

The Old School House Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY241373
Inspection date	13 November 2007
Inspector	Fran Fielder
Setting Address	The Old School House, De Montfort Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1SP
Telephone number	01273 480492
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Registered person	Lindy Baldwin
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 outstanding. 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?

The Old School House Nursery opened in 2003. It operates from three rooms of a renovated school building close to the town centre of Lewes. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday during term time from 08:30 to 16:00 except on Fridays when the nursery closes at 13.00. All children share access to an outdoor play area and a garden.

There are currently 46 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attending the setting come from the local and surrounding area. The nursery makes provision for children with learning difficulties or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff, six of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The premises are very clean. Staff follow excellent procedures to ensure all areas are hygienic. The toilets are regularly checked and cleaned. Children cover their mouths when they cough and know why. This helps prevent the spread of infection. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through discussion and effective routines. They know they need to flush the toilet before other children use it and automatically wash their hands without prompting.

Parents supply food for their children and all enjoy healthy options such as fresh fruit, yogurt and rice cakes. Staff store snacks and lunches carefully to prevent items spoiling. Staff monitor the contents of snack and lunch boxes to ensure they are healthy. Parents have access to books that give information on nutritious packed lunches. Staff are very aware of all dietary needs and make sure children do not share food. If children bring a birthday cake to share with friends at nursery, this is given out at home time so parents can assess whether their children can eat it.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that support their physical development and keep them in good health. They love to play outdoors in all weathers. They use large climbing equipment, play throwing and catching games, spend time gardening and ride on wheeled toys. They learn that rest is also an important part of staying healthy. Indoors children have access to a fabulous soft play area. They excitedly chase each other, crawl through tunnels and practise balancing skills. Children recognise the changes that take place after exercise and talk about being exhausted. They know that energy comes from the food they eat. This ensures children develop an all round healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The environment is truly inviting with lovely displays of individual artwork. Each child has their own named peg that makes them very much a part of the nursery. The premises are extremely well laid out allowing space for children to move around safely. They learn the need to push chairs under the table so others do not trip. An excellent mix of Montessori equipment and traditional resources provide stimulation for all ages. All items are formally checked to ensure they are safe.

The premises are secure and there are excellent procedures for arrival and departure. Visitors cannot access the building with staff knowing. Staff carry out daily and weekly checks of the premises and resources to ensure children's safety. Regular fire drills ensure all children know how to leave the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. Staff are aware of their role during the evacuation. This prevents confusion and gives children confidence in their carers. Staff carry out risk assessments for all outings.

Staff are very vigilant and their excellent awareness of child protection issues safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy, confident and independent. Staff encourage children to play together and share. Constant praise and encouragement develops children's self-esteem. Children relate exceptionally well to each other and learn important social skills, such as sharing and being kind. Staff are very warm and gentle making children feel secure and valued.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of how children develop and learn. They create an environment where each child's needs are carefully monitored. Staff prepare a very well balanced curriculum. This ensures children have a wide range of first hand experiences that support their learning in all areas. Staff motivate children by presenting activities in an exciting way and always follow children's interests.

Children are extremely independent and their social skills are superb. Children develop close relationships evident in the way they hold hands and play together. Children develop a positive attitude to learning because staff are enthusiastic and make learning fun.

Children speak very confidently. Staff encourage a love of books, both fact and fiction, by reading expressively. As a result children listen intently. When listening to stories they recognise rhyme and confidently guess the rhyming word at the end of sentences. Children's listening skills are exceptional as they sit quietly and identify sounds both inside and out. They use excellent vocabulary when describing textures and sounds they hear. This is because staff emphasise words when reading to children giving them the language and skills they need to express themselves clearly.

Daily routines and well-planned activities introduce children to number, calculation and shape. They enjoy filling containers with water and creating structures out of bricks. The opportunities to explore are extensive. Children love to mix flour or salt with water and watch the reaction. They discuss the changes and compare what is produced. They experiment with sound using a range of instruments such as African drums, guitars, cowbells and triangles. When making their own xylophone children know that each bottle should contain a different amount of water to create a range of notes. Bubble painting, collage and role-play allow children to develop their imaginative and creative skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are excellent role models and ensure children learn respect for all. Staff listen to children and encourage them to express their thoughts. A wide range of resources and activities help children learn the value of all people in society. The nursery has links with nurseries in the Gambia and the children collect items to send. This helps children understand that others are less fortunate and need support. Parents visit the group to share their expertise and tell children about festivals such as Eid and Hanukkah. As a result, children develop a very positive attitude towards others.

Children behave beautifully. Staff praise children by telling them how much they like the way children do things such as putting up their hands. Children take responsibility and staff trust them to carry out tasks such as sweeping the floor or cleaning the tables. This gives children

independence and ensures they understand the need to look after their environment. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive detailed information about the nursery through the prospectus, a welcome pack and regular newsletters. Parents are exceptionally pleased with the level of care and education their children receive. They happily recommend the nursery to friends and colleagues. Parents complete an initial profile of their child and continue to contribute to their assessment. Formal and informal meetings ensure parents have a very clear picture of how their children are progressing. Together staff and parents compile a 'special book'. This contains photographs, artwork, evidence of achievement and significant events. This gives parents and children a wonderfully memorable record of their days at nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children play in an extremely well organised environment. The effective key worker system ensures excellent support making children feel secure, valued and confident. Staff make excellent use of time. This means children are always involved in stimulating and worthwhile activities that support their learning and social development.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Management are incredibly proactive and are constantly evaluating practice. They have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and put together action plans to help them reach their goals. Communication between staff and management is excellent. Staff are fully aware of their role. This enables them to devise individual aims for each child's development and learning. Continuous monitoring of the teaching and the careful evaluation of activities enables staff to enhance the learning experiences for children.

All required documentation is in place and carefully maintained. Recruitment and induction procedures are extremely effective. Regular supervisory meetings and appraisals help identify staff's development needs. Ongoing training and support means staff are well equipped with the knowledge they need to ensure outcomes for children are superb. The nursery meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the care last inspection, the nursery was asked to ensure parents signed the medication record and to make sure accidents are recorded confidentially. The nursery was also asked to deploy staff effectively during large group activities.

All records are carefully maintained and confidential. Staff ensure parents sign to acknowledge any medication given at nursery. This ensures continuity of care. Staff deployment is excellent at all times. This ensures children's safety and means they enjoy stimulating interaction.

At the last education inspection, the nursery was asked to evaluate the focussed activities, to give children more opportunities to sing familiar songs and to pour their own drinks.

All activities are carefully evaluated to ensure they meet the educational and developmental needs of every child. Children sing a wide range of songs both well known and less familiar. They enjoy learning new songs ensuring they have a wide repertoire. Jugs of water are always available and children show excellent hand and eye co-ordination when pouring drinks. This also develops their independence.

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

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

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