

The Rugby Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY230637
Inspection date	23 November 2007
Inspector	Jan Burnet
Setting Address	Bilton Grange, Dunchurch, Nr Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 6QS
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Registered person	Jane Garland
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rugby Montessori Nursery School was established in 1989 and operates from a purpose built nursery unit in the grounds of Bilton Grange School. The nursery is situated in the village of Dunchurch on the outskirts of Rugby. Accommodation comprises of a baby unit with two care rooms and a 'fun studio' for messy and creative play, a pre-school unit with four playrooms, and three outdoor classrooms. There is large enclosed outdoor play area and the nursery is set in woodlands and gardens.

The nursery is open throughout the year and a maximum of 81 children under eight years may attend at any one time. There are currently 111 on roll and of these, 42 are funded three and four-year-olds. Staff currently support children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of 17 members of staff care for the children and of these 15 are qualified with Montessori and/or early years qualifications, and two are working towards early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is assured because hygiene routines are thorough and because the nutritional value of their food is addressed well. Children are learning how to keep themselves healthy, including the benefits of exercise, and they are aware of good practice with regard to hand washing. The risk of cross infection is minimal because parents are aware that their child should not attend if he or she has a contagious illness or sickness and diarrhoea and that they will be contacted if the child becomes ill. Children are protected by a staff team who are well informed on accident procedures as 14 currently hold in-date first aid certificates. The risk to children from unsafe food is very low because food hygiene is addressed well. Children's individual dietary needs are fully met and meals and snacks are nutritious. A menu has been drawn up and shows a good variety of substantial lunchtime meals and lighter teas. Children enjoy meal times as social occasions.

Children's emotional well-being is given a very high priority. Parents are asked to gradually settle their child so that separation anxiety is avoided and children are happy and settled with staff consistently offering support and encouragement. Children are developing an awareness of their own growth needs in relation to other living things as they care for and grow vegetables and flowers. They develop physical skills and confidence when using climbing, sliding and riding equipment on a daily basis. They learn about the changes to their heart beat and talk about how they feel when they have been running.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy activities in an exceptionally warm and welcoming environment. They are cared for in seven playrooms and since the last inspection three outdoor classrooms have been created. A former sleep room is now the 'fun studio' and has been created for children aged under two to experience a range of messy and art and craft activities. Equipment in all areas is safe and in a good condition. Risks of accidental injury to children are low because staff are vigilant and potential risks have been identified and comprehensively addressed inside the building and in the outdoor play areas. Risk assessments are thorough and are reviewed each term. Children's independence is developing well as the storage of resources is organised to encourage them to self-select and because easy access to bathrooms aids their personal independence.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, the safe use of equipment and when out walking around the school grounds each child has a partner to look out for. A visiting police officer has talked with older children about 'stranger danger'. Children are aware of the evacuation procedure as it is practised regularly. A fire safety calendar identifies daily, weekly and annual safety checks. Children are safe from unwanted visitors and could not leave unsupervised because security is excellent and an effective password system is used for collection of children. Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who have a sound working knowledge of abuse and neglect and are aware of local referral procedures. A thorough child protection procedure is included in the staff manual and parent handbook and the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children procedure is displayed throughout the nursery. More than half of the staff team have attended child protection training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy, motivated and enthusiastic in the stimulating environment created by staff. All team members inspire children and promote thinking and vocabulary. Children confidently select resources, relate well to each other and they enjoy and get involved in activities. They achieve well because staff offer excellent support and use their extensive knowledge of Montessori teaching methods, the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to provide opportunities for learning. Play space and activities are extremely well organised to ensure that the different needs of children at different stages of development are met effectively. All children develop and learn as a result of consistently challenging experiences.

Children under two years are cared for in two separate rooms, generally changing rooms at the age of approximately one year. They share an outdoor classroom and the 'fun studio' where they enjoy a full range of messy and creative activities and explore texture and colour. The quality and quantity of resources is excellent. Staff prioritise the development of emotional and social skills and ensure that activities promote the development of children's senses, large muscle groups and manipulative skills. Staff caring for the older babies promote a colour and a shape of the week and during short group times the same story and song are repeated through the week. The current story is 'Hug' and the children are thoroughly engaged as different emotions are identified by the reader. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used effectively to plan for children under two years and staff ensure that they evaluate activities, record comprehensive observations and assessments and draw up 'next steps' for each child.

Children aged two to three years benefit from staff knowledge of the early stepping stones as well as the 'Birth to three matters' framework as staff ensure that Foundation Stage planning is effectively adapted to meet the needs of all children in their group. Weekly planning identifies a weekly learning goal, resources needed, every child matters focus area, children that will be taking part, commitments covered, evaluation and next step. Today children have made ginger bread men and after washing their hands most are now keen to join in with a movement to music session. As they return from the bathroom, two children prefer to sit in the cosy corner to look at books and staff encourage children to make this choice. The other children are thoroughly engaged, have fun and react delightfully when the music for different familiar songs begins.

All staff care for children as individuals. They plan an excellent range of activities for groups of children, adapt for children at different stages of development and use what they know about each child to inform planning to lead the child towards their next step. Children are well supported in trying out new activities and from two years old they are able to take part in yoga sessions and French sessions. Children's self-esteem is fully addressed and they are confident and sociable.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children access an extensive range of resources, which support their learning across all of the six areas of learning. They are keen to be involved in activities, either when supported by staff or when playing independently with activities chosen by themselves. Children are self-assured, eager to learn and proud of their achievements. Activity planning is excellent and the current topic planned by pre-school staff for the term is, 'People who help us'. Children have explored the role of the dentist, postal

workers, fire fighters, chefs and bakers, hospital staff and teachers. For each topic a letter and number of the week is planned, colour and special story book. A 'What's happening' plan shows baking, food tasting, painting, visit from a postal worker, visit from a police officer and preparation of fresh vegetables and fruits that links to care of teeth. Planned 'practical life' activities for different professions include making Christmas cards linked to the duties of postal workers.

Children have access to books at all times and enjoy listening to stories. They benefit from excellent opportunities to develop manipulative skills and pencil control develops with daily practise. This includes the use of writing in role play, for example, the take-away restaurant where children write down customers' orders and draw up menus. Staff encourage children to hear different sounds in words, initially sounds in their own names, and children recognise their own name. They are encouraged to write their names on pictures and some are able to do so without copying. Mathematical development is excellent and children benefit from individual support from staff to ensure that they are continually challenged. For example, one child counts counters up to 17 and a staff member talks with her about how to reduce this to 10. They count 10 and then count how many they are taking away. They then identify that they have two groups, of seven and of 10, that together make 17. Calculation is also promoted at group times, for example, today they sing, 'Five current buns' with use of props and real pennies and staff continually ask children to identify, 'how many are left?' Children are initially supported in learning to recognise numbers to five, then to 10, and beyond 10 if ready to do so. They independently choose from a range of activities that promote counting, numeral recognition, shape and pattern making.

Children behave well and are aware of behaviour boundaries. Their self-esteem is continually promoted by staff and children are very proud of their achievements. For example, the inspector is guided by a child through his own assessment folder and he confidently shows her photographs of how he has created his name in different ways. Children's physical skills develop and improve with a variety of experiences and equipment. A teacher of yoga encourages children to develop an awareness of how their bodies feel after exercise and this is also promoted by staff. Children are developing skills with small equipment, tools and programmable resources, including the computer mouse. They explore and investigate and they are imaginative and inquisitive. Children explore sound and develop a sense of rhythm, regularly bake, they have constant access to their mini beast area and they plant and grow flowers and vegetables.

Initial information provided by parents is thorough and so staff are aware of children's skills, interests and needs as care begins. The range of planned and spontaneous activities is outstanding and routines are well balanced. Planning is excellent and staff continually records observations and use photographic evidence to assess children's progress along the stepping stones and, with information obtained from parents, successfully use what they know to lead each child towards the next steps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and their individual needs are known and are very well met by staff. They are encouraged to talk about home and their experiences in order to appreciate and value each others' similarities and differences. They have brought in photographs of their families and staff have put them in to a folder that is accessible at all times. Topics through the year include festival celebrations and children learn about how people live on different continents around the world. Each pre-school room has a cultural area and children can select resources

linked to past and present topics, for example, Diwali materials. Currently children are learning about the United States of America and Thanksgiving celebrations. For these topics they find the country on the map and learn about different foods, costumes and flags. Older children are aware of Makaton sign language, particularly signs that link to behaviour, for example, good sitting and good listening. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. All children are valued and included and are supported by staff who have experience of working with parents and other professionals to ensure that children with learning difficulties and disabilities are able to reach their full potential. The special educational needs coordinator has attended a variety of training courses and ensures that information is shared with other team members.

Children behave well and play cooperatively. Staff ensure that positive behaviour is always acknowledged, they explain and reason with children and ensure that expectations are appropriate for different levels of development. Children show consideration for others and they share and take turns. Staff are consistent in their management and are good role models. Consistency of care between nursery and home is addressed with good written and verbal communication. Parents are made to feel very welcome and a parent handbook includes comprehensive information on the service provided. The provider demonstrates a commitment to assessing and improving the care of children because a complaints procedure is provided. However, this does not include all of the revision to criteria issued in October 2005, specifically parents' rights to access complaints records, and potentially this has an impact on the overall quality of the service provided.

The partnership with parents and carers for early years education is outstanding. Consistency of care for children and working together to ensure that all children reach their full potential is given the highest priority. Written and verbal communication is excellent. Initially parents are asked to identify their child's stage of development so that staff can plan for future learning. Information is shared on the early learning goals and individual folders and assessment records are shared with parents on request and at meetings arranged each term. Staff use information from parents to plan for children. For example, if a child has a favourite toy or toys, which currently for one child is dinosaurs, staff promote learning across the six areas by linking activities to the child's interests. Information on topics and activity planning is provided in regular newsletters.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider ensures that staff enhance children's care and education with the quality of organisation. Children's welfare and care are very well supported with staff implementation of the setting's policies and procedures, although the complaints procedure is currently not up to date. Legally required documentation is in place and is kept in good order.

The leadership and management of early years education is outstanding. The provider is the supernumerary day care manager and is part of the staff team. Staff receive excellent support and all are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Procedures for recruitment, selection, induction and appraisal are thorough. Children benefit from the commitment shown by staff to improve their knowledge and skills as all are qualified or working towards a qualification and they regularly attend training. Staff demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and all staff are involved in planning and assessment to ensure that children make good progress. Advice from other professionals is sort and welcomed in order to improve practice and outcomes for

children. There were no key issues raised at the last nursery education inspection but the provider was asked to consider ways of developing opportunities for children to use role play resources in daily activities. This has been addressed well and has been further developed with the creation of outdoor classrooms.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last nursery education inspection there were no key issues raised. The care inspection resulted in one recommendation, to ensure that there is a system for registering staff attendance on a daily basis, and this is addressed with the completion of daily record sheets.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

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):

- review the complaints procedure to include revision to criteria 2005.

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