

# Rainbow's End Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY344005
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Pamela Woodhouse
<b>Setting Address</b>	Parley First School, Glenmoor Road, West Parley, FERNDOWN, Dorset, BH22 8QE
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<b>Registered person</b>	Tina Hemming-Stevens
<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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rainbows End Montessori School opened in 2007 and operates from two playrooms in premises which are for their exclusive use. In addition there is a securely enclosed garden available for outside play. The premises are situated on Parley First School site in Ferndown, Dorset and a maximum of 28 children may attend the setting at any one time which is open each week day from 08:30 until 16:00 during term time. Children from the adjacent school can attend after school.

There are currently 45 children aged from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 35 receive funding for early education. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and English as an additional language.

The setting employs six members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The owner/manager is supernumerary, she has Montessori and Professional Status qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's well-being is suitably safeguarded due to the implementation of sensible practices and routines. They demonstrate through their actions and discussions that they are showing awareness of their personal care and hygiene issues. For example, they know why they routinely wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet rather than just doing this by rote. Children know to keep themselves cool by drinking plenty of water and some children comment that they have their long hair tied back to help keep them cool. They are appropriately protected when playing in the sun because there are suitable measures in place. These include wearing hats, having sun cream applied and playing under a gazebo so that they are in the shade. Appropriate procedures ensure that a record is maintained and shared with parents with regard to 1st Aid and the administration of medication, however, parental consent has not been sought to enable staff to seek medical assistance/advice in the case of an emergency situation.

Children's dietary needs are met. Their personal records include information about any allergies or dietary needs they may have which enables staff to offer food which is safe for them to eat and to handle, for example, during cooking activities. They have ready access to a water cooler where they can help themselves freely to a drink throughout the session and have healthy snacks. In addition they are growing a range of soft fruits, vegetables and herbs which they plan to cook/prepare and eat in the coming months. These activities help to promote their understanding of healthy eating.

Children are encouraged to engage in physical activity every day. Weather permitting they make daily use of the garden where they are able to play with a range of equipment which helps to develop their physical skills. Indoor space is more limited but some opportunities exist for moving to music and playing action games. They competently climb on the frame and expertly control their wheeled toys, stopping and starting to avoid collisions. They dig and rake the ground looking for worms and to tend their produce garden. Children also have many opportunities to develop their small muscle control. They use a range of equipment which encourages their hand/eye coordination such as filling and pouring from small containers and pencils and brushes to draw, write and paint.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is suitably maintained because there are appropriate measures in place to protect them from harm. They play in secure premises where daily checks are undertaken before they arrive to ensure that their environment is safe. In addition, a full internal and external risk assessment is undertaken regularly to identify and rectify potential hazards, for example, resiting an electrical socket away from a water source. Children and staff are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures and know what to do should a real emergency arise because these are practised at regular intervals.

Children use a range of toys and resources which promote their learning and are appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are clean and safe for them to use. All resources are displayed in an orderly fashion and the contents of baskets can be clearly seen which enables children to make their own choices and also promotes their independence.

Children's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded because staff have a basic understanding of child protection procedures. They are able to identify potential indicators of abuse and know to report concerns to the owner/manager but do not fully understand the procedures to follow.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are very confident and have high self-esteem. They happily leave their parents and quickly settle down to their self chosen activities which demonstrates their familiarity of routines and their self assuredness. Children have a warm relationship with staff, enjoying conversations and discussions about their activities and recalling past events. They have access to a range of activities which support their development and learning and are constructively occupied at times. However, some activities do not interest all children at the same time because they do not offer appropriate challenges, for example, the group story does not capture some children's attention because it is too long and they lose interest. Children have established real friendships with their peers and they are very sociable and confident amongst children and adults alike.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff know the children well and plan activities to support their individual progress, using a combination of methods including Montessori with some success. However, some staff do not have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals which impacts on their understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. New systems have recently been introduced to monitor the children's progress and their activities. Staff are learning how to implement these so that constructive observations and evaluations can be made to plan for the next steps in the children's learning. Children are very keen to learn and are making sound progress due to the owner/manager's influence. Staff encourage children to think through their own thoughts and ideas, asking open ended questions and praise them for their achievements. This helps to promote their enthusiasm for learning.

Children show interest in their activities and when sufficiently challenged persist for sustained periods of time. However, ineffective time management when preparing to play outside and during story time at the end of the session impacts on children's enjoyment. For example, they are asked to leave the group as their parents arrive and do not have the opportunity to hear the end of the story. Children are very independent, developing good self-care skills and are sociable and confident.

Children's language skills are developing well because staff encourage them to talk at every opportunity, they initiate their own conversations and join in with group discussions. As a result they have a strong command of language and a wide vocabulary. Children are beginning to write their names and have opportunities to develop their writing skills further in the course of their activities, for example, in the role play area. They are learning simple sounds, listening carefully to the tape and identifying what they can hear, matching the sound to their lotto card. Children's interest in number is encouraged informally, for example, counting the number of cups on the tea tray and in focussed activities. These include trying to guess the number as they trace around the sand card wearing a mask to prevent them from seeing. This helps them to identify by shape. They competently count to five matching the colours and numbers to the corresponding rod.

Children are beginning to learn about the world around them. They learn about the natural world through being actively engaged in practical activities such as planting and maintaining

their fruit and vegetable patch. A recent project on the life cycle of a butterfly helps them to understand in a simple way how life evolves. Children have some opportunities to use simple technology but this is not actively promoted. There are opportunities for them to express their imagination in the small role play area, they improvise well to develop their play. For example, using a magnifying glass to examine knees and look into eyes when playing at being doctors.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are appropriately met because staff ensure that they liaise with parents regularly and have sufficient information to be able to plan for their children's care. Procedures are in place to adequately support children with specific needs. Children's awareness of the wider world is promoted through activities which introduce them to other cultures as well as their own, for example, celebrating St Patrick's and St David's day, Eid and Chinese New Year. They also regularly use a range of resources which promote positive images of diversity such as books and dressing-up clothes.

Children behave well and most understand and respect the simple boundaries, for example, they share; take turns and show interest in their peers; and help and support each other with small tasks. Staff work closely with parents to promote a cohesive approach to managing behaviour at school and at home so that children are not confused by different strategies. They use some effective diversionary strategies and praise children regularly for their achievements, however, sometimes they are not convincing when responding to negative behaviour. As a result some children begin to take advantage of this.

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

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive regular information about the setting through newsletters, notice board and word of mouth to keep them updated about forthcoming events. Their children's progress is discussed with them at regular intervals, for example, there are opportunities for formal meetings, informal open days and the day-to-day exchange of information. In addition, a home/school link journal has been introduced which includes a brief outline of the children's routines that day and includes information about how they can help their children at home. Parents receive good information about the Montessori method of education, however, information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is not so detailed. This means that they are unable to see how both methods of learning complement each other to promote their children's progress through each area of learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable people are employed to care for the children and most staff have suitable qualifications in either mainstream or the Montessori method of education. This means that children benefit from both approaches to learning. Plans are in hand to offer training opportunities to all staff so that there is a fully trained staff team.

Sessions run generally well. They are organised to enable children to enjoy a range of experiences but the grouping of children and the timing of some activities are not always used effectively. This means that some children are not fully engaged or interested in what is happening. For example, some children are not interested in the story and spoil it for those who are, and the

preparation to play outside is lengthy. Space is used well and children are able to focus on particular activities such as maths and language development away from, but not separate from, the main activities. This means that they can play in a relatively quiet environment.

Children's well-being is satisfactorily supported. Required documentation relating to their care needs are maintained and most parental permissions have been obtained to ensure that they are cared for according to their parents wishes. The comprehensive range of policies and procedures sets out how the setting operates, however, these do not always reflect current practices due to a recent change of ownership.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The owner/manager has a very clear vision for the future of the setting and has started to implement changes to the organisation of the educational provision. As a result, children are benefiting from a wide curriculum which supports their learning in all areas. Regular staff meetings ensure that there are opportunities for staff to be involved in the planning and organisation of the educational provision and to build up effective team work, however, some staff are not confident in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the setting are being established to identify strengths and areas for development. These include training opportunities for staff and regular appraisals to monitor their progress and identify areas for their personal development.

#### **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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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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 parental consent is requested to enable advice/assistance to be sought in the case of a medical emergency
- develop staff confidence and understanding of safeguarding children procedures
- further develop policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect the ownership and ethos of the setting and are put into practice

### **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):

- develop staff understanding of the early learning goals and how these support the Foundation Stage curriculum
- ensure that information for parents includes information about how the curriculum for the Foundation Stage of learning is promoted
- make more effective use of time, particularly during group times and in the preparation of activities such as outdoor play to engage children's interest (also applies to care)

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