

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY377599

Inspection date

09/03/2010

Inspector

Jenny Kane

Type of setting

Childcare on domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Stowting Montessori Nursery has been registered since August 2009. It operates from two rooms of the owner's home in rural Stowting, near Ashford. There is access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. It is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from a wide catchment area. The provision is accessible with all facilities on the ground floor.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 10 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 17 children on roll aged between two and four years. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs nine staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification. They receive support from the Local Authority Early Years advisory team. The nursery adopts a Montessori approach to the curriculum.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. They successfully combine the Montessori philosophy into the planning of activities. Working closely with parents and other providers ensures the provision meets children's individual needs. Policies and procedures are effective and inclusive for those children who attend. Self-evaluation and reflective practise help all adults involved in the children's care to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- consider the use of contact books to back up verbal information about children's daily activities and progress
- develop the outside play area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are vigilant about safety and carry out daily checks of the equipment and all areas used by children to assess and eliminate risks. The manager is clear about her role and responsibilities concerning child protection. She has attended recent training and shares good practise with her staff. There is a written policy, which is

in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This is clearly presented and shared with parents.

The staff work closely with parents creating good working relationships. They are welcoming and professional. Consequently, parents share information about their children which helps provide continuity of care. Parents are very happy with the service and express their positive views enthusiastically. All legal documentation is in place, well maintained and regularly updated. The nursery maintains children's individual records and shares them appropriately with parents. Parents and carers are provided with well-produced, clear and good quality written information about the provision. Although staff feedback children's progress and achievements to parents through daily discussions they do not use contact books for all children to back up this information.

Staff work very well together as a team. The owner works full time with the children and leads her staff by example and enthusiasm. The staff share her ideals and vision for the future and confidently suggest new ideas and areas for development. Using self-evaluation gives her and her staff a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Plans to identify continuous improvement are clearly identified and staff work together to make suitable improvements. The action taken to tackle the previous recommendations has improved the outcomes for children. The owner has a good commitment to working in partnership with other providers, for example, she is developing effective links with the local schools and other nursery providers. This liaison and sharing of information ensures continuity.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because practitioners have a sound understanding of how to implement the framework and provide a good balance of interesting activities, which meet their individual needs. Effective planning and good organisation ensures staff support children during their play and extend their learning. In addition, children frequently share their ideas for themes and activities. For example, when they wanted the home corner to be a café, staff accommodated their suggestions and helped the children to establish this. As the group is small, there is plenty of time for parents to stay and talk to the staff or the owner. Consequently, parents readily share information about their children. When children first start parents work with staff to complete the initial child profile. This enables the staff and key persons know children's starting points and help to give them a clear understanding of children's individual abilities and interests. Staff use observation and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan motivating learning experiences for each child. They make notes during activities and transfer these to children's individual development folders. These observations are matched to the expectations of the early learning goals. Parents have access to their children's development folders.

Children have a wonderful time at the nursery. They enjoy purposeful play in a relaxed environment where they have plenty of time for exploration, problem

solving and developing their creativity. Children are cared for in premises, which are welcoming and child friendly. They have access to a wide range of good quality play materials, which are in excellent condition and are stimulating and challenging. Self-selection is very good and children move freely about the play areas selecting what they do. They take care of the resources and remember to clear away when they have finished. Children are very independent. They take themselves to the toilet and remember to wash their hands before eating. At snack time, children pour their own drinks and enjoy cutting up the melon. There is a water dispenser in the playroom and older children help the younger children to operate the tap. When a child spills some milk, they find a cloth to wipe it up. During lunch, children chat to staff about things that have happened at home. This is a social time with staff eating with the children. One child finishes a bunch of grapes and declares that the stalk 'looks like a tree'. Staff expand this by discussing the trees which can be seen from the window and explaining that some trees have no leaves because it is winter. While looking in the garden children notice some birds on the feeder and are able to identify blue tits, robins and thrushes. When they finish, children help to clear up and wipe the table using the spray and a cloth.

Children are developing good communication skills and staff encourage speech by talking to children clearly, using good questioning and listening to their views and comments. When children arrive, they use a self-registration system where they find their name card and put it on a board. They enjoy stories and use the book area frequently. During a story about animals, one child fetches a rabbit puppet and children all sing 'Mr Peter Rabbit' having fun with the actions. Children ask for the 'Old MacDonald' music and have fun playing musical statues, listening and stopping well. They have great fun pretending to be animals and gallop about making horse noises and watching out for their friends. One child takes the hand of a younger child so they can join in safely.

Children learn about their own safety. For example, they practice fire evacuation drills, learn about crossing roads safely when out for walks and are careful about other children when using the equipment in the garden. Outdoor play is available on a daily basis, ensuring children benefit from the regular exercise and fresh air. Walks in the nearby fields and countryside help children to understand that exercise is part of a healthy lifestyle while they enjoy exploring and using their senses. On these outings, children look at animals, identify birds and sometimes take photographs. As well as these outings in the community, children gain an understanding of the wider world through discussion, topics and celebrating festivals.

There are many opportunities and a good range of equipment for children to develop their problem solving and numeracy skills. The light box is popular and children cut up bits of cellophane paper to go on it. They discuss how the colours change when they mix the pieces. There is a pulley system from the ceiling and children really enjoy this piece of equipment and cooperate well. When it will not work one child works out how to put the rope back onto the cogs and helps a friend to pull up a basket. They continue using this for some time with other children joining in. Good supplies of art and craft materials are available for the children to use as they choose. Recently when a collage was taken down, children

independently decided to put their own pictures up on the wall making a colourful display. Staff use lots of praise and encouragement to build children's self-esteem. They consistently use clear explanation; encourage decision-making and the instigation of activities. Consequently, children are fully occupied and purposefully engaged, which results in extremely good behaviour.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
---	-----

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
--	-----