

The Garden Room

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY361333
Inspection date	10 June 2008
Inspector	Linda Close
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Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Garden Room provides care for children on the ground floor of a house located near the centre of Wimbledon. Children have access to all rooms on the ground floor which include two playrooms, a quiet room and a room for messy activities. In addition they have the use of a separate single storey garden room at the rear of the building. There are toilet facilities on the ground floor of the house and in the garden room. Further toilet facilities are available for supervised use on the first floor of the house. Children use an enclosed garden area for outdoor play. The local authority is Merton. Children can attend for varying sessions. A pet dog and a cat live at the setting.

The provider is a qualified Montessori teacher and some elements of the Montessori philosophy of education are incorporated into the activities planned for children. There are five members of staff who work with the children over the week and two further staff are available as and when required. There are two members of staff who hold Montessori qualifications, two staff who are qualified to level 3 and one member of staff is a qualified teacher. The remaining staff members are experienced but unqualified. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 16 children at any one time. There are eight children present at the time of this inspection and there are 20 children on roll in total. There are six children who are learning English as an additional language. None of the children on roll has identified learning difficulties.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A trained first aider is present at every session to care for children if they have an accident. Children's health is safeguarded by the staff who are well informed about individual needs. Important items of prescription medication are kept to hand at all times. Staff implement appropriate routines for maintaining good standards of hygiene for the children in the setting. They clean and dry the table tops before snack time and after messy activities such as dough play, and they make sure that the toilet facilities are clean and well supplied with soap and paper towels. Parents are made aware that the children are not to attend if they are unwell which helps to prevent the unnecessary spread of infection. Children learn about good personal hygiene from the staff who explain why they must wash their hands and before handling food.

Parents know that there is no refrigeration available and they are asked to provide ice packs with packed lunches to keep children's food fresh. The nursery provides healthy snacks and drinks for the children who have free access to fresh drinking water at all times. The children help to prepare fruit snacks and juices and they eat and drink with obvious enjoyment. Children enjoy healthy exercise in the garden every day. They play energetic games with balls and shuttlecocks. They climb on the apparatus confidently and they steer their wheeled toys well. Music and movement activities taken indoors give further opportunities for healthy exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a very pleasant, welcoming environment. Their art work, photographs, posters and interesting artefacts make the setting interesting and colourful. Parents come into the house to leave or collect their children which helps to keep the children safe. The outer door cannot be opened by the children which ensures that strangers cannot enter unnoticed and children cannot leave unobserved. There is ample space in the house, the garden and the garden playroom for the children to enjoy a full range of activities.

A wide range of good quality toys, books and resources are easily accessible to the children. The chairs and tables in the garden room are the correct size for them to sit, eat and play in comfort. In the house the children can play on a low table or on the floor or they can rest on comfortable sofas. The outdoor environment is attractive and very well resourced with climbing apparatus, wheeled toys and a large gazebo where children can play in the shade.

Children are accustomed to emergency evacuation procedures which take place regularly. Staff complete daily risk assessments in the setting and they keep a note of their daily checks. They ensure that the stair gate is in place, electric socket covers are on and sharp kitchen equipment is inaccessible to children. However, the staff have not noted a few potential hazards. These include an ineffective safety catch on a cupboard under the sink giving children possible access to bleach and the Aga in the kitchen gets quite hot to touch.

Children are safeguarded in relation to child protection issues because staff are aware of the signs or symptoms that suggest ill-treatment. They know what action to take if they are concerned for the children's welfare. An appropriate policy and procedure document is in place and it is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are very happy and secure at the setting. They enjoy the relaxed, calm atmosphere that the staff provide. Staff are dedicated to helping children to learn through well planned, purposeful play. They arrange the rooms and resources before the children arrive following the Montessori principle of welcoming children into a 'prepared environment'. After finding their name cards the children say goodbye to their parents and carers and they eagerly choose an activity. Staff plan activities that help children to make progress in all six areas of learning. They ensure that the activities and resources appeal to children of all ages.

Children's achievements are carefully monitored. Staff promote independence in gentle but effective ways. They offer the children opportunities for doing things for themselves such as squeezing oranges and pouring out the juice to drink. They are very successful in the way they promote children's first steps in reading and writing. Examples of children's emergent writing are displayed all around together with many examples of the way writing is used including food packaging, maps, shop signs and greeting cards. The children learn about the sounds and shapes of the letters of the alphabet and they have easy access to a wide range of writing materials which they use well. They write letters to each other, label their own work and some of the more mature children are already able to form letters correctly. Reading readiness is identified and some children are blending letter sounds and making their first steps in reading. Staff are equally effective in helping children to count and recognise figures. Children are learning mathematical vocabulary through discussions over practical activities. They talk about more and less, taller and shorter with understanding.

Topic work is well chosen and very well resourced. Staff capitalise on the children's interests. They find ways to extend children's learning by linking activities to children's home lives and real experiences. A good example of this is the current topic on China which includes complex role play involving packing for a journey and flying on a plane. Staff and children make very good use of the outdoor area. The children learn about nature through planting and growing vegetables. Staff take an active role in children's games and they extend learning through asking questions to make the children think about what they are doing. They encourage the children to use their imagination in their play which results in children selecting resources which they move all around the garden to build dens and enclosures.

Children show an interest in books and they enjoy stories. However, the way that circle time is organised does not always promote good listening skills. Sometimes the younger children are restless which disturbs the older children and the proximity of various toys can be a little distracting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children of all races, languages, abilities and cultures are welcome to join the nursery. Staff find out about each child's individual needs from their parents at the time of registration and in ongoing discussions thereafter. A key worker is assigned to each child which helps them to settle in and feel comfortable and secure. Children's activities include stories and art work connected with a good range of festivals in different parts of the world. Staff have attended training to assist them in their work with children who are learning English as an additional language.

At the time of this inspection none of the children have identified learning difficulties. However, the staff are well informed about providing appropriate support for children's individual needs. The setting has links with the local authority inclusion team which gives staff access to specialist advice and guidance should it be required.

Children's behaviour is managed very well. Staff are fully committed to providing a calm learning environment for the children and they are very successful. They help children to understand kindness and consideration for others through explanation and through their own good example. They are charming and quietly spoken and the children respond to them well.

Parents say that they are delighted with the standard of care that their children receive at this setting. Useful posters and printed information are displayed. Planning documents are shared so that parents know what their children do at the nursery. Home/nursery link books go back and forth between the setting and the children's parents for the exchange of observations and messages. Numerous photographs, samples of work and explanatory notes are also shared which ensures that parents can support and extend children's learning at home. Parents are welcome to speak to the provider at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider carries out checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children at the time of their employment and she keeps neat records of the outcome of her checks. References are taken up and induction procedures ensure that staff gain familiarity with the policies and procedures of the setting. In this small setting the staff work side by side which means that new staff are monitored by more senior staff at all times. Annual appraisals, as well as consideration for new developments in early years care and education, guide the selection of training courses. Staff have attended training to assist them in applying the new foundation stage guidelines in their work with the children.

The provider is very conscientious in her approach to planning and daily preparation. She is dedicated to giving children a peaceful nurturing environment and she acts as a good role model for her staff. She devises plans with her staff and prints them out to use as a daily guide and to share with parents. Resources are well prepared and neatly set out before the children arrive. Daily safety checks are conducted and in most respects they are effective. All regulatory documentation is completed in full and stored confidentially. All policy and procedure documents are neatly presented in clearly labelled files. However, a few details on these documents are inaccurate including maximum group size which does not reflect a recent increase from 12 to 16. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints 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 that they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

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):

- improve the organisation of circle time so that the younger and older children can enjoy it to the full
- review and improve risk assessments in the setting
- review and update policy and procedure documents.

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