

Lilliput Montessori Day Nursery (Coalville)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	223230
Inspection date	09 January 2008
Inspector	Patricia Bowler
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Registered person	Lilliput Day Nursery Ltd
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 good. 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?

Lilliput Montessori Day Nursery (Coalville) is one of five nurseries run by Lilliput Day Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 1999 and operates from six rooms in a purpose built building in Coalville, Leicestershire. A maximum of 66 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07.30 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 78 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection through consistent daily routines. Most are effectively implemented by staff who have an underpinning knowledge of health and hygiene issues, supported through clear policies to support children's health. However, good practice is not maintained prior to meal times when babies use a bowl of shared water to wash their hands posing a risk of cross infection.

All areas accessed by children are clean and well maintained. Diligent routines are followed when changing babies and young children and the use of disposable aprons and gloves minimises the spread of infection. Parental provision of nappies, wipes and creams ensure children are not at risk from allergic reactions to unfamiliar products. Older children develop good levels of independence in their personal care. They address their own needs and talk knowledgeably about hand washing to remove germs following toilet use and before meals.

Parents are kept fully informed about health issues, sickness and accidents through good recording systems, and regularly updated information ensures they can be contacted in an emergency. Comprehensive care plans are established with parents to ensure staff are fully informed and can provide for children's specific needs. Staff are trained in first aid and a fully stocked first aid kit ensures children receive appropriate care at all times.

Positive attitudes to exercise provide children with regular physical activities. They access the fully enclosed outside play area in age related groups and enjoy developmentally appropriate activities. A large climbing frame with a slide attachment enables older children to develop control of their bodies, developing their coordination and climbing skills. They balance on low level equipment and talk about seasonal changes as they play in the snow. Children recognise the transformation to ice due to falling temperatures and request to return inside when they feel the cold. Younger children develop climbing skills on a low level climbing frame in a separate enclosed area.

Children change into indoor shoes in the ground floor cloakroom to prevent the spread of infection throughout the nursery. Indoor activities are provided and babies enjoy a group activity with the parachute and giggle gleefully as they crawl under and onto the material as staff shake and lift the parachute. Younger children access an indoor climbing frame and older children take turns to use an exercise trampoline and join in enthusiastically in a music and movement session.

Children rest and sleep according to their needs in line with parental requests. A separate area within the baby room allows babies to sleep in designated cots with their own bed linen. A peaceful atmosphere is created through dimmed lighting and the use of soft relaxing music. Older children use floor mattresses with their own bed linen and benefit, as babies, from reduced lighting and soothing music.

Children enjoy various foods at snack time, which are taken in base area rooms. They enjoy a range of fresh fruits and older children try kiwi fruit along side familiar fruits of apple, bananas and raisins. Whilst younger children remain in their base areas for main meals older children eat in the designated dining area. They sit in small groups at low level tables and although staff do not eat with children an adult sits at each group table. A wide variety of meals are provided using fresh produce including vegetables. Children enjoy a two course lunch and a hot snack

or sandwich tea. Children eat well in accordance with parental wishes and specific diets are very well catered for. A vegetarian alternative is made to closely resemble the main meal using meat alternatives.

A variety of drinks are provided and children have their own regularly replenished drinking bottles throughout the day. However, these are not clearly identifiable to children to ensure they only access their own bottle posing a risk of possible cross infection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Diligent policies, procedures and routines, where risks are substantially minimised, provide children with a safe and secure environment in which to play. The premises remain secure with closed circuit television cameras to monitor access to the setting. Rigorous procedures ensure appropriate identification is checked and visitors are admitted only by care staff. Robust risk assessments, carried out on a monthly basis ensure all areas used by children are safe, including the outside play area. Staff take individual responsibility to maintain the safety of children through continuous assessment in their base areas. Children are recorded in and out of the nursery and good systems for arrival and departure ensure the safe transfer of care. Parents are required to inform staff if other persons are collecting children, to maintain their safety, and passwords are established to ensure children are released into the care of known adults.

Close attention is given to the structure and presentation of activities to ensure children can move around freely and independently as they play. They use good quality equipment which is systematically checked to ensure it is safe for purpose, age and is developmentally appropriate. Children develop confidence and independence as they access toys and resources from low level storage units as they self-select and direct their own play. Separate rooms, and areas within base rooms ensure children engage safely in appropriate play, especially messy activities and rest and sleep times.

Appropriate adult to child ratios are maintained to further promote their safety. Staff have a good understanding of encouraging children to be independent whilst setting safe limits, to develop awareness of their safety. They learn about keeping safe in the community as they practise road safety on outings and take part in regular emergency evacuation practices.

Children's safety is enhanced through the provision of appropriate safety equipment. Safety gates are fitted to doorways and at the top and base of the stairs used by older children. They walk in single file on the stairs and know to hold onto the low level banister. Covers prevent access to electric sockets and door hinge covers protect children from the risk of trapped fingers. Equipment for babies, including high chairs and buggies are systematically checked to maintain safe care.

Staff have sound knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, in line with Local Children's Safeguarding Board procedures, including the referral process and any allegations made against staff. The policy is comprehensive and clear and is shared with parents to ensure they are fully informed about staff roles and responsibilities to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The progress for children under three years is effectively planned, using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They benefit from the visually stimulating environment, with pictures, posters and displays to extend and support their development. They make good progress to become effective communicators and competent learners as they explore their environment and use their senses. Children enjoy a good range of activities which are presented and supported very well by staff. They play with natural resources including sand where they hunt carefully for mini beasts which they gleefully bury. They learn about changes to texture as they add water to mould and squeeze the wet sand. Floor activities are widely available, encouraging physical development as babies roll and crawl and toddlers become increasingly confident in their walking skills. Close and caring relationships are established with staff to increase children's sense of trust and belonging. Language is effectively encouraged as children engage in conversations, listen to stories and join in familiar rhymes and songs. Children develop positive interactions with peers as they are supported in acquiring skills to negotiate and take turns as they play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage which is successfully implemented along with aspects of the Montessori teaching method. Children enjoy a variety of activities which meet their individual needs in a stimulating and welcoming environment which reflects their backgrounds and the wider community. Children behave very well as staff skilfully implement a positive behaviour policy to create a harmonious environment. Sound teaching methods, observations and assessments support children's development. However, the information and clear identified next steps in their learning are not used effectively to guide the planning of activities to promote their development. Good use of time and diligent evaluation records identify how activities are received by children, if learning intentions are met and recommendations from staff for future improvements. This promotes effective evaluation to maintain good standards of teaching. Staff are very skilled in encouraging children's communication and language using open questions which allow children to express their thoughts. Children talk very well to each other and staff as they develop good listening and conversational skills.

Children make good progress because they are recognised as unique individuals. Time at registration is made to welcome children, as they respond to an individual greeting gaining confidence and self-esteem as they reply to staff. A wide range of varied and stimulating activities captivate their imagination and challenge their thoughts. They enjoy a small group activity where they identify facial expressions from flash cards and join in using their own facial expressions. They discuss their feelings for some expressions and a child talking about being worried said this happens when she 'is missing mummy'. When asked what she would do she replied 'have a cuddle'. Children take turns to identify colour cards progressing to correctly identify two colours used to make another. For example, red and blue to make purple and yellow and blue to make green. Children recalled a discussion the previous day about primary colours which cannot be mixed adding 'you can't make black or white too'.

Some children show signs of emergent writing and recognise their name cards as they bring them to the snack table. Children count in everyday situations, as they count children in and out from outside play and when moving in small groups to different areas of the nursery. They develop skills in early calculation to decide how many more dinners are required at the group

table, how many children have dinners and how many children there are in total. Numerals and associated smiley faces indicate to children how many can access activities at any one time. A child comes to tell an adult that there are more children than there should be at the doll's house play and two children wait patiently to play at the water tray as they identify this activity is for two children only.

Children listen intently to excellently narrated stories and eagerly join in songs during a musical instrument session. They move enthusiastically during outside play enjoying ring games, running freely and climbing and balancing on static equipment. They examine the snow which fell overnight recognising the transformation to ice due to the very cold temperature. They watch it melt into the surface as it turns to water as they squelch it with their feet saying 'it because it gets warmer when it moves'. Children recognise the cold and confidently ask staff to return inside.

Children engage in a range of creative activities to experience different textures and their work is attractively displayed around the room to enhance their sense of achievement and belonging.

Personal, social and emotional development is a strong element. Children are very determined in their personal care. They know to wear aprons for creative activities and persevere to put these on independently only requesting help to secure back fastenings. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic as they make active choices about their play. However, children are not skilled in using two hands as they engage in activities. A child at the water tray insisted on adult help to hold a bucket whilst she filled a small jug using one hand. She was unable to grasp the concept of holding the bucket with the other hand before transferring the water from the jug to the bucket. During the use of Montessori resources another child was observed using a spoon in her right hand to fill a container, putting down the spoon before using the same hand to transfer the contents from the container to another. This has a detrimental effect on some fine manipulative and coordination skills such as using knives and forks at mealtimes. Although children pour at activities such as water play they do not practise these during mealtimes to define skills to pour carefully and accurately.

Children are sensitively supported in gaining high levels of self-control. Consistent methods are successfully used to help all children acquire an excellent awareness of right and wrong in line with their stage of development. Effective intervention from staff enables them to negotiate and become sensitive and respectful in their interaction with others. Overall, children make good progress in their levels of achievement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clear equal opportunities policy which works well in practice. Individual needs are discussed and recorded on detailed children's records to ensure their specific needs are met well. A strong commitment from staff ensures the inclusion of every child and they work collaboratively with parents and other agencies to meet children's individual needs. Children engage in a range of activities to enhance their awareness of the wider community as they celebrate cultural and religious festivals and play with resources to promote positive images of diversity. They gain confidence and self-esteem as staff foster children's sense of belonging through sensitive recognition of their achievements, praising their efforts and offering cuddles and hugs.

Children gain high levels of self-control as they follow consistent methods and boundaries to increase their understanding of right from wrong. They follow simple rules to gain understanding about sharing and taking turns. They know how many children can play at each activity and wait patiently for their turn. Children know when it is time to tidy away as they are given a verbal prompt by staff that this time is approaching. This enables them to bring to a close any activities that they are involved in before ably assisting with this task. They carry out tasks at Montessori activities, taking personal responsibility to return these to the low level shelving units after use. Children use their own initiative to tidy away general activities and follow directions from staff to gather resources together. Children respond extremely well to staff's use of praise and encouragement to promote a harmonious atmosphere based on positive contribution.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. A comprehensive prospectus provides detailed information about the nursery and gives them an understanding about policies, working practice and the Foundation Stage. Policies and procedures are displayed in the welcoming entrance area. Information is also displayed about current themes within the nursery so parents are fully informed of activities to support children at home. Children receive consistent care in line with parental wishes through clear care plans established as they commence at the nursery. They are actively involved in the initial assessment to clearly identify what children can do when they become eligible for early education funding through further documentation. This means that valuable information about what their children can do at home is included in their records.

Bi-annual meetings with key workers ensure parents are kept informed about children's progress and development. Partnerships are further enhanced as staff engage in informal discussions as children arrive and are collected. A monthly newsletter informs parents of pertinent information relating to the management of the nursery including legislative issues, staff changes, care and early learning issues to maintain and enhance the care for children.

A complaints policy is established with clear information to instigate this and parents are aware of the process.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them. They learn about other cultures and beliefs through planned topics and enjoy books and activities to promote their awareness of differences.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust procedures for recruitment and employment are implemented and maintained. The procedures ensure children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff suitable for their role and ensure children are protected from non-vetted persons. Rigorous methods, including visitors being accepted only by care staff after identification checks maintain children's safety. Visitor records are maintained as they sign in and out of the nursery.

Staff are deployed effectively within the setting to support children's overall care and an effective key worker system ensures their individual needs are met and pertinent information is shared with parents. Clear policies, which are successfully implemented, form a sound foundation to the good quality of care which children receive. Training and development needs are supported as staff attend various courses and events to further enhance their high standards.

Registration systems accurately record children's attendance as their arrival and departure times are recorded.

All required documentation that contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is established and regularly reviewed. Confidentiality is rigorously maintained whilst ensuring parents are well informed and involved in children's care and learning.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from a well-organised routine and a range of activities presented in a stimulating environment to maximise play opportunities. They spend their time purposefully as they are supported in their play, learning and development.

The care and education that children receive is supported because staff have a sound understanding of early education and a commitment to implement this effectively. The leader is committed to enhancing and developing the setting through her own working practice and attendance at further training. Evaluation of the curriculum has resulted in a clear focus to implement all aspects of the Foundation Stage whilst incorporating Montessori teaching methods. Staff work effectively as a team to identify areas of strength and improvement, and work conscientiously to ensure recording systems to monitor children's progress give clear direction for their ongoing learning and development. However, children's individual learning outcomes are not incorporated into the planning to ensure each child reaches their full potential.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At last inspection the quality of care was judged as inadequate. The setting was required to ensure the risk assessment of the premises is conducted on a regular basis, is dated and identifies all hazards and minimises all risks, review and update the child protection policy and ensure it includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, ensure a record of all complaints is maintained and demonstrate how all policies and procedures are effectively shared with parents.

A comprehensive risk assessment document has been established to include detailed assessment of all rooms including base areas, corridors and stairways. This is completed, each month, by the manager or member of the management team and identified with their signature and the date of completion. Any identified hazards are transferred to an action sheet where clear records are maintained including action taken to address the issue raised. A clear direction to all staff is diligently followed as they take responsibility to maintain continuous assessment and report hazards identified between the monthly check to maintain children's safety.

The written policy for Child Protection has been completely re-written to include clear procedures in line with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board procedures. The policy is included in the parent policy pack available in the entrance area. Reference is made in the prospectus with an abbreviated paragraph stating the nursery's responsibility and refers their attention to the full policy available to them. Clear guidelines are now included to follow in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff.

A record is maintained identifying all complaints and clear information is included in the prospectus regarding the complaints procedure.

The prospectus has been updated to include reference to all policies and procedures which are now displayed in the entrance area to be available and accessible to parents at all times.

At the last inspection the quality of nursery education was judged as satisfactory. Recommendations were raised to improve opportunities for children to develop mathematical knowledge and understanding regarding calculation, improve the current planning system to show the learning intentions of children and links to the stepping stones, further improve children's assessment records to clearly show attainment on entry into the Foundation Stage and information gained from parents, ensure parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and are informed of their children's progress and demonstrate how the provision for nursery education and quality of teaching is monitored and evaluated effectively to improve staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure all children are sufficiently challenged and making progress in all areas.

The nursery has established a clear working document identifying how the provision for early education is monitored to ensure children's learning and achievement is maintained. Staff have worked collaboratively with a Local Authority mentor teacher and have identified and attended training events to support children's progress. Opportunities to involve calculation in activities within general play and routines is having a positive impact on children's ability to associate more and less.

A newly established 'All about me' booklet is completed by parents as children commence early education. This provides staff with clear information about what children can already do and enables clear starting points to be identified to plan for their individual learning and progress. Parents are provided with clear documentation about early education and attend regular meetings with key worker staff to discuss their child's progress and next steps. Information about themes and activities is displayed in the entrance area so parents know what children are involved in and any forthcoming events. Written diaries are completed for the weekly duration of children's attendance. They are then sent home and completed by parents to inform staff of weekend activities to form strong links between home and the nursery.

Staff have attended training events to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to implement this successfully along side the Montessori teaching method. Some progress has been made, especially to monitor and evaluate teaching methods to ensure planned learning intentions have been met. The nursery works continuously to identify strengths and weaknesses and were aware and making plans to improve the methods of observation and assessment of children's progress. The inclusion of links into the planning of activities to enhance children's next steps in learning will be included into future training and development for staff to have a positive effect on children's overall learning and development.

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

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 good.

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):

- ensure that staff are informed and aware of the importance of good hygiene practice in order to prevent the spread of infection with regard to ensuring individual drinking bottles are clearly identifiable to children so they only access their own bottle and hand washing routines for babies prior to meals.

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):

- provide opportunities for children to develop dexterity in two handed skills during play activities to encourage skills such as using knives and forks and pouring drinks at mealtimes
- use the observations and assessments of children's progress to influence the planning of daily activities to meet their identified next steps in learning.

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