

# Oxford Montessori Nursery Wolvercote

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134041
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jan Leo
<b>Setting Address</b>	Wolvercote Green, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX2 8BD
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<b>Registered person</b>	Judith Walker
<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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Oxford Montessori Children's House Wolvercote Day Nursery opened in 1992. It is one of four settings in the Oxford Montessori group and operates from Wolvercote Village Hall which overlooks the village common in Wolvercote. It is close to the Oxford ring road and children attend the nursery from all areas of Oxfordshire. A maximum of 46 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There is an enclosed outdoor play area for supervised outdoor play.

There are currently 52 children from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 39 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and eight who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery operates five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:30 until 15:00. There is some flexibility over starting and finishing times and children may attend for sessions, or all day.

The nursery employs six staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications, and one is working towards a Montessori qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

All children at the setting thrive because they follow a healthy lifestyle. Younger children play outdoors several times each day to benefit from fresh air, while older children have free access to the outside play area and can choose where to spend their time. Most opt for active games in the open air in order to develop their physical skills and coordination while climbing, jumping and running about. All are very confident and have full control over their movements. Some shoot headfirst down the slide while others jump from considerable heights from a range of equipment providing different levels of challenge. The staff stand by to offer help if needed but routinely encourage children to try things for themselves and develop independence. The children form exceptionally good relationships with all adults working in the setting. They happily snuggle on adults laps for a story, or involve staff in their games displaying a real sense of security and pleasure at being part of the group. The staff promote good hygiene by keeping the environment clean and teaching children to wash their hands thoroughly to remove dirt and germs at regular intervals. Staff wear aprons and gloves to serve food from children's lunch boxes, but they do not always provide plates for children to eat from at snack time to promote etiquette and good food hygiene. Children learn about healthy eating by becoming involved in growing crops and discussing the origins and benefits of different foods. The staff advise parents and carers of suitable contents for lunch boxes, and staff ensure children have ample milk or water to drink when they are thirsty. First aid boxes are full of up to date supplies and there is always a first aider at the provision in order to treat injuries effectively, to rapidly relieve distress.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are safe because the staff systematically follow secure entry procedures, provide unfailing supervision, and successfully teach children how to play safely and protect themselves from harm both on and off site. Children have a large amount of space, which is organised extremely effectively to ensure they can develop their own ideas without encroaching on other children's games. They define their own space by the effective use of mats, and learn to take responsibility for keeping the floors clutter free, packing away one lot of equipment before getting something else out. The children know where resources live and access them safely from low-level storage boxes. Most of the equipment is made from high quality, natural materials. The setting is a 'pack away' group, which enables staff to check all resources every time they come out and, as a result, all are in very good condition. The staff keep a record of all visitors and hold accurate registers to provide clear details of who is on site. They supervise tirelessly to promote safety without hampering children's development, and all children play sensibly, setting themselves achievable challenges. For example, one child competently climbed to the top of a fence but struggled to step over at the top while holding a toy. She confidently asked a friend to hold the toy for her in order to complete the task and achieve her goal. Staff, watching from close by, waited for less confident children to try to copy and then calmly suggested they could use the gate when failure looked imminent. All areas are safe for the

children because the staff complete thorough risk assessments and carry out daily safety checks to identify and remove hazards. Children practise fire drills at the beginning of each term to ensure they become familiar with the evacuation process soon after starting at the nursery. Staff have a very clear understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children from harm. They attend training regularly to keep their knowledge up to date, hold reference material on file to aid speedy referrals, and monitor children closely to preserve their welfare.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children benefit from a highly motivated staff group, skilful planning to suit individual needs, and inspiring delivery of the activities. Throughout the setting, the focus is on what the children like and they freely choose what to do, linking with friends and seeking out resources to develop their ideas. The staff enable children to become independent by setting few limits and giving full and appropriate explanations to steer them into making sensible choices. Staff skilfully repeat concepts to reinforce children's understanding by, for example, referring and pointing to 'empty' jugs, plates, trays and boxes throughout the morning with young children to help expand their vocabulary. The staff set high expectations at all times and, as a result, the children are sociable, confident, independent and self-motivated.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff know the children exceptionally well, monitor their interests and achievements, and plan a basic programme as a starting point to inspire all who attend. They let children fulfil their natural curiosity and are proactive in extending ideas to help children develop and learn. All staff have an extraordinary ability to make learning fun and effortless. For example, staff's own enthusiasm at circle times results in children eagerly wanting to help count those present, joining in singing with gusto, and confidently suggesting activities. The staff are a cohesive group that unquestionably puts children first and, as a result, the children settle well, they remain productively occupied throughout the day, and they are extremely confident. The children form very good friendships and play considerably well alone or in groups. They understand and follow boundaries willingly, to please the staff and make the nursery a friendly and welcoming place to be. The children take full control of their personal care and have high self-esteem.

All children communicate very clearly with adults and their peers. They talk about what they do, share ideas giving roles to others, and have fun linking sounds and letters at circle time. Children competently sign while singing and even correct staff if they get the gestures wrong. The children listen well to everything around them and respond with giggles when the music teacher sings the wrong words on purpose to add humour. The children have highly developed imaginations; some suggesting adults hurry to escape the crocodile, while others plan family scenarios to act out. Children learn to recognise their names and frequently practice mark making to improve control over their movements. They develop a love of books because staff read so enthusiastically at group story time, and children freely choose books to look at on their own.

The staff successfully introduce mathematical concepts throughout the day to reinforce what children know through relevant, practical activities. Several children competently count, in groups or alone, to double figures and they have a firm understanding when matching numbers and objects. They use a wide range of puzzles and games to sort, match and build, developing a strong interest in how things fit together. Children freely access equipment to create items

for a particular purpose, making telescopes by cutting and joining resources together while playing at pirates. They work alongside staff at the computer and enjoy listening to music via headphones. All know the routine well and even remind friends what to do if they take time to respond. The children talk about past and future events in their personal life to display their understanding of time and place, and share information about their own culture.

Children access and use a wide range of equipment safely and competently. They are well coordinated and eagerly stretch themselves to take on new challenges. Some use equipment for their own purpose by, for example, using a hoop to sweep a path in the bark chippings when scooting outside. All respond well to what they see and some automatically link with friends to share the burden of carrying awkward boxes when packing away. All thoroughly enjoy music, and most bob up and down in time with the beat as they sing loudly and tunefully. Some clap and click their fingers in syncopated rhythm to add their individual mark on the songs, all of which ingeniously include other areas of learning to revise and build on what children already know.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children feel very welcome because they receive a lot of individual attention from staff. They follow their own interests, which staff value and extend to help children progress. All have equal access to the resources and the staff make sure every child feels secure and is engaged by giving cuddles and one to one help whenever necessary. Staff work closely with parents and carers of children with special needs in order to build a strong partnership of care and ensure a consistent approach. They have regular meetings with outside health professionals to prepare individual development plans for children with special needs, which include areas of focus and achievable goals. As a result, all children join in fully, know what to expect, and behave exceptionally well. The staff are all very good role models and they impose few rules. They consistently give children choices and explain consequences clearly to help children make the right decisions. This creates a strong sense of community, makes the children very sociable and eager to help. The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. All parents and carers receive regular updates about the setting. They talk frequently to their children's key worker to find out about recent progress, attend parents' evenings for more formal feedback, and receive regular newsletters about changing topics and events. Comprehensive information about the ethos, activities, procedures and policies is on display for all who use the provision. This enables families to feel part of their children's learning and development, and helps them to continue work at home if they wish. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The staff have to pack everything away each day but, despite that, they create a very attractive and welcoming environment with colourful posters, displays of children's work, and an array of visual aids to inspire activities. Staff promote safety and most aspects of good health as a matter of routine to instil good habits for later life. All children's learning extends from their individual interests making it relevant and engaging. As a result, every child has a thoroughly good time at the nursery and makes exceptional progress in their development. All of the documentation, required

by regulation, is in place. Staff organise paperwork in well laid out folders, which are readily available in order to help provide a professional and efficient service.

As far as the nursery education is concerned, the leadership and management of the provision are outstanding. The management monitors day-to-day practice and works closely with staff to develop high standards throughout. They supervise and appraise staff to identify areas of focus, and support ongoing personal development by encouraging further training. On a daily basis, the staff plan and deliver a very varied and stimulating programme with great enthusiasm. They work exceptionally well together to support children's learning and development on an individual level, and continually review their practice looking for ways to improve.

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

There were four recommendations set at the last inspection. The nursery was required to improve care by implementing better procedures for cleaning children's potties after use, and ensure staff went through the checking process to assess their suitability. The staff now have a formal hygienic procedure to ensure potties are disinfected after every use to avoid the spread of germs, and all staff are supervised closely until the vetting process is complete, to keep children safe.

In order to improve the nursery education, the setting was asked to extend resources for communication technology and physical activities, and ensure children use books correctly. Staff now work with children at the computer and printer, and they introduce an appropriate range of technological equipment to support and enhance topic work. Children also now have use of a wide range of large equipment, which they access freely, in order to develop their physical skills on a daily basis. Children do now understand how to follow the print in books because staff point to the words when reading stories and ensure all can see, and understand, what they are doing.

### **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):

- improve hygiene by routinely providing plates for children to eat off at snack time.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)