

Bishops Stortford Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY353280 |
| Inspection date | 30 June 2008 |
| Inspector | Lynn Clements |

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| Setting Address | The Pavilion Nursery, Hockerill Sports Club, Beldams Lane, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, Hertfordshire, CM23 5LG |
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| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Louise Nicole Bailes |
| 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 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?

Bishops Stortford Montessori Nursery opened in 2007. It operates from Hockerill Sports Club. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll, of which 17 are in receipt of early education funding. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.30 until 12.30 term time only. There is access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are also effective strategies in place for children with English as an additional language. The nursery employs five members of staff. Four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is currently working towards an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff ensure that children learn to deal successfully with their personal hygiene needs. Children are encouraged to be independent from the outset. They take themselves to the toilet and wash their hands whenever they need to. Very good posters in the toilet area provide younger children with the important visual clues they need to remind them how to wash their hands properly. Very good nappy changing routines are in place and organised well to ensure that children's dignity and privacy are protected at all times. All health related documentation is in place and updated as required. There is a clear sick child policy which is shared with parents and carers. The sharing of clear information in this way helps to help prevent the unnecessary spread of infection. Staff have completed relevant paediatric first aid training and this enables them to act quickly and immediately by providing appropriate care for children, onsite, in the event of an accident.

Staff have good procedures in place for food preparation and cleaning routines. All tables are thoroughly cleaned before snack, after snack or during cooking activities. This ensures that the risk of cross-contamination is kept to an absolute minimum. Parents actively support the nursery's healthy eating programme. Children bring a wide variety of fresh fruit from home which they share and enjoy together at snack time. They become excited when talking about the healthy things they have brought in for snack time. Children have previously made large cut-out displays of fresh fruit, and this provides a visual focus for them as they talk about bringing in an orange for their snack. No child remains thirsty as they pour drinks independently; staff support these developing skills as they provide child-sized jugs and cups. Clear information is obtained from parents prior to placement. This enables staff to meet children's individual needs effectively. For example, information regarding food allergies means that staff can protect children from foods which could potentially harm them. Children learn through first hand experiences about the importance of a nutritious diet. They enjoy tasting different foods and exploring where foods come from as they learn about fresh produce. For example, children enjoy investigating pea-pods, using their noses to smell them, popping them open by themselves and counting out how many peas are hidden inside each one. Staff then talk about cooking the peas and the children have the opportunity to taste them at snack time. They also join in cooking activities as they bake bread. These well-planned opportunities enable children to explore their personal likes and dislikes in a relaxed environment.

Staff plan plenty of physical opportunities for the children. They ensure that they have access to a range of resources which enable them to build on their hand-eye coordination and fine manipulative skills, such as pouring, picking up objects with tweezers or tongs and transferring objects from one container to another. Children use tools, single handed, with competence and control. They learn to balance and move around safely, showing good spatial awareness. Children used wheeled toys with control as they negotiate pathways and learn to move forwards then backwards. All children are able to rest or be active according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The premises are very suitable and extremely well organised to provide good space for children to play safely and move around freely. Dedicated members of staff set up the nursery every day to a very high standard. The very good use of child-height storage facilities enables children

to make their own investigations at their own pace. Attention to putting objects and games away after use encourages children to keep their play space clear, safe and free from hazards. The hall is organised exceptionally well, giving children plenty of space to play. Children can independently access the toilet area. This helps them to feel at home within the setting and raises their confidence to complete tasks for themselves. There is an extremely good range of child-height furniture and equipment which enables them to play and learn in safely and comfort.

Clear and well-presented risk assessments are in place. These are used extremely well as working documents to ensure the nursery remains safe for the children. Staff are confident in assessing risks to children at all times. For example, when work is arranged to address problems in the changing room within the pavilion, staff are quick to respond. They assess how the works will be managed, what the risks are to the children attending the setting and then they implement effective systems, at short notice, which protect children from harm but also ensures that any impact on the daily routine is minimal. Staff are proactive in supporting children to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, children practise fire evacuation procedures so that everyone knows exactly what to do in the event of a real emergency. The premises are kept secure. Visitor identification is checked and a record of all visitors is maintained. Clear drop off and collection procedures are in place to ensure children only leave with authorised adults. The premises are kept secure whilst the nursery is in operation and this ensures that no child can leave unescorted.

All staff have a very good understanding about the signs and symptoms of abuse. Systems, such as an existing injury record ensures that children's welfare is being monitored daily. All staff are confident about the procedures to follow if they suspect abuse or neglect in any form. This ensures that children are protected from harm. Staff have completed relevant safeguarding children training and this is updated on a regular basis as staff firmly believe that children's welfare is paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The large hall is divided into core Montessori learning objectives, such as practical life, maths, language and sensory activities, all of which are designed with the specific intention of enabling children to learn through play and investigation. Staff fully understand how to link these learning experiences to the six early learning goals and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Time is taken prior to placement to ensure that information about each child and what they enjoy doing is in place. This provides staff with important, relevant information about children's starting points and enables staff to provide an inviting environment where children feel motivated and cared for. Staff plan and provide exceptionally well thought through and resourced activities and play opportunities which clearly develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Children are very confident and secure in their relationship with staff members and each other. They ask questions, such as why, when and how. Visitors to the setting, such as Scottish relatives during the St Andrews day celebrations, help to bring topics to life and provide children with exceptionally good opportunities to explore artefacts and ask questions, all of which enables them to develop their thinking skills and extend their understanding about the wider world. Children enthusiastically make their own choices about the activities they wish to investigate or the resources they want to play with. They are motivated to try new things without fear of failure. Members of staff are interested in what the children say and do, promoting their

independent learning and development through visually stimulating activities. Additional staff are welcomed into the setting to support the children. Access to a peripatetic French teacher, provides children with marvellous opportunities each week to develop their language skills. Parents report on how children are using their newly acquired skills when on their holidays and how this boosts their self-esteem and confidence to try other activities.

Key persons are in place for each and every child. This system provides continuity of care and provides a regular point of contact for parents and carers. Children under three years are extremely well supported. Staff have a clear understanding about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use aspects of this in their practice to ensure that firm foundations are set for all future learning and development. Children enjoy what they do and are able to sustain interest in a range of activities which promote their understanding and learning. They are motivated extremely well and concentrate for prolonged periods of time at activities which capture their imagination. Staff ensure they provide a broad range of activities and experiences which encourage the children's interest and investigation skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very clear understanding about the Foundation Stage curriculum. They ensure that the activities and resources provided enable children to explore all six areas of learning. Key-worker observations of the children are very good and are used to update their individual records of assessment. Staff highlight which of the stepping stones the children have achieved, this gives staff, parents and carers a clear picture of what each child is able to do. However, this information is not currently used effectively to inform future planning. In addition, whilst current planning contains differentiation with regards to equipment or where activities are place, it does not clearly identify how specific learning intentions can be adapted to ensure that all children are challenged appropriately.

Staff use a wide range of teaching methods to support children and help them to achieve in what they do. Visual clues, audio and a range of multi-sensory equipment enables children to learn through first hand experiences and investigation. In addition to assessment records staff find out about the children and what they enjoy doing at home, through two way communication diaries. This enables them to learn about the whole child and gives parents and carers an active role in supporting their children's learning and development.

Children are independent, seeing to their personal needs, making their own selections about the resources they want to play with or the activities they wish to explore. They show care and consideration for others as they invite them to join in their games. Children learn to link sounds to letters and staff support them by introducing simple phonics which helps them to develop skills for later learning. Children extend their thinking and listening skills as they join in registration and circle time discussions or listen intently during story time. Children learn to recognise their name in print whilst older children begin to use writing for a purpose as they write their names, generally forming the letters correctly.

Children enjoy number rhymes and songs. They show a developing understanding of simple calculation as they count out how many peas are in the pods and add them together with those already in the bowl. Children explore shapes, looking at the shapes around them or using the Montessori equipment available. They competently develop their understanding about information communication technology as they use the computer with increasing control. Children negotiate programmes, such as shapes, numbers and letters which help to consolidate previous learning. They learn about the wider world through topics and visits out and about.

Children develop their understanding about change as they take nature walks or observe daily weather patterns. Staff ensure that physical opportunities are planned on a daily basis. Children enjoy stretching, running, jumping and using apparatus, such as stilts, bats and balls, climbing frames and wheeled toys. They develop balance, coordination and control over their bodies as they find out about moving in different ways.

Children use their imagination freely. They paint pictures based on their own ideas, create star fish and model ice cream cones for their 'visiting the sea-side' display. Children show clever use of their imagination as they use equipment, such as number rods to make beds for their pretend hospital.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All staff work extremely closely with parents and carers. This ensures that children's individual needs are met and respected. All children have independent access to toys and equipment which reflect diversity. This enables them to develop their knowledge and understanding about the world around them. Staff actively encourage children to develop their self-help skills. Children are able to make their own choices about what they want to play with or explore, based on what interests them. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs during topics and discussions, examining artefacts and tasting foods from around the world. Staff ensure that there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender, race or disability.

Whilst there are currently no children on roll with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, staff have plenty of previous experience and clear support strategies in place. They ensure they always work closely with families in the best interests of the child. When appropriate, additional support is sought from the local authority advisor. One to one care is offered and specialist equipment is acquired when necessary to ensure children are fully included in the life of the nursery. There are currently a small number of children attending who speak English as an additional language. Key words are obtained from the parents and children are fully supported and given plenty of time to feel secure in the nursery in their own language before they begin to learn English. Close contacts are maintained with families and if necessary staff seek support regarding interpretation so everyone can feel included in the provision.

Staff work closely together to provide a consistent approach to behaviour management. Older children and staff discuss their rules and devise ways of making the atmosphere pleasant and welcoming. Hand puppets are used to help children focus on their feelings, emotions and their behaviour towards others. Older children learn to share, take turns and negotiate with each other. Whilst younger children are supported by staff to share toys fairly. Children develop a sense of belonging as they select resources or the activities independently and move around freely. Staff create an environment which encourages children to behave well.

Relationships with parents and carers are strong. Opportunities for all parents and carers to become involved in their child's development is very good. Key persons observe younger children and babies and actively encourage parents and carers to share comments from home about their development. This valuable information enables them to plan progress based on the whole child. Parents, carers and children are greeted warmly as they arrive each day. In addition to daily verbal feedback and daily written communication records, newsletters are sent out to encourage parental participation and provide information about activities and topics or forthcoming events. Notice boards are well presented and kept up to date with information about funding and general nursery business.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education funding is good. Parents and carers have access to the planning which is displayed in the planning folder and made available on a daily basis in the hall. There is also some information available in the nursery school's prospectus which refers to the Foundation Stage. Children's records of assessment are maintained by key persons and shared with their parents. In addition, staff take daily opportunities to provide parents and carers with feedback, helping them to share in their children's achievements and learning experiences in the nursery. Parents report that they are extremely confident in the care and education offered to their children and that their children enjoy going to nursery.

Children share and help each other. They encourage others to join in their games and make room for them at activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Outcomes for children are very good. Policies and procedures are individual to the setting. However, some, such as the safeguarding children, complaints procedure and the incident record require updating to fully promote the safe management of the setting. An operational plan is in place and made available to parents. Registration systems are in place and clear, they include both the children's and staff's hours of attendance so everyone can be safely accounted for at all times. All records are stored securely and confidentiality is respected. Robust procedures are in place for the employment of staff and the monitoring of volunteers. This ensures that children are protected from harm.

Children are cared for by dedicated, caring staff who have an extremely good knowledge and understanding of child development. The vast majority of staff hold relevant qualifications, with the remaining staff currently working towards recognised early years qualifications. Clear staff induction procedures are in place and on going appraisals are implemented to support existing members of staff. The organisation of the setting ensures that children are well cared for. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of early education is good. The manager ensures that regular staff meetings build on new learning opportunities for the children. Staff are deployed effectively to provide good support for each child. Development plans are in place to ensure the setting continues to provide a good learning environment for young children. Staff provide good opportunities for children to make good progress through the Foundation Stage and this is monitored by the manager.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration, 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):

- ensure that procedures required for the safe management of the setting are regularly updated, this refers to the complaints procedure so that the regulator's contact details are fully included and the safeguarding children procedure so that information regarding how allegations of abuse against staff or volunteers are managed; also to ensure the incident record is maintained appropriately.

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):

- develop the current planning systems to ensure it is clearly based on children's next steps for learning; ensure that differentiation is clear to provide effective challenge for all children.

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