



West Acre Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254343
Inspection date	12 May 2005
Inspector	Sally Ann Hubbard
Setting Address	The Old Chapel, East Walton, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE32 1PU
Telephone number	01760 337316
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Registered person	West Acre Montessori School
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?

West Acre Montessori School has been established for 23 years. In 2001 it moved to The Old Chapel in the village of East Walton to the south east of King's Lynn. It has sole use of the premises. The children who attend come from a 15 mile radius of the setting.

There are currently 27 children on roll aged from two and a half years to under five years. This number includes 23 children in receipt of funding. The school supports

children with special educational needs but has none attending who speak English as a second language.

The group currently operates on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.00 until 12.00 and on a Tuesday and Thursday from 9.00 until 14:45, during school term times only. The directress and her deputy work full time and the two other members of staff work part-time. Two members of staff have a Montessori qualification and a third is working towards this. Three of the staff are also qualified to NVQ level 3.

The setting predominantly uses Montessori teaching methods. Support is received from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from good health and hygiene procedures, which are implemented by staff. They gain a good understanding of hygiene and are able to be independent in their personal care, helping themselves to fruit and water when they need to throughout the morning and water during the afternoon. Children's individual dietary needs and preferences are always respected with parents providing food if they wish to.

Children play outdoors once or twice during the day and are appropriately dressed, for example they wear coats and boots when it is windy and cold.

Children enjoy playing outdoors and run around using the equipment skilfully, balancing on the logs, climbing on the frame, hanging from the bars and also swinging on the swing without any adult assistance.

Children are developing good physical skills at a variety of activities, which include action songs and rhymes and using small items of equipment, such as clay tools and scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in bright, attractive and welcoming environment where examples of their work are displayed around the room for everyone to see.

Children are kept safe and risks throughout the setting are minimised by staff, who make daily checks to ensure the premises and outdoor area are safe for children to use. Children are very well supervised by staff but are also able to extend themselves especially, when using the outdoor equipment.

Children select and use a range of resources and equipment and handle this carefully showing regard. They show awareness of safety as they are taught to carry

furniture such as chairs, storage tubs and other equipment carefully around the room, as they get resources out and return it to the shelves.

Children are protected by staff who are trained in and have understanding of child protection issues and clear procedures to follow.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range and balance of activities, which are planned to cover all areas of learning. They show high levels of concentration and perseverance and show willingness to assist others with their Montessori work and other activities. They have very good relationships with staff and arrive happily, immediately involving themselves in activities. Staff know the children very well as individuals and as a result children are confident and well settled. They show excellent levels of personal independence, when they take themselves to the toilet and put on coats and boots for outside play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and know where the Montessori equipment and resources fit into this. They plan together to cover all six areas of learning over a period of time and include all children in this planning. They use gentle questions to encourage the children to think and describe things they are seeing, feeling and hearing.

Children are well motivated and able to work independently, in small groups or participate in larger group activities. They are confident and able to access all of the resources. Children listen well at group time to stories and are eager to contribute and participate. They access mark making equipment and use these to draw and some are able to write recognisable letters of the alphabet. Children have visual displays of print around them in the environment, enabling them to associate words to everyday items such as, the clock, door and windows.

Children ask questions about things in the nursery, one child is very inquisitive about the laptop computer, enquiring about how it works and what the buttons are for and looking at the different shells in a box. Staff extend this by asking well timed questions to support children's learning.

Children can explore their local environment and have very good opportunities to go for nature walks and learn about the countryside. They become involved in events locally, such as lambing time and shearing on the nearby farm and make the guy for the local bonfire. Children learn about living things, planting seeds and watching them grow and caring for them outdoors, feeding fish and looking after them, washing up and helping to tidy away. Children have many opportunities to develop mathematical skills from counting at register time to identifying the shapes of the wooden blocks they are using. They use the Montessori equipment well to develop their understanding of maths, such as numbers, shapes, size and volume. Children competently make models with plasticine, using tools to make patterns and moulding

it into different shapes. They make collages looking at the patterns on different animals, such as giraffes and zebras, linking in with the pattern theme they are following. Children enjoy using the role play area, washing the baby doll in a caring way and taking a baby for a walk in the buggy, during a game of 'mums and dads'.

When children first start, staff find out about their interests and their individual ability, as a result staff are able to build on what children already know and can do. Assessments are in place and staff are beginning to use these to identify the next steps in learning, but they have not yet found a way to incorporate this into their written plans, and as a result children's progress is not fully recorded.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of our diverse society and the wider world is effectively promoted because good quality images and resources are provided. Additional resources are brought in to support individual topics and themes, for example photographs of people from different countries are displayed for children to see and staff and parents bring in items from their travels to other countries, which are used in discussions with the children.

Children are respected as individuals and well integrated into the school. They benefit because staff make appropriate assessments and work closely in partnership with parents and others. Children generally behave well, with some needing to be reminded of rules and given direction, but this is done in a calm relaxed manner by staff. Children are polite and show respect and consideration for others because staff encourage good manners and act as appropriate role models. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

The school has good partnerships with parents. Children are progressing well because staff seek views and share information about the children's care and education and provide opportunities for parents to discuss children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The premises are well organised and indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. Children benefit from well qualified, experienced and skilled staff who work well together as a team to provide a good range of activities to meet the children's needs. They are kept safe because there are effective vetting and employment procedures in place. All required documentation and records to support the operation of the school are available. These are well organised and accessible, however the register of attendance is not always accurate and as a result staff may not know how many children are present in an emergency situation. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend well.

The leadership and management of the school are good. Children are motivated to

learn because staff provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere. There is a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong focus on personal achievements and development for all children. Children are progressing because there are effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the curriculum, to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care and nursery education inspection recommended that the school develop their procedures for lost or uncollected children and child protection. They were also asked to develop children's imaginative play, improve the use of books in a variety of situations and to ensure children's assessments inform planning and their progress is fully monitored.

A policy has been developed to include the action to be taken if a child is lost or uncollected and the child protection policy has been improved and updated to include information, contact details and the procedure to be followed, if an allegation is made against a member of staff. As a result staff are better able to ensure children's safety.

The school has created a well resourced role play area both inside and outside, which the children enjoy using. Children access a variety of books, which are factual, fictional and pictorial and these are used to support their learning within topics. Although assessments are in place and staff are beginning to use these to identify the next steps in learning, they have not yet found a way to incorporate this into their written plans, and as a result children's progress is not fully recorded.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 an accurate record of attendance is maintained at all times

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):

- continue to develop the use of children's assessments to identify the next steps for children's learning and ensure these inform future planning

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