

Tree Tops Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY309169
Inspection date	03/06/2009
Inspector	Sheila Dawn Flounders
Setting address	1-3 Chesham Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1JS
Telephone number	01926 888050
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Tree Tops Montessori Nursery is an independently run provision. It opened in 2005 and operates from two buildings on the site, containing separate areas for each age group in specifically converted premises. Children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. It is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 69 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 109 children aged from three months to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

There are 21 members of staff, 18 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ Level 2. The setting operates in line with the Montessori philosophy and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the provision is outstanding. The managers and staff ensure that the individual needs of the child are paramount and frequently adapt their practise to meet them. Those with additional needs are particularly well supported by enthusiastic staff, the layout of the premises and the underlying philosophy of the nursery. Staff know the children very well and their welfare is a priority, with management ensuring that all necessary measures are in place to actively promote this. Families are always welcomed and parents make many positive comments about the atmosphere within the nursery. Children engage in activities they enjoy in a child-centred environment where they have many opportunities to explore and develop at their own pace and as a result, most are making very good progress. Management are pro-active about self-evaluation, constantly seeking to improve in all areas of the provision and demonstrate an excellent capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- reorganising the lunch time period in the baby room to better meet their needs

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Management have a comprehensive understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and as a result, its requirements are mostly fully in place. Equipment and resources which are age-appropriate are provided in the various rooms. Documentation is very thorough, updated and maintained so that confidentiality is assured. Robust procedures are in place for staff recruitment, vetting and induction with ample staff employed to ensure that ratios are maintained at all times and to cover absences and emergencies. Staff have an appropriate mix of qualifications and experience and generally make very good use of their time whilst following children's interests and allowing for their individuality. However, at lunch time, the organisation in the baby unit is protracted, resulting in some of the babies waiting for periods for their meals while others miss parts of the activity immediately after. Children are safeguarded through comprehensive policies and procedures, which are implemented by the staff, detailed risk assessments which have identified potential hazards so that measures are in place to minimise them, and the maintaining of a secure perimeter to the nursery. Senior staff are very aware of their duty to protect children, what issues would cause them concern and the action they would take if necessary, although some junior staff are less confident.

Parents have excellent relationships with the nursery. They have access to detailed on-going information, in a variety of formats which meets their individual needs, and opportunities to have flexible settling-in visits according to needs of their child. They are updated regularly about their child's achievements and progress verbally and have as much access to their child's records as they wish, with more formal opportunities to have discussions with their child's keyperson also provided. They are encouraged to share what they know about their child before they attend, which is updated as children move rooms, and become involved in their child's learning, for example, when they take the 'holiday bear' with them or come in to share skills. Liaison with other settings children attend, via the parents, is well established at the end of the pre-school year and is being developed for younger children. Parents comments are also used as part of the settings detailed self-evaluation, together with input from staff. This process is used continuously to clearly identify strengths and weaknesses, with actions then set to improve these aspects. Management demonstrate their on-going commitment through action taken after their last inspection and processes such as appraisals, training for staff and regular meetings, which also provide staff with opportunities to raise ideas for improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children have a positive experience here and are constantly progressing; they enjoy themselves becoming confident, independent and articulate. They benefit from positive interaction with all staff, who use their experience to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which ensures that children cover all areas of learning. There are always lots of challenging activities which capture children's interests, providing opportunities to develop and learn. Planning is centred in these interests and with staff supplying a carefully prepared environment, the resources and

opportunities for children to continue learning, for example, some materials in the outside area are changed daily. Older children access the Montessori materials at their own pace, with staff showing younger children how to do activities that are unfamiliar. Each child independently chooses their mat and the basket they want to access and is also responsible for tidying it away when they have finished. Group activities also take place, especially outside or at storytime. Children have many opportunities during the day for free-play both inside and in the outdoor areas; for example, role play is freely available and often linked to ideas the children express previously. In the baby unit, they enjoy regular singing sessions, stories and outdoor play. Creative experience are prominent, such as examining the texture and properties of shaving foam, with staff encouraging those who are reluctant to participate and get messy. Activities are also provided which develop their concentration, for example, threading, with several of them showing great determination to succeed. Staff regularly note down observations which ensure they know the children's current abilities; these are collected in children's assessment records, allowing staff to identify the next steps individuals need to make, although some individual records are not up-to-date.

Promoting children's welfare is fundamental to all the staff. Children's health is protected through robust cleaning routines, high standards of personal hygiene and staff's practises which limit the chances of cross-infection, for example, runny noses are quickly cleaned and surfaces used for eating kept very clean. Parents provide meals for children under two years, while the older children access a varied, healthy diet provided through their meals and snacks at nursery, with careful consideration given to accommodate all allergies. Outdoor play is easily accessed from all areas, so that children benefit from daily access to fresh air. Opportunities for more challenging physical play have been added since the last inspection and there is ample space inside for babies to develop their emergent mobility skills. Children are encouraged to think about their own safety through activities such as gardening, when they learn which foods they have grown can be eaten after preparing them, by taking part in fire drills and when staff give gentle reminders of boundaries. These always include consistent explanations about why the rule is necessary so that children's understanding develops and as a result, their behaviour is very good. Staff are very aware of trigger points and ensure that children are purposefully engaged in appropriate activities, to limit boredom or frustration while being mindful of issues linked to recent lack of sleep or illness. Children learn to be independent and also to play well together, to share and take turns, thus developing skills and habits they need in the future.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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