

# Busy Bees Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY314825
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
<b>Setting Address</b>	Westmorland Park Pavilion, Westmorland Drive, Warfield, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG42 3QP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 885245
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Partnership of Alison Gale & Melissa Wherlock
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Busy Bees Montessori School has been registered since 2005. It operates from the Westmorland Park Pavilion which is situated in the Warfield area of Bracknell in Berkshire. The nursery has use of a nearby fully enclosed public play park. Children also access the extensive grounds available within the park. The nursery serves the needs of families in the area and the intake reflects the local community.

The nursery school is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children aged two to five years at any one time. There are currently 27 children on roll. This includes 14 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The group supports three children with English as an additional language and welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery is Montessori led and follows the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The nursery operates Monday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.30, term time only. An additional supervised lunch session is held until 14.30 depending on demand. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are five members of staff currently working with the children, some of whom work part-time. The two managers hold a recognised early years qualification and one member of staff is nearing completion of a National Vocational Level 2 qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are accommodated in premises that are clean, comfortable and well-maintained. They learn about staying healthy and the importance of good hygiene through consistent daily routines and the support of staff. Children wash their hands after messy play activities and before eating. Staff have introduced a clever way of ensuring that each child uses fresh water each time they need to wash without having to escort them out to the toilet area where the wash basins are located. Children bring in a flannel from home which they use for drying their hands to minimise the potential for cross infection. One of the managers takes these home each week for laundering to ensure they are fresh and clean for continued use. Staff make a point of cleaning tables before children sit to eat their packed lunch but they do not always do this before snack time. Food at this time is, however, served on plates. Most members of the staff team hold valid first aid certificates and they ensure the first aid box is easily accessible at all times, even when they take children outside to play. This means that appropriate action can be taken promptly in the event of a child suffering a minor injury or accident. Accident records are maintained and parents sign these to acknowledge the entry.

Children bring in a water bottle from home each day. These are stored to be easily accessible which ensures they can help themselves to a drink as and when they feel thirsty. Everyone sits together at snack time. The setting is in the process of introducing a healthy eating policy. Children are encouraged to eat some fruit and may then have a biscuit. The quantity of fruit they are offered is very small but includes some interesting items such as blueberries. Arrangements for monitoring children to ensure they do not pass on any items of food they do not want to eat to other children are not fully effective. This could potentially place children at risk if they suffer allergies to particular food items. Children are able to bring a packed lunch from home on some days of the week. They sit together to eat but staff do not always make good use of this time to encourage social interaction and conversation. On the day of the inspection a video was played whilst children were eating their lunch and some children remained engrossed in this.

Children have opportunities to be active and develop a positive attitude towards exercise as staff take them outside every day, weather permitting. They run around on the nearby football field and play with balls, bean bags and quoits. They go for nature walks in the woods and occasionally visit a nearby play park where they can explore the apparatus available. They are able to develop their climbing, crawling and balancing skills indoors when staff set up the relevant equipment, for example when the weather is too poor to go outside. Children attending on a Thursday participate in yoga sessions delivered by a visiting teacher.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Potential hazards are identified and minimised through use of risk assessment and daily safety checks. Staff supervise children

carefully and intervene as necessary to address potentially unsafe practices. For example, they explain the importance of not running indoors and not walking around whilst holding scissors. They draw children's attention to the need to pick up books they have placed on the floor in the entrance to the home corner so others do not slip and fall. This approach helps children begin to learn how to keep themselves and others safe.

Good security measures contribute to children's overall safety. The main doors remain locked to ensure children cannot leave unsupervised and staff implement appropriate procedures to ensure the safe arrival and collection of children. Staff remain vigilant when taking children outside to play, conscious of the additional hazards that this entails. Visitors' attendance is documented. Fire drills are conducted each half term to develop children's understanding of the procedures they should follow in the event of it being necessary to evacuate the premises. Older children are able to explain what they need to do if the fire bell sounds, which door they need to leave by and how they are expected to behave.

Children use suitably sized furniture and explore age appropriate resources that are of a good, clean condition. Many items, especially the Montessori equipment, are arranged on low level open shelving units to aid children's independent selections about what they do. Staff check resources regularly for safety and cleanliness.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as most members of the staff team have attended child protection training. They are aware of possible signs of abuse and neglect and the procedure they should follow if they have any concerns. They have access to relevant information to guide them in the local authority's safeguarding children procedures. Staff understand the importance of keeping written records of concerns. They discuss with parents any existing injuries that children arrive with but currently, do not maintain a written record of these.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children attending the setting are happy. The majority of children enter the nursery school well and separate from their parents and carers without any difficulty. Some newer children who are less self-assured and are finding it difficult to separate receive good levels of support from staff who are kind and caring towards them. They are ready to offer hugs and cuddles and some children sit contentedly on an adult's lap, snuggling in.

Children use their imaginations as they make different things from playdough and play in the home corner or at the construction bench. They enjoy playing with small world toys such as cars and trains and freely access the painting easels. Younger children explore the Montessori sensorial and practical life activities where they begin to develop their co-ordination skills. Staff provide a cookery activity each week. Children enjoy making 'snail biscuits' from pastry. Each child is provided with their own piece of ready made pastry and they use their fingers to mould this. Children notice the coldness of the dough and comment on this. Staff offer help and guidance to form the shape of the snails. Sand and water play is offered on some occasions. Concerns for children's safety because of the slip hazard of spilt sand and water has meant that these materials are not currently available. However, the owners have acquired rubber matting and are now in the process of purchasing suitable equipment so that children will have more ready access to these materials.

Currently, children do not have key workers although this is something that the managers of the provision are looking to implement to support children further, now that the overall number

of children on roll is increasing. The nursery does not currently use an approach in line with the Birth to three matters framework.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory.

Children are confident. They mostly remain involved in the range of activities available and enjoy these. They relate well to others and form good relationships. Children are supported in developing mostly good levels of independence as they change their shoes and boots themselves, put on aprons and tidy away resources when they have finished using them. However, they are not encouraged to play an active role at snack time, for example by pouring out their own drinks or helping to serve their peers.

Children move freely around the hall with good levels of control and spatial awareness. They handle pencils, paintbrushes and scissors well and develop and improve their hand/eye co-ordination and fine motor skills as they make use of the different practical life skill activities such as tongs, pipettes and tweezers.

Children develop their literacy and mathematical skills as they work through the different Montessori exercises that relate to these areas. Some children write using correctly formed letters whilst others trace over letters. Some children successfully link sounds and letters with some showing awareness of simple words as they match pictures and words. Children engage easily in conversation. They listen to stories and choose to spend time looking at books both independently and in small groups. Some children count well. They identify written numerals and record these. Other children are able to do simple sums such as  $2 + 1$ . Children develop their problem solving skills as they complete puzzles and persevere to fit different sized blocks in a box. They count the number of children present at registration time but are not encouraged to develop their mathematical skills as part of the daily routine or at times other than when they are engaged in the Montessori activities. This limits opportunities for them to consolidate and develop their skills further.

Children operate the computer and build with different construction toys. Daily calendar activities develop children's awareness of the passage of time. Some children enjoy looking for mini-beasts when they are outside but staff do not extend them further in their learning. Children excitedly announce that they have found some daddy-long-legs but do not have sufficient time to be able to look at these closely and they are not provided with magnifying glasses to help them develop their observational skills.

Plans show that children have participated in some interesting activities as part of the different themes presented to them. For example, they have made rain gauges and played with ice cubes during a project about the weather and have sorted different resources for re-cycling. A police officer has visited the setting and children were able to go inside the police van and they have planted wild flower seeds with the assistance of the local park ranger. Children explore different media and materials through art and craft activities. They play co-operatively in the home corner, pretending to have picnics and acting out stories.

The nursery session is planned to offer children opportunities for free play, focussed activities, to work independently and take part in small and large group times. Staff engage well with children and support their learning, in particular when they are exploring the different Montessori equipment. However, children's learning is not consolidated or enhanced effectively at other times as staff do not always exploit the many learning opportunities available. For instance,

although staff provide support and guidance when children are making the 'snail biscuits', they do not talk to them about the ingredients and do not provide any books or pictures for older and more able children to look at so they can see what snails look like.

Staff monitor children's progress across all aspects of the Montessori curriculum well. They identify specific areas for improvement each half term in relation to the different areas and work alongside groups of children and support them in their use of the equipment. They record their observations of children at this time and use the information to complete their records on children's achievements and progress. Staff also observe children at other times and keep records of these. Pre-profile progress records relating to the stepping stones and different areas of learning in respect of the Foundation Stage curriculum are available but staff have yet to complete these for any of the children attending. Whilst staff do know the children they support well and are able to talk about their progress, the lack of record keeping means that it is difficult to successfully monitor their progress through the stepping stones, identify the next steps in their learning and use this to inform future planning. A new system of planning is in the process of being developed and the owners of the group are actively seeking guidance and assistance from the local authority early years and childcare partnership to develop their provision for nursery education further.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children say Grace before they eat their snack and are helpful towards others, for example by assisting children to put on aprons. All children have equal access to the range of resources available. These include some items that reflect positive images of diversity to help them gain awareness of the wider world in which we live. A topic about countries around the world enables them to find out about other places and take part in different activities. For instance, they make flags, windmills and tulips and create henna hand prints. Children become familiar with their immediate surroundings as they go for walks around the vicinity of the pavilion. Staff treat all children with equal concern. They acknowledge that they are different and have individual needs. For example, they accept that some children are not yet ready to join in with whole group times and respect this by not insisting that they conform. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff seek the input of parents in respect of children who speak English as an additional language and respect their wishes. They are willing to learn key words in the child's first language and investigate other forms of communication such as providing pictures to help children visually understand what they are saying.

Children behave generally well overall. Staff intervene to diffuse minor squabbles and guide children towards positive, co-operative behaviour. However, the organisation of the latter part of the session is not fully effective and some children start running around the room at this time because they are not well-occupied. Children's self-esteem and confidence is fostered well as staff make good use of praise and positive language when talking to children.

Children benefit from the warm, friendly relationships staff establish with their parents. Parents feel happy to approach staff, who spend time talking with them at the start and end of the session. They encourage parents to stay as long as they wish to help settle their children. Parents do not formally contribute their knowledge about children's starting points although, in discussion, parents feel that staff ask for any relevant information they need. Parents are informed about the setting in a variety of ways. These include a welcome pack, termly newsletters

and information displayed on the noticeboard. Policies and procedures governing the setting, including the complaints procedure, are easily accessible and parents are invited to take home childcare magazines to read. The owners of the provision also conduct regular general parents meetings. Parents share in their children's learning as they are invited to accompany their children on outings and to attend specific events at the setting. The partnership with parents and carers in respect of nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and staff provide them with a written report on their children's progress in the different areas of the Montessori curriculum. However, they are not informed about their children's progress through the stepping stones as staff have not introduced this method of record keeping. Consequently, parents do not yet have the opportunity to contribute to these.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Available space within the hall is arranged to enable children to move freely and safely around all areas and to access the range of resources that are available. Resources are rotated over the course of the week to offer children different play opportunities. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and they are deployed in a generally satisfactory way. The number of children attending each session is increasing and staff are conscious of the need to better manage some aspects of the session and their use of time.

Most necessary documentation and other records that promote the health, safety and welfare of children is in place. Written parental consent is obtained to administer medicines but staff do not keep a medication record. This is a breach of regulation.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Both managers are appropriately qualified and another member of staff is currently attending relevant training. Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures are implemented to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so. Staff training needs are identified through appraisal and all members of the team have a personal development plan in place. Existing practice is monitored and areas for development are being identified which demonstrates a clear desire and commitment to improve the provision of care and education for all children attending. Measures to implement these are however very much at the beginning or are still at the planning stage.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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:

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 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 monitoring procedures to ensure children do not share food
- develop and implement a key worker system to support the children attending and monitor their progress
- keep a written record, signed by parents, of medicines given to children
- consolidate further the records kept on children by keeping a record of existing injuries.

#### 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):

- continue to develop planning and assessment systems to show children's progress through the stepping stones to the early learning goals. Use this information to identify the next steps in their learning and use to inform future planning, in particular to ensure all activities are sufficiently challenging
- provide more opportunities for children to build on their independence and develop their mathematical skills, in particular as part of the daily routine
- share children's pre-profile records with parents and provide them with opportunities to contribute to these
- continue to monitor and review existing practice (care also).

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)