

Gerrards Cross Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	108065
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Keriann Belcher
Setting Address	Methodist Church Hall, Oak End Way, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8BR
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Registered person	Lorraine Douglas
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 inadequate – notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Gerrards Cross Montessori School was first registered in 1999. It is a privately owned setting. The school operates from the Methodist Church Hall in Gerrards Cross. A maximum of 16 children may attend at any one time. The school is open from 09:30 until 12:30 for four days a week during school term times. A lunch club is offered as required and operates from 12:30 until 13:15.

There are currently 22 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, nine children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language.

The school employs three staff. Of these, all hold relevant qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Currently no staff hold a valid first aid certificate which means that children's health is not protected if they have a minor accident. This is a breach of regulations to the National Standards. Information relating to accidents is recorded confidentially to protect children's privacy. A system is in place to record any medication if it is required.

Children are learning to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene through practices that are part of their daily routine, such as washing their hands after using the toilet, and after messy activities.

Children bring their own fruit to share and water is available at snack time. However, it is not always freely accessible during the session. The snack time is a social occasion, as children sit in small groups to enjoy their food. Their independence is actively encouraged as they pour their own drinks and help themselves to fruit from a plate. Children with individual dietary needs are known by staff, who consider this when planning any activity involving food. Some of the older children stay for lunch club and guidance is provided to parents to promote healthy eating.

Children have regular opportunities to promote their physical development, for example, they balance as they walk along the beam, slide, climb on apparatus. They enjoy musical games such as 'Row, Row, Row your boat' or 'Ring a ring a roses'. Children's fine motor development is promoted through the daily activities, for example, they use pencils to draw, thread wool, throw sewing cards and complete puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have access to a good selection of toys and books to support their learning. They can move around and select the resources they wish to play with from those that have been set out.

Staff supervise children well, for example, staff accompany when children go out of the room to go to the toilet. Security on the main entrance is good, as it is kept locked throughout the session and staff monitor the internal door when children are collected, to ensure children's safety. A good written procedure is in place if children are going home with other people rather than their parents.

Basic risk assessments are undertaken on the areas and equipment used by the children, which means that hazards are clearly identified. Regular fire drills are carried out to ensure that children can evacuate the premises safely in the event of a fire.

Children are safeguarded because there are written procedures in place for dealing with allegations of abuse in relation to both the children and staff. However, the procedure does not reflect the current legalisation which could compromise children's safety. The procedure is made available for parents to see, which ensures they are informed of the steps that would be taken.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children are happy and settle well into the nursery, due to the flexible settling in procedures in place. A secure environment is created by the staff team who are friendly and caring. A range of activities are provided for children. Children enjoy listening and looking at familiar stories such as 'Love you this much'.

Children enjoy creating and designing, for example, they glue coloured paper and add pieces of pasta to their paper and paint at the easel or draw with felt tipped pens.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use this to plan a variety of activities that promote all areas of learning. Staff work well as a team, enjoy their work and are motivated to continue to improve their skills and knowledge by attending further training. Staff question children in order to encourage them to learn and develop their thinking. Although staff observe and assess children on a regular basis to inform the planning and learning intentions; the documentation does not securely link from the Montessori ethos into the Foundation Stage of learning.

Children enjoy taking part in activities that promote mathematical development, they learn about numbers and the concept of maths through using a variety of Montessori equipment. They use wooden cubes and triangles to create 2D and 3D shapes. Children count in units of tens and hundreds using bead blocks. They are able to recognise written numbers when completing number jig-saws. Children are positively supported during these activities. This means they are effectively challenged and their knowledge extended.

Children's creativity is developing as they have easy access to paint, colouring pencils, scissors and glue. They eagerly join in songs and listen attentively to the adult leading the singing sessions. Musical instruments are available for the children to use. Montessori equipment is always readily available to the children. Additional equipment such as role play resources and dressing clothes are incorporated into the daily planning. For example, children dress up in chiffon dresses and admire themselves in the mirror and continue to wear the outfit as they go about their play.

Children learn about the natural world as they go to into the local community, such as the nearby farm to visit animals or to church for the Harvest festival. They learn about different countries and cultures through discussions, songs, resources boxes and the celebration of festivals. Recently they enjoyed making Easter cards. Knowledge and understanding of the world is supported through the use of flags, jig-saws and the globe.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle in well at the nursery as the procedures in place enable children to feel secure. A profile is completed by parents prior to children starting to enable the nursery to give the best possible care to each individual child. Staff are aware of individual needs, for example, dietary needs. Children learn about their own cultures and those of others through the acknowledgement of festivals such as Divali and learn about different continents using a globe and related items.

Children's behaviour is good because they are engaged in the range of activities provided. Staff continually promote positive behaviour, they are heard praising children throughout the day and congratulated on working well at the end of the session. Children benefit from the strong emphasis on good manners and politeness, such as shaking hands before they leave the session. Therefore children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive information relating to the Montessori philosophy. However, they receive very little information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. A parent's information area is available, where general information is displayed, such as policies and procedures. Parents are happy with the friendly, approachable staff and identify amongst the group's strengths the emphasis on positive social behaviour.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The provider has failed to ensure that the staff maintain a valid first aid certificates which severely compromises children's safety and well-being. There are sound systems in place to ensure that staff working with children have been checked and are suitable. Individual files demonstrate staff's suitability to work with children. However, these are not always available and accessible for inspection. There is an induction procedure for new staff to ensure that policies are discussed and understood. The provision has most of the required documentation to protect children but some lacks the necessary detail and organisation to fully promote children's welfare.

Children are grouped in mixed age and ability classes. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure that sufficient staff work directly with the children and during free-play times. This ensures that children have good support as they are cared for by staff they know well.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff are led by a highly committed manager to ensure that children receive a good standard of nursery education. As a result, staff work well as a team to provide a stimulating and challenging environment for children. There is a clear daily routine and staff plan well for children's learning, activities are adapted for children's individual needs to ensure that all participate. Children quickly learn the routine of the day, which helps them to feel secure and helps them learn.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that the child protection statement includes the procedures to be followed if an accusation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer. The policy has been amended to include the required information, which protects children's safety and welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to develop the process for evaluation by formally recording and using to inform future planning. The provider has devised a formal system using the Montessori structure of evaluation and is using it to inform future planning. She was also asked to develop the planning to ensure children have further opportunities to mark make and practise their emergent writing through practical and fun activities within the daily routine. Children have regular opportunities to mark make and practise

their emergent writing, such as drawing letters in the sand, using pencils and felt tipped pens for creative work.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- attend first aid training that includes first aid for infants and young children

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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 information to parents about the Foundation Stage and early learning goals
- improve the links in the planning and evaluation documentation between the Montessori teaching method and Foundation Stage.

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