

The Denning Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116750
Inspection date	06 November 2007
Inspector	Joanne Graham
Setting Address	Fawley Village Hall, Fawley, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 6JA
Telephone number	01491 578573
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Registered person	Jennifer Lynn Blain
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Denning Montessori Nursery School opened in 1991. It operates from Fawley Village Hall and is located in village of Fawley, near Henley in Oxfordshire. The school serves the communities surrounding Fawley. A maximum of 18 may attend the nursery school at any one time. The nursery school is open from 09.00 to 12.00 Mondays and Fridays, and open 09.00 to 12.00 and 13.00 to 16.00 Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The children have an opportunity to stay for lunch or all day on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The setting is open term time only. There is a fully enclosed outside play area for the children to use.

There are currently 22 children on roll. This includes 16 children in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has provision to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities, although none currently attend. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs three staff, of whom one holds a level 3 childcare qualification and one holds a level 6 qualification, although this is not relevant to childcare. All staff hold Montessori training qualifications. The Nursery school follows the Montessori teaching method.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good daily routines, visual signs and sensitive explanations help children understand that washing their hands before eating, after visiting the toilet and after using tissues reduces the risk of passing on germs. Children are well taken care of if they have an accident because staff follow current and appropriate guidelines, all hold up to date first aid knowledge and the first aid box is easily accessible. Staff undertake additional epi-pen training to meet children's individual needs and accidents and incidents are sufficiently recorded. This promotes children's welfare. Children receive a range of healthy snacks including raisins, apricots and fresh fruit, encouraging them to develop healthy eating practices. They select their snacks independently and are beginning to recognise their bodily needs. Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet and medical history. This ensures children's individual dietary and medical needs are met. Although food supplied for the children who stay for lunch is adequately stored, staff preparing and warming through meals do not hold food hygiene certificates.

Children learn about healthy eating and living because staff are good role models and promote this well. They ensure children play in a clean environment and have plenty of opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Children take part in regular physical activity both inside and outdoors, boosting their development very well. They go for walks in the local community, participate in weekly classes of children's yoga and music and movement and use the garden daily. They increase their balancing and climbing skills when using the monkey bars and large apparatus, pedal bicycles and roll and catch hoops with increasing skill.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a spacious well-organised environment. This allows them to move around and play safely. They have easy and safe access to a good range of toys and resources appropriate for their age and stages of development and children confidently self select from the open shelving. Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Visual and written risk assessments and good staff deployment and supervision keep children safe. The premises are very secure and there are good procedures in place to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access. For example, only staff open the doors and they check identification of all visitors.

Staff sensitively implement 'rules' to help keep children safe. For example, sitting down when eating and accessing the activities, tidying away floor toys before accessing new equipment and reminder to walk inside. Children know they do not enter the kitchen and only access the garden with staff. This helps to keep them out of harm's way. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely.

Staff are aware of child protection policies and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Staff receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse. Management ensure staff receive up to date training to continually increase their knowledge. This supports children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy, content and comfortable in the setting. They self select their chosen activities with self assurance and are confident to approach staff for guidance, reassurance and comfort. Staff skilfully foster children's curiosity and children's learning benefits from their in-depth knowledge of individual developmental levels. Children are busily occupied and welcome interaction from their peers and staff. They especially enjoy preparing breakfast in the role play kitchen area, matching shapes using the knob cylinders and accessing the outside space. All children are eager to learn and confident to try new experiences.

Children have their individual needs met extremely well. Staff demonstrate they have a very good knowledge of children's preferred activities, interests, levels of learning and developmental stages and differentiate activities sufficiently to significantly enhance children's enjoyment and achievements. Staff have an excellent knowledge of early childhood frameworks and use this knowledge to plan interesting, stimulating and fun activities and games into the curriculum, helping the children to achieve well. Children respond positively to the vast choices available to them. They build up strong relationships with their peers and the staff and positively welcome them into their play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children thrive in this fun, exciting and extremely stimulating environment as staff skilfully plan motivating, appealing and interesting activities. Staff's very good use of observations, individual learning plans and written evaluations informs the children's developmental profiles and future planning needs. Children benefit immensely from this knowledge and this significantly helps them achieve their full potential. Children are very keen and confident to join in and to try new experiences and will work independently with self assurance. Staff ask effective questions which help the children think and to move their learning forward. Children are confident and competent learners. Staff significantly increase and foster children's desire to learn by developing the outdoor environment effectively, as well as ensuring the inside areas are well resourced. They enjoy the weekly garden sessions and bringing items in to their nature table.

Children use mathematical skills in everyday situations when they problem solve and count in rote, especially before going into the garden. They listen well to instructions and are confident and articulate speakers. They especially get pleasure from talking in the 'show and tell' session. Children enjoy stories and some children are beginning to predict the text with familiar stories. Their creative and imaginative skills are increased during activities such as collage, free painting and playing with the farm animals. Children's fine motor skills and hand and eye co-ordination benefit from accessing activities such as rolling the napkin into the holder, building the train track, controlling paint brushes and using scissors with increasing skill. Children access everyday technology such as the computer and digital camera. The photographs they take are used as screen savers on the computer enabling them to see their 'work'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a good knowledge of children's family context and increase the children's feelings of security and comfort when they participate in conversations about the children's home life. Staff have a good knowledge of caring for children with disabilities and learning difficulties,

although none currently attend. Staff effectively support children who speak English as an additional language by talking to them in their home language, having dual language books which they ask the parents to read to the group and through conversing by using signs and gestures. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the setting. They are happy, contented and comfortable. Their individual needs and differences are valued and respected and staff treat all children with equal concern and compassion. They ensure all children have a named peg and box to store their own belongings. This contributes to the children feeling secure. Children learn key social skills such as sharing, turn taking and caring for the environment, the equipment and one another. They enjoy each other's company, listening and respecting views and treat each other kindly. Their behaviour is good and at times very good. Staff are excellent role models and are consistent in managing boundaries. Children respond positively to their high standards and their sensitive and effective support.

The children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other, the local community and the wider world through planned activities, celebrating different festivals and outings to local places of interest, such as a visit to the local church. Children access a wide range of resources which depict positive images of race, culture, disability and gender. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although staff are aware of the complaints procedure, this knowledge is not in depth.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and this contributes significantly to children's wellbeing in the nursery. Staff actively seek views from parents about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis through out their time there. Parents particularly enjoy the termly individual family afternoon appointment. During this time, their child shows them their favourite activities and equipment and is able to demonstrate their usage. The child's key worker is available to discuss their child's progress and achievements. Staff ensure that all parents are kept informed about the provision through daily verbal exchanges, regular newsletters and fund raising events. Excellent observational skills and planning ensure children's developmental needs are met, as staff use this knowledge to inform future planning and work closely with parents and carers.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy, settled, secure and enjoy their time in the nursery because staff offer good care and attention to their needs. Staff ensure children are supervised at all times, that ratios are maintained throughout the sessions and children are never left unsupervised with persons not vetted. They have high regard for children's welfare. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating, well-balanced and smooth flowing programme throughout the day. The premises layout is appropriately organised and children are able to self select, access snacks when they need to and play outside during the session.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff effectively monitor and reflect on their practice and welcome ideas and ways to continually improve the provision. They are currently completing their local authority quality assurance programme. The owner actively supports and encourages staff development and training and she ensures staff have a very good understanding of the Montessori ethos. Staff are committed to update their knowledge, which helps them to improve and enhance children's care and learning opportunities. Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff who are very caring. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and wellbeing is in place, well maintained and is regularly reviewed.

Staff lock all confidential detail in a secure storage unit. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting had one action, four recommendations and a point for consideration for the nursery education inspection. The setting has updated their policies and procedures to include all mandatory detail, including lost and uncollected child. The group now conducts a termly risk assessment on the premises to identify and minimize potential risks and there is fire safety equipment on the premises. This promotes children's safety. Staff's names and attendance hours are recorded on the register, confirming ratios are maintained and safeguarding children's welfare. The setting no longer administers medication on the premises.

The owner has introduced a staff appraisal system which highlights and addresses staff training and developmental needs. This ensures the continuous development of the education provision provided, supporting children's learning needs.

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.

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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):

- make sure staff who prepare and warm through food hold food hygiene training
- ensure all staff continue to familiarize themselves with the complaints procedure.

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