

Sunshine Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Unique Reference Number | 116712 |
| Inspection date | 04 December 2007 |
| Inspector | Susan Mary Deadman |
| Setting Address | Downley Memorial Hall, High Street, Downley, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 5XG |
| Telephone number | 01494 442 057 or 07731 631 348 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Virginia Roden |
| 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?

Sunshine Montessori School opened in August 1997. It is a privately owned provision. It operates from the Downley Memorial Hall with use of the main hall, a small lobby, a walk-in storage area, toilet facilities and a small enclosed outdoor play area. The school serves the local community and surrounding villages.

A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 50 children on roll. This includes 25 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently no children attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00 and from 12.15 until 14.45.

Eight staff work with the children. Six staff have Montessori teaching and early years qualifications to Level 2 or 3. Three of these staff are qualified to a Level 4 and the Principal has gained her Early Years Professional status. Other staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children gain a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating and staff provide them with a good amount of fruit and a choice of milk or water during snack times. Children benefit from having independent access to the snack table and choose when to eat and drink. Staff remind them about the need to refresh themselves, which keeps children hydrated.

Staff are organised to deal with accidents competently, which maintains children's physical well being. Staff maintain clear accident records and share these with parents. Staff gain prior written permission for emergency medical treatment and attend additional medical training to meet children's individual needs.

Children benefit from the frequent use of the garden. They play outside in most weather conditions and enjoy the varied range of activities. They have access to a climbing frame with slide and rope ladders and wheeled vehicles. Children enjoy indoor physical activities such as walking along balance beams and musical movement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are very well organised and the play areas are enhanced by attractive posters, displays and children's artwork. Children independently select from a very good range of play resources and equipment. Step stools in the bathroom areas support children's independence. Good organisation and vigilance of staff ensures that children do not have access to smaller play items such as beads, which are part of a play provision. Staff promote children's safety within the setting, as they practise fire drills on a regular basis.

The outside play area is generally safe and secure. Staff check the garden prior to children's use and bolt the low level gates on the outside to prevent children from opening them. Although the garden contains large areas of Ivy, this is not included within risk assessments.

Children are safe during outings as staff complete risk assessments on the venue, take children's medical requirements with them and work within a high ratio of staff to children. Staff promote children's welfare as they have a good understanding of child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly in the well-organised environment. They sustain interest in their play and are engrossed in the activities. A good range of Montessori equipment is in easy access to the children. This supports their independence as they ponder thoughtfully over which activity to choose. Children make very good use of the garden. Staff include this area in the planning and provide activities such as musical instruments, construction items and small table with office equipment. Evaluation of how children use the equipment extends the children's enjoyment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from the planning of stimulating activities and the easy availability of resources. Staff monitor and evaluate children's progress and plan for the next stages of development.

Staff extend children's language development through planned activities and impromptu discussion. The staff take every opportunity to inform children of the meaning of new words. Children learn about letters and sounds, and understand that print carries meaning. They use various mediums to support their understanding of letter formation. Children delight in tracing over sand letters with their finger and writing the letters of their name in trays of tea leaves. Children then use chalk and boards to write their name. They play games of I Spy and choose the related item to each letter sound.

Staff provide children with excellent opportunities to learn mathematical concepts such as numbers, shape and size. They challenge children by asking them to work out how many more items they require to make a nominated number. They talk to children about the elements which make a whole shape, for example, two semicircles make a circle. Children understand the concept of size such as half and use this in their conversations with others.

Children make good use of programmable toys such as the computer and have accurate mouse control. They are familiar with and understand the purpose of each computer task. Staff expand children's general knowledge through interesting practical activities. For example, a battery connected to terminals and a light bulb provides children with an insight into electricity. They are fascinated, and grasp the concept very well, eagerly finding items to place between the two terminals and correctly predict if these will be a conductor or insulator.

Children have some access to role-play equipment. It is part of the weekly planning and the playhouse in the garden is available every day. Much of the Montessori equipment encompasses household items and children sweep the floor after some activities and use various sized containers to pour liquids. Children persist in their chosen activity and gain as much enjoyment from the process as they do the product.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy themselves at the setting. They form good relationships with their peer group and staff. Children play very well together and staff deal with minor disputes in a sensitive way, which supports children's understanding of right and wrong. Staff work in partnership with parents to promote positive behaviour management and are excellent role models for children.

Staff meet children's individual needs. They enhance children's positive self-image as they praise and show interest in children's achievements. Children are highly independent and this is particularly evident at snack-time. Children choose when they wish to eat, wash their hands before doing so and mop up any spillages. Should they need to change their clothes, children go to their bags and choose the required article. Children complete all this without the aid of staff as the area is effectively organised to support the children's requirements.

Children learn about the world around them through a good variety of topics, which often arise from an interest shown by the children. There is access to resources, which show positive images of culture, lifestyles and ability. Staff provide parents with information relating to the festivals children acknowledge within the setting, which provides them with an insight and enables them to talk to their children at home should they have any further questions. There are procedures

in place to support children who have special educational needs. Staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the effective partnership with parents who are welcome in the setting. Parents receive a wide range of information in relation to the Early Learning Goals and the Montessori teaching methods. Sound procedures are in place to ensure staff gain clear information from parents relating to children starting points. For example, staff record children's previous day-care experiences, current favourite activity, their method of communication and personal care issues. Regular good-quality newsletters provide parents with much information on future activities. Parents attend information evenings to gain practical knowledge of the various methods used to teach their children. The strong partnership with parents enables them to be part of their child's learning and is of great benefit to the children. Parents are very happy with the setting and confirm that they receive a good amount of information on their child's learning and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting is good. A wide range of policies and procedures keep children safe, secure and promote their general well-being. Records are generally very well maintained, although the record of incidents sometimes contains the names of others involved, which does not promote confidentiality. Records are shared with parents and provide a good insight to children's development, care and daily routine.

The leadership and management is good. There are secure systems in place to ensure new staff are suitable for the position. There are effective recruitment procedures and the principle of the setting undertakes the appropriate references on all staff. There are good systems in place to ensure staff hold the appropriate level of childcare qualification and undergo the required checks and references.

Staff have a strong professionalism and undertake additional training to benefit the children. For example, they attend child protection, special educational needs, and health and safety training. The principal completes staff appraisal forms, which identifies current roles and responsibilities. Together they evaluate staffs individual strength and plan future training, which supports their professional development.

Staff promote children's welfare as they review procedures to ensure that relevant information relating to the individual care of children is known to all staff. Regular staff meetings, sharing of records and discussions provide effective communication between the staff members. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider was required to maintain an accurate record of the hours children attend the setting and record visitors. They were required to ensure that the child protection policy included the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation against staff members. They were also required to have a complaints procedure.

An accurate daily attendance register shows the actual hours of children's attendance. A record is maintained of the names of the staff who care for the children each day. There are effective

procedures in place to record visitors to the setting. For example, a notice on the door reminds staff to record visitors. The procedures in place promote children's safety.

The updated child protection procedure identifies the local safeguarding children board and includes the procedures to follow relating to allegations against staff members. This ensures staff follow the correct procedures and promotes children's welfare.

Parents have easy access to a written complaints procedure. They are provided with the full contact details of Ofsted as the regulators of childcare. The parent poster is on display, which provides parents with a telephone contact number. This supports children's welfare as parents are informed of whom to contact should they have any complaints or concerns.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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 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):

- extend the risk assessment to specifically address the issue of the Ivy in the garden
- improve confidentiality in record keeping.

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 the provision of children's role play.

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