

# Farnham Royal Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107982
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 February 2008
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<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 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?

Farnham Royal Montessori Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 1999 and operates from two rooms in a village hall in Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.15 to 15.00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five staff and supports two students. The manager and one member of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff and two students working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have daily opportunities to experience physical play in the hall or outside if children have the appropriate clothing for the weather. The equipment to develop climbing skills does not provide sufficient challenge for all children. For example, during an indoor physical play session the only opportunity children have to climb is onto a very low beam, which some children can balance on and walk along with ease. Children crawl at speed behind each other through a tunnel and practise hopping onto 'stepping stones'. Some children competently hopscotch with skill across coloured mats.

Children adopt good personal hygiene routines, such as washing hands at appropriate times and wiping running noses, disposing of soiled tissues in the bin, with good support from staff. However, children share a bowl of water to wash their hands in and a communal towel is used at snack and mealtimes for all children to dry their hands. This does not minimise the risk of cross infection. There are clear procedures in place for recording accidents and the administration of medication. This promotes the health of children.

Children develop understanding of healthy eating as they are encouraged to be in fresh fruit to eat at snack time. Fun resources are used with children, such as Smiley the crocodile, to support healthy living activities. Children have access to drinking water throughout the session encouraging them to think about their own needs.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All required safety policies are in place but the uncollected child policy does not clearly inform staff of the procedure to follow if a child is not collected. In addition, the registration system does not accurately record the attendance of all children. This compromises the safety of children. Staff have good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and are clear about the procedures to follow if concerned a child is at risk. All current national guidance is in place for staff to refer to but the setting's own child protection policy has not been updated to reflect relevant national changes to further protect children.

Children access a very good range of resources to support specific Montessori activities which are made from a variety of materials. Resources support learning in all areas of development but not all provide sufficient challenge for all children. Staff regularly inspect the resources and equipment to ensure they are maintained in a suitable condition for children to use. Children are cared for in a clean, warm and well maintained environment where they have sufficient space to move freely between activities. Staff open windows, even in cold weather to ensure there is a good supply of fresh air for children.

The management carry out a daily risk assessment of the premises each morning to ensure children can play safely. Children learn to keep themselves safe through clear explanations from staff. For example, staff explain how resources should be carried safely and why pencils should not be held near to eyes. Regular fire drills ensure children and staff know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

There is a relaxed atmosphere in the setting and most children settle straight into activities leaving their main carers with ease. Staff interact warmly with children offering encouragement at activities. Children engage in conversation with each other and staff take time to listen and respond to what children say. This enables children to be skilful communicators and fosters a sense of self-worth.

Staff know children well, although occasionally they do not pick up on their non-verbal signals as to the activities they want to participate in. For example, staff do not respond to children's signals for creative activities when they use a peg to attempt to make marks down a painting easel which is not in use or when they approach the bowl, used for children to wash their hands after painting pasta strings, and let the water trickle through their fingers.

Children benefit from the consistency in the daily routines. They know to put away individual activities when completed and help staff tidy up before moving onto different activities. Children enjoy completing puzzles. They select puzzles for themselves and persevere to find the correct places for individual pieces and they often work together to complete the task.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the early learning goals and plan activities that link to all areas of learning. However, they do not provide children with sufficient opportunities to freely express themselves through creative activities or access malleable materials. Staff provide good support for children at activities either in one to one or small group situations. They evaluate the success of activities through children's assessment records. Staff effectively use open-ended questions to encourage children to think. Staff make regular observations of children's achievements and record these under Montessori skill headings and then transfer this information to sheets detailing the early learning goals. However, staff do not regularly update these sheets, making it difficult to easily identify the progress children make along the stepping stones.

Children have some chances to be creative. They enjoy singing and following actions to songs and explore the sounds musical instruments make. Those who attend on a Thursday participate in a session of dance. Children create storylines as they play together with small world vehicles. However, children do not have regular access to explore materials and be freely creative. For example, sand and water activities are only provided when children play outside and play dough and clay activities are not regularly provided. Children do adapt the aim of some activities, such as after drawing round shapes they add on stems and petals but the size of the paper provided for this activity limits their creativity. Other activities, such as painting a string of pasta are adult directed and when children ask if they can have some paper on a table they are told they cannot as the pasta painting activity is taking place. The importance to children's development of freely marking marks is not fully understood by staff.

Children show interest in how things work. For example, a child repeatedly revs the wheels of a friction car then turns the vehicle over to watch the wheels spin and then stops them. He says 'the faster I move it the faster they go but they can't spin without me'. Children develop understanding of technology as they push buttons on cash registers to make the money drawer open.

Children have good opportunities to develop independence skills. They are competent at selecting individual activities for themselves and take off and put on their socks and shoes for dance activities. Children form warm relationships with each other and staff and are helpful to each other. For example, a child helps a younger child to hold a musical instrument correctly and shows the child how to make a noise with it. Children enjoy looking at books for pleasure and staff support this by being available to read stories on request throughout the session. Staff encourage children to identify objects and characters on the pages. Children listen attentively to group stories and respond positively to the questions that staff ask. Individual activities encourage children to recognise rhyming words and with staff support children identify jug and mug and spoon and moon as having the same sounds. Children develop pencil control by practising set activities, such as drawing around shapes and some can write recognisable letters.

Children have daily opportunities to participate in a wide range of mathematical activities either independently or with staff support. They complete number lines recognising the numerals one to nine and count out and correctly match the number of fir cones to the numbers on the cards. Children complete simple calculation tasks as they add two numbers together with staff support. Children have excellent opportunities to develop small muscle skills and manipulate small resources with great dexterity. For example, they use tongs to move small eggs from one basket to another, undo press studs, thread laces through cotton reels and screw nuts onto bolts.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents of the nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are invited to an annual parents evening and receive an annual report. However, the reports grade children's attainment and effort at different aspects of each area of learning, including aspects that children have not participated in. This does not ensure parents are given accurate information about the activities their children participate in or of the actual progress they are making along the stepping stones. The setting operates a reading scheme which enables parents to be involved in their children's learning by encouraging them to look at the books they take home. Parents state they are happy with the care and education their children receive and particularly like the supportive staff team.

Staff develop warm relationships with parents. They verbally inform them of their child's daily activities and routines and there is a good exchange of information at the door at each end of the session. The setting operates an open door policy for parents to discuss children's progress and to be involved in specific activities. However, it limits the amount of time parents can spend in a session at other times, such as to settle children. This does not fully support continuity of care.

Staff record and discuss with parents any particular requirements children may have to ensure their individual needs are met. Children learn about their own culture and those of other people as staff plan activities to celebrate a variety of festivals. Parents are invited to be involved in their children's learning by sharing their knowledge with children. For example, they have been involved in activities celebrating festivals, such as Diwali and Burns night. Staff provide good support for children with learning disabilities and difficulties. They work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure the developmental needs of the children are met.

Staff act as good role models for children. They are polite, calm and treat all children, each other and visitors with respect. They use effective strategies to encourage positive behaviour.

For example, when a child tries to reclaim a toy from another child a member of staff explains 'If you would like it, you need to ask' and then helps the children to negotiate a satisfactory solution. Children behave very well. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's attendance is not always appropriately maintained as on occasions they are not marked present until over an hour after they arrive or they are 'ticked' present but the actual times that they arrive and leave are not recorded at all. This is a breach of regulations.

The management have a generally secure knowledge of their roles and responsibilities under the National Standards. For example, there are procedures in place to ensure children are not left alone with people who are not vetted and children are secure in the setting because the staff to child ratios enable them to have sufficient support at activities. All required policies are in place and regularly reviewed. However, this process is not thorough enough to ensure that they all contain the required information, such as the child protection and uncollected child policies.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. They monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education curriculum through working in the setting, observing staff practice and the staff appraisal system. This is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that children's assessment records are regularly updated and easily identify children's progress along the stepping stones or that children have regular access to a variety of activities where they can freely express their creativity. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection four recommendations were raised for care.

The setting has two members of qualified staff present at each session and other staff are working towards a qualification. Most documentation contains the required detail although there are issues with the attendance registers and the uncollected child policy to fully ensure the safety of children. In addition the attendance register do not always record the time that staff leave the setting. Some staff have undertaken food hygiene training to ensure that food is handled and stored appropriately.

There were two key issues raised at the last nursery education inspection. These were to provide children with resources to develop confidence in climbing and to have access to equipment for information technology and access to a wider range of media and malleable materials. Little progress has been made to provide all children with sufficient challenge with climbing and they do not have regular access to experience a range of creative materials. These are carried forward as recommendations at this inspection. However, children access a computer and resources to explore technology, although the computer is currently broken.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the 1 April 2004 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):

- review the practice of sharing hand towels
- ensure children's attendance is accurately recorded and the uncollected child policy details what will happen if a child is not collected.

#### **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):

- consider providing further challenges for children to climb, use malleable materials and freely express their creativity on a regular basis (also applies to care)
- ensure children's progress is accurately recorded and reported to parents and easily identifies their progress along the stepping stones

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