

Wise Owl Montessori Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116731
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Inspector	Samantha Hunt
Setting Address	United Reformed Church, Cores End Road, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire, SL8 5HZ
Telephone number	01628 525210 and 523724
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Registered person	Wise Owl Montessori Ltd.
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 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?

Wise Owl Montessori Nursery School opened in 1994. It operates from two halls in the United Reformed Church on the outskirts of Bourne End, Buckinghamshire. The setting has access to an enclosed secure garden area.

There are currently 27 children on roll. These include 12 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00.

Four staff work with the children. All staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and follows the Montessori method of teaching.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children engage in a range of physical activities that contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Daily access to the upstairs hall or the outside courtyard enables the children to practise and develop physical skills well. Many children confidently catch and throw balls, climb up the steps and go down the slide or slowly walk across the balancing beam, holding out their arms to steady themselves.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn to become aware of good hygiene practices. For example, older children independently access tissues when they need to wipe their noses and know to place the tissues in the bin. Staff actively encourage children to wash and dry hands after using the toilet and before snack time. However, children do not always have access to individual hand towels and the one available in the bathroom is also used by other visitors to the hall. This compromises children's health and hygiene. Staff follow effective procedures when changing nappies and preparing snack that include wearing gloves.

Children learn the importance of healthy eating. They have a daily snack of fresh fruit such as grapes, apples and bananas. Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the session with children being offered milk or water at snack time. Snack time is a social occasion with children engaging in conversations about their favourite fruit. Staff collate information of children's individual dietary needs and ensure that information is shared with all staff so that risks to children's welfare are minimized.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in an environment, which is bright and welcoming. They are freely able to access a suitable range of toys and equipment set out on low level shelving around the room. This encourages them to begin to make their own choices and decisions about what to play with. Security of the building is good and staff are vigilant at the beginning and end of the session as they supervise the main entrance to ensure children do not leave without a parent or carer.

Children become aware of their own safety through clear boundaries and discussion with staff. For example, staff remind them to hold on to the hand rails when using the stairs and not to run in the setting. The fire evacuation is practised regularly, this helps children to become familiar with the evacuation procedures should they need to leave the building in an emergency. Staff carry out a daily formal risk assessment of the building to ensure risks to children's safety are minimised. Safety features such as door wedges in the toilet ensure children do not catch their fingers.

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection and the procedures to follow in order to safeguard children in the setting. There are effective systems in place to ensure children are kept safe from unvetted persons. All documentation is in place to support and help promote children's welfare in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children relate well towards one another, staff and visitors. Most children part well from parents and carers, and clearly enjoy their time at nursery. Younger children receive lots of support from staff as they settle into nursery and begin to form friendships with their peers. All children use their imaginations well, such as pretending to be a hairdresser cutting and styling a member of staff's hair carefully in the home corner. All children take part in group activities well. For example at music time they choose an instrument and then listen well to the music as they confidently play along following the beat. Staff effectively plan a daily routine and activities to provide children with a balanced range of structured and free play experiences. This makes children's learning and enjoyment a positive experience.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are taking effective steps to help the children progress in all areas. Staff regularly monitor the children's progress and use observations effectively to plan the future curriculum. Children communicate well with staff and one another. They are eager to participate at group times and share news such as where they have been on holiday or where they are going after nursery. Children share and take turns well, for example when building a train track children divide the trains up fairly according to the colours. Children listen well to stories and know that print carries meaning. Staff make stories interesting and exciting for the children as they encourage them to anticipate what might happen next before turning the page. However, children do not access the book area independently or look at books spontaneously by themselves. Many older children can write their names and younger ones are beginning to form letters with good support from staff. They are beginning to link letters to sounds and can identify their own names at snack time.

Many children confidently count to 10 and have regular opportunities to develop mathematical thinking. For example, they mix together corn flour and water, staff encourage them to feel and smell the corn flour both before and after mixing it with water. Children use language such as longer, shorter, heavy and lighter when taking part in activities with the Montessori blocks and rods. Staff use good questioning techniques to encourage children's learning further.

Children have daily opportunities to express themselves creatively through drawing and painting, and experience a variety of textures and materials, such as corn flour and water, play dough and glue. Children enjoy physical play both indoors and out and confidently handle a variety of tools such as rolling pins, paint brushes, scissors, pens and pencils. Staff show a good understanding of the children's individual stages of development and take good steps to meet and support them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are valued and respected. Staff encourage all children to participate in activities to help them learn and develop. This helps them to feel secure in the setting. Children's behaviour is good. Staff set children clear boundaries and deal with inappropriate behaviour in a calm consistent manner. Staff give children good praise and encouragement, and respond warmly to children's requests, for example helping to put on dressing up clothes and aprons.

Children become aware of the wider world through discussion and practice with the staff. They celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year and harvest, and learn about other countries around the world when discussing their summer holidays. Staff meet children's individual needs effectively. There are clear policies and procedures in place to support and identify children with special needs, although none currently attend the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive a variety of information on the setting both written and verbal, which includes the Foundation Stage, Birth to three matters, behaviour management, sickness and how to make a complaint. Regular newsletters and information such as the current topic help to keep parents involved in the setting and how they can support their children's learning at home. Children's individual files are easily accessible and parents receive a regular written report that keeps them up to date with their child's progress. Settling in procedures are good, staff liaise with parents prior to children starting and actively encourage parents to stay until children have settled. Staff collated details relating to parental wishes, allergies, likes and dislikes but do not get written permission from parents to photograph children in the setting. Parents in the setting state they are happy with the care and education their children receive. Staff are approachable and greet parents in a friendly manner.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Organisation of the setting is effective. Children are able to move around freely and safely within the playroom. Good organisation of toys and resources enables them to self-select and feel at ease in the setting.

All regulatory documentation that promotes children's health, safety and welfare is in place. Staff keep records of children's attendance and record accidents effectively however staff ratios are not always effectively maintained. Information related to the setting such as the certificate of registration and policies and procedures are clearly displayed for parents.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are good. The manager demonstrates a clear understanding of the settings strengths and weaknesses. There are effective systems in place to support and monitor staff development. Staff are actively supported to attend training and extend their learning. Staff work well together and meet regularly to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum to meet the children's individual needs. The setting seeks regular guidance and support from the local authority to help monitor the quality of care and education they provide.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to make available to parents, a written statement that provides details of procedures to be followed if they have a complaint and devise systems to enable a summary of any complaint to be shared with other parents on request. To ensure there are effective child protection procedures in place, which comply with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). They were also asked to continue to review the planning of activities and the evaluation of children's learning, and review the system for staff appraisals to ensure the discussions and outcomes are recorded.

Both actions and recommendations from last inspection have been clearly addressed. A comprehensive complaints procedure and log are now in place which detail how the setting will deal with any complaints and are freely accessible to parents on request. The child protection policy has been updated to comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and two members of staff have attended up to date training in child protection. The setting continues to review planning and evaluation of children's learning, staff regularly observe children and meet to discuss their progress before using evidence to inform future planning. A written staff appraisal system has been introduced to formalise and monitor staff development effectively.

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.

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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):

- continue to assess and improve hygiene procedures in the toilet to ensure risks to children's health are minimized
- ensure ratios are effectively maintained at all times
- improve documentation to ensure that parental consent is obtained to take photographs of the children.

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):

- encourage children to use the book corner and freely access the books.

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