

Willow Tree Montessori Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

06/05/2010

Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Willow Tree Montessori Kindergarten is privately owned. It was opened in 1994 and was re-registered under new ownership in 2009. The setting combines both Montessori teaching methods and traditional early learning techniques. The kindergarten has sole use of a single storey building, close to Horley town centre. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday 8.00am to 6.00pm for 50 weeks of the year. The Kindergarten is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 22 children aged from six months to the end of the early years age range may attend the Kindergarten at any one time. Children may attend on either a full time or sessional basis. There are currently 39 children aged from 11 months to under five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The Kindergarten currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are five members of staff, two of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at NVQ level 3, with one staff member working towards a recognised qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a happy and welcoming environment, where their individual needs are recognised and met. Staff provide an interesting and varied learning programme for all children which allows them to engage in a range of exciting first-hand experiences. There are adequate systems in place for parents and staff to work together and share information and become equal partners in children's care and learning. Methods for self-evaluation are developing and positive improvements have been made. There are breaches of specific legal requirements that do not fully safeguard children at all times.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that each child is assigned to a key person (Organisation) 20/05/2010
- obtain an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure for all staff working directly with children (Suitability of adults). 20/05/2010

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

- review the use of risk assessments to clearly identify potential hazards to children

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Adequate procedures are in place to safeguard children and promote their welfare. For example, staff have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities relating to child protection; they regularly update their awareness through training and know the procedure to follow in the event of them having any concerns about a child in their care. Systems, to ensure that staff working directly with children are suitable, are not robust enough to ensure that children are safeguarded appropriately. The provider is unable to confirm that all staff have a Criminal Records Bureau check. Therefore, a specific legal requirement in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been met, although the organisation of the setting ensures that unvetted staff do not have unsupervised access to children. All records of information relating to individual children are in place, well maintained and effectively stored to ensure confidentiality. Risk assessments to support the secure and generally well maintained setting are in place, which helps to protect children's health and safety. However, the storage of some equipment has not been effectively identified as a potential hazard to ensure a safe and hazard free environment for the children at all times.

The setting has begun to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has already taken positive steps to improve practice. For example, the development of the outside play area has created a purposeful play area for young children. Staff meet regularly to discuss and implement new ideas, and evaluate their practice to ensure positive outcomes for children. A annual appraisal system is in place which ensures that staff's professional development is well supported. Staff have a sound understanding of both the Montessori educational philosophy and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff deployment is good; they are supportive of children's individual interests needs and desires which ensures that children receive a good balance of child initiated learning alongside adult-led activities. Children access a good range of resources which reflect and uphold the Montessori approach to learning alongside traditional play resources.

The setting is able to fully support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language. Adequate links are made with external agencies to ensure that the child's specific individual needs are highlighted and met by the staffing team. Resources enable staff to aid children's understanding of the wider world as well as their immediate community.

Partnerships with parents and carers is evolving well. Parents receive information about children's daily routines through a daily feedback sheet and verbal exchanges with staff. They have information available to them about the day to day aspects of the setting through various notices and newsletters. Children's developmental progress is shared with parents on a regular basis through discussions with the staffing team. However, the lack of a key person system prevents staff from fully meeting the needs of individual children and further developing a partnership approach with parents. Comments received from parents highlight how happy they are with the Montessori approach to learning and the calm and relaxed atmosphere that their children enjoy. The setting is aware of the

importance of forging links with other care providers to ensure a consistent approach to care and learning.

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

Children are very happy and well settled within a friendly and nurturing environment. They form strong relationships with staff and enjoy well established friendship groups. They show a willingness to cooperate with one another as they engage in their chosen activities and take responsibility for individual tasks that are assigned to them by staff within their daily routines. For example, helping to set up the tables in preparation for snack times; taking turns when playing together with the building bricks. Younger children happily approach staff for cuddles and support showing that they are happily and relaxed in their care. Children enjoy a balance of planned, purposeful play and exploration indoors and outdoors, with a high emphasis placed on child-initiated activities that result in children being active learners, creative and think critically.

They independently access and enjoy using a range of resources which are made of natural materials, which is supported by the use of treasure baskets for younger children and Montessori teaching aids for older children.

The well-balanced organisation of the day ensures children have suitable opportunities for physical activity as well as provision for quiet rest and relaxation. Children follow good personal hygiene routines. Staff show vigilance in their hygiene practices, which reduces the risk of cross infection. Children have daily opportunities to access a newly developed outside play area which encourages the development of large muscle movements and promotes their awareness of the importance of daily exercise. Older children understand the impact exercise has on their bodies as they recognise when they are becoming hot and take off their coats. Children benefit from the provision of freshly prepared meals and snacks which take into account their own dietary requirements.

Good behaviour management strategies are in place which help children to understand the importance of working harmoniously within the group, consequently children behave very well; they show kindness to each other and willing support younger children. Children are constantly praised for their efforts and acts of kindness across the whole of the setting. Children have good opportunities to respect diversity by celebrating festivals from different cultural traditions as well as their own.

Children's starting points are clearly identified which enables staff to plan effectively for their individual needs. Staff use observation and assessments to inform planning, ensuring it is matched to the children's interests and desires. Children develop effective skills which contribute towards their future learning. They become familiar with technology as they begin to explore the use of computer games. Mathematical concepts are encouraged through the use of practical activities. For example, children confidently use many of the Montessori equipment which support and promote their understanding of size, volume and sequence. Access to books across all of the age ranges encourages children's

awareness and use of books, which are enjoyed through group story times and as individuals. There are ample opportunities for children to develop and practise writing skills even at a very young age. For example, babies use chunky crayons.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
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

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