

Maynard Montessori - Stebbing

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337575
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Inspector	Lynn Clements
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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?

Maynard Montessori Nursery was registered at the present site in 2006. Maynard is the sister nursery school to Westwood Montessori Nursery in Thaxted. The nursery operates from within the main school building. The nursery offers care to the children from the local and surrounding communities.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 26 children at any one time. There are currently children 56 on roll. This includes 32 funded children. Staff have strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is open from 09.00 to 14.45 each week day during term time only.

The nursery employs 11 members of staff. Eight members of staff including the manager hold relevant early years qualifications. Three members of staff are currently working towards appropriate qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop their independence as they confidently take themselves to the toilet to see to their personal needs. Visual clues displayed in the hand washing areas helps to remind children to wash their hands thoroughly, to prevent germs from hurting their tummies. Paper towels are used to limit cross contamination. There is a clear sick child policy which is shared with parents and carers to prevent the spread of infection. All parents and carers complete records prior to placement providing staff with valuable information about children's individual needs, such as medical requirements, allergies and their likes and dislikes. Records are updated to ensure staff continue to meet children's changing needs. Staff have clear systems in place to obtain written instructions from parents about any medication their children require. Relevant permission is in place to protect children in an emergency. All members of staff have completed first aid training enabling them to respond and care for children in the event of an accident. Any accidents occurring on the premises are fully recorded and signed by members of staff and parental signatures are also obtained. However, during the inspection the accident record showed some inconsistencies with regard to obtaining parental signatures, this impacts on ensuring clear information is shared with parents and carers following minor accidents in the nursery. All health related documentation is kept securely and confidentiality is respected.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, with fresh fruit or vegetables every day. They grow different vegetables, such as lettuce, cabbage and onions, which they taste during snack or cooking activities. Children take turns helping to prepare the snack and learning about the different types of fruit from around the world. Children are encouraged to explore their personal likes or dislikes, tasting different foods at snack time or, with parents permission, during activities. Parents are encouraged to support the nursery's healthy eating programme by providing suitable packed lunches. Alternatively children have the opportunity to enjoy freshly prepared hot nutritious school lunches provided by the primary school. During discussion and activities, such as growing their own fruit and vegetables, children learn about the foods which help them grow and remain healthy and those which are not so good for them. They take part in regular exercise, such as climbing and balancing in the garden or making safaris in the school grounds as they observe wildlife in the local environment.

Children use a wide range of small and large apparatus which helps them develop their coordination and manipulation skills. They have free access everyday to the fully enclosed outside play area which enables them to join in activities on a larger scale than is possible indoors. Children demonstrate increasing control and show very good spatial awareness as they ride wheeled toys and negotiate space both inside and outside.

Staff have systems in place to support children under three years. All children are able to rest or be active according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is very well-organised. Attention to planning the play-space has provided children with free flow access around the classroom. Child-height storage, furniture and equipment enables all children to play and learn in safety and comfort. Children can extend their own games and ideas by selecting resources independently. Daily checks are made of all

child-accessible areas to ensure the environment remains safe for children. Annual risk assessments are conducted to meet health and safety requirements. All toys and resources are regularly checked and cleaned so they remain in good condition for the children to use. Staff help children to learn about the importance of doing things for themselves. The Montessori philosophy of tidying away between each activity also ensures the play space is kept free from tripping hazards.

Children are supervised closely at all times. Positive steps are taken to increase children's awareness about general safety. For example, they practise fire escape procedures to ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency. While out and about children learn about the importance of staying together and holding hands when crossing the road. Children learn how to hold knives correctly when helping to prepare snack to prevent injury. Staff check the identification of visitors and a record is maintained. There is a clear child collection procedure in place to prevent children leaving the nursery with unauthorised adults. Security systems are in place to alert staff to any child attempting to leave the nursery unescorted, such as the alarm system on the doors, which also alerts staff to any intruders.

Staff have recently completed relevant safeguarding children training which they implement in practice to protect children from harm. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures and how to make referrals to social services if they believe a child is at risk. Staff act in the best interests of the child at all times to ensure their welfare remains paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very confident and at home in the nursery. They rise to new challenges by questioning and trying things out for themselves. Children cooperate together as they extend their imaginative play, turning the living willow play-house into an African mud hut or making pretend journey's across the baking hot dessert on their large wooden train. They join in Montessori practical life experiences, pouring, mixing and discussing what they are doing with their friends and members of staff. Opportunities for children to develop their ideas based real or imagined experiences in high quality on-going role play scenarios are excellent. Large group activities are organised extremely well by staff and include children of all ages. Children help each other as they practise for their end of term concert. They remember the words to new songs and have tremendous fun matching actions and movements. Props are used during group story-times, engaging the children's interest and participation as they sit expectantly, hushing each other gently in anticipation of what happens next. Much to their delight, they meet 'George the Giraffe' a hand-puppet who helps them through the story. Children join in repeated refrains and help staff to tell the story as they join in making the different animal noises, such as roaring lions.

Staff have effective systems in place to support children under three-years to ensure they make progress. Children take part in planned and child-led activities designed to capture their interest and imagination. They are very confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other and staff. Staff are sensitive and supportive of all children. They use plenty of positive praise and encouragement which raises children's self-esteem and confidence. They value what children say and have high expectations of what they can achieve.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how this can work well within the Montessori philosophy. They use the 'Keep Track' system which enables them to monitor children's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, using traditional Montessori methods and activities in conjunction with play and everyday resources. Children make very good progress towards the six early learning goals. Daily observations are made by key worker staff which enables them to identify children's next steps for learning; this information is used by staff to help them plan activities and topics which build on previous understanding and ensure children are offered interesting and stimulating opportunities for continued progress. Plans are clear and cover all of the six areas for learning. However, while staff have a clear understanding about each child, differentiation in written planning enabling staff to adapt activities and challenge the less or more able child is limited.

Clear daily routines are in place and children demonstrate a sense of belonging within the nursery as they greet each other and members of staff when they arrive, hang up their belongings in the child friendly cloakroom or move freely to engage in child-led learning within the nursery. Children select story or information books, turning the pages correctly and showing a good understanding of how books are used to access information, for instance, when exploring Africa and finding out about the types of wild animals which live there, or having fun telling stories which make them laugh out loud. They use pictures as clues to the story-line when re-telling narratives. Children sit expectantly during whole group story time; they sit in anticipation waiting to see what artefacts or resources the staff have brought in to help them learn about their topic. Children select their name cards as they arrive and confidently link letter names and symbols. They develop mark making skills and emergent writing as they put their names on creations and use writing for a purpose in role play situations. For instance, as they play in their 'Italian café, taking orders and preparing menus. Children develop their calculation skills, for example, some children choose to sit inside joining in a creative activity to make safari binoculars, they count up how many other children remain, then they count how many adults are inside, after adding the numbers together they triumphantly announce that there are six people altogether staying inside. Children explore simple fractions as they prepare snack, cutting and chopping fruits into smaller pieces to share out with all the other children. They make repeating patterns and explore symmetry as they recreate butterfly pictures and prints, carefully making both wings match.

Children show an interest in the world around them. They grow fruits and vegetables and notice aeroplanes as they fly overhead. They bring in butterflies they have found at home providing opportunities for their friends to examine them up close and see the lovely colours. Children show curiosity as learners and investigate change, observing the seasons of the year and noticing how much their plants have grown, associating this with the care they have shown as they ensure their plants have lots of sunshine and water. Registration time provides opportunities for children to share their news from home or join in topic discussions. While exploring other countries children learn how to greet each other in different languages, for example, using the Swahili word 'Jambo' which means 'hello'. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore information communication technology as they use calculators and computers or remote controlled equipment with increasing understanding. Children discover the wider world around them, exploring other cultures and customs. They taste and recreate foods from around the world, such as Italian pizza's or Australian damper bread. They learn to move their bodies in different ways and develop their understanding that being active and exercising is good for you. Children enjoy experimenting with musical instruments as they accompany their favourite songs or make their own musical interpretations. They use their imagination to explore a variety of creative media.

Staff support children well through a balanced range of child-led and adult-initiated activities. Children move freely around the classroom and outside play area, joining in activities which interest them. They respond well to staff and show a willingness to try new activities without fear of failure.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff ensure there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender, race or disability. They engage children in topics and activities which help to increase their knowledge of the world around them. Interesting artefacts are used and educational trips are arranged to consolidate previous learning and help to bring the curriculum to life. Children use maps and globes to develop their understanding about the wider world. Visitors to the setting include parents and carers who share their skills and resources. Staff work exceptionally hard as a team to ensure they meet children's individual needs.

There are extremely effective procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parent or carer permission is sought enabling staff to work very effectively with other professionals in the best interests of the child. Parents and carers are fully consulted and included in all target setting to support their child to make progress. Staff are confident in seeking one to one funding as required and work closely with the area special needs co-ordinator, other professionals and feeder primary schools to promote smooth transitions for children into mainstream school.

Relationships are strong at all levels. Children are valued and as a result, they develop positive attitudes towards others. An incident record is in place. However, the incident record is not consistently completed or shared with parents and carers to support a unified approach when dealing with behaviour management. Children are confident in the nursery and with each other. They show care and consideration as they share items of interest from home or invite others to join in their imaginary play. They negotiate turn taking to ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate. Children benefit from the consistent routines and secure approach to their care. Staff use descriptive praise and encouragement, helping children to understand what they have done well. Children's confidence and self-esteem are high.

Parents views are discussed and valued. Staff support an 'open-door' policy enabling parents and carers to share their concerns as they arise. Forums are organised to ensure everyone has a voice. Notice boards provide excellent information for parents concerning all aspects of the nursery. Policies and procedures are shared and newsletters or emails are sent out regularly encouraging parents to share their skills and experiences by helping in the nursery. Children's needs are met well as staff work closely with parents and carers to promote continuity of care between home and the nursery. Information is sought from parents and carers enabling staff to get to know children and plan for their individual needs. Information about the curriculum's offered are discussed with parents and further information is made available in the welcome pack.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery funding is good. Records of assessment are in place and shared with parents on a regular basis. Parents and carers have opportunities to come into the setting to view and discuss their child's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have formalised systems which encourage the parents and carers to share observations about their children's achievements at home; this enables the key workers to make assessments based on the whole child. Information about the Foundation Stage

curriculum is made available to parents and carers enabling them to see for themselves what the six areas of learning are and how children can make positive progress through the stepping stones. Parents views and opinions are valued by the staff. Both staff and parents work closely together to support children during their formative years.

Staff are directly involved in the children's learning and all children are included and treated with equal concern. Children learn to share and help each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All regulatory policies and procedures are in place and updated as required. Systems for recording the arrival and departure times of children and staff are in place to ensure they are safely accounted for at all times. Staff employment procedures are robust to ensure children remain protected from harm.

Children are cared for by staff who have a very good knowledge and understanding of child development. The majority of staff hold relevant early years qualifications. Clear staff induction procedures are in place and monitoring systems, such as appraisals and staff meetings are implemented to support new and existing members of staff. Attention to ongoing professional development enables staff to keep their practice up to date. Clear development plans are in place and discussed with members of staff and the feeder primary school to increase opportunities for children, for example, the refurbishment of the outside play area and the development of a 'forest school'. All policies and procedures are implemented in practice to promote positive outcomes for children and ensure the nursery runs smoothly. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of the nursery funded provision is good. The provider and managers are responsive to the needs of children, parents and staff. Individual training budgets are in place and regular staff meetings support the successful delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum in conjunction with the Montessori philosophy. Managers monitor classroom practice to ensure all staff are working well with 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.

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 accident records are appropriately maintained and signed by the parents
- formalise systems with regard to dealing with incidents, ensure any incident is recorded and the parents informed of the incident on the day.

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):

- formalise differentiation in all areas of learning to show clearly how activities and resources are adapted to challenge the more or less able child.

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