards the children. However, the system for the collation of the staff records is not fully in place.

All the required documentation is in place. However accident records only show the children's first names and confidentiality is not assured on these or the incident records as other children are referred to by name. Policies and procedures are in place which the staff follow and are known to parents. Some lack detail, in particular the safeguarding policy which does not include the procedures to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff. There is no written statement about children with learning difficulties and disabilities, although it is covered in general terms within the Equal Opportunities policy.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The principal works alongside the staff so is able to monitor and evaluate the care and education. The principal is aware of the strengths

and weaknesses of the provision and is putting strategies in place to improve these, in particular the outside learning environment for the children.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **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.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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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 that the children become familiar with evacuation procedures by implementing regular drills
- develop staff's awareness of and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour consistently
- review the organisation of group time to ensure that it is not too long for the younger children and that each child has their own space
- review all documentation, policies and procedures to ensure that these contain all the necessary detail and are in line with current regulation; in particular a statement about children with learning difficulties and disabilities and the extension of the safeguarding policy to include the procedures to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

### **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):

- extend the opportunities for children to use their emergent writing in the environment
- extend the opportunities for children to use their own creativity in activities.

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)