

Sunflower Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Mary Daniel
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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

Sunflower Montessori Nursery has been registered since 1992. It operates from converted premises and is situated in Frome, Somerset. Children have use of two main play rooms, kitchen and toilet facilities situated on two floors of the building. There is an enclosed outdoor play area available on the upper floor.

Ofsted has registered this privately owned nursery on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 30 children aged two to the end of the early years age group, and there are currently 60 children on roll. The nursery is in receipt of government funding to provide nursery education and there are currently 54 funded children on roll. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 3.00pm, term time only.

The two owners share joint responsibility for managing the nursery and employ four members of staff, all of whom have an early years qualification. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who have English as an additional language. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very much welcomed and valued at the nursery and become totally involved in their play, responding readily to the friendly, reassuring approach given by staff. Children are extremely well supported in their learning and development through the provision of a range of exciting and motivating play experiences and consequently they achieve and enjoy at a high level. Children's continuity in care is effectively maintained as staff form extremely positive partnerships with parents, and this results in children feeling very settled and secure within the group, knowing their needs will be met. Evaluation systems are ongoing and this has helped the nursery to maintain continuous high levels of improvement in most aspects of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure systems used to make decisions of suitability consistently use evidence from criminal record disclosures and identity checks
- review the arrival and departure procedures of parents and children to ensure the premises remain secure at all times
- ensure confidentiality is maintained in use of all records

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted as staff update their knowledge of safeguarding issues through regular training. Relevant written information is maintained to support the management of any concerns and safeguarding policies are shared with parents, which helps to promote open communication. Clear recruitment policies and procedures are in place, which include suitable induction and ongoing appraisals. However, some systems followed to assess staff suitability are not consistently implemented. Staff work very well as a team, regularly reflecting on their practice and are committed to providing high levels of care and learning to help each child make achievements at their level of development. Consequently, children develop confidence in their abilities and are keen to explore and learn through their play.

Every child's individual needs are recorded in liaison with parents, which enables staff to get to know children well and support them in settling in happily. Children play with a range of well maintained toys, games and resources which are effectively organised on low level shelving to enable children to make their own choices in play. For instance, there are several interesting treasure baskets of shells, wooden pieces and different textures for children to explore. Children's learning is well supported through use of the natural and wooden Montessori resources, such as the easy to hold grading sets. Most documentation used to maintain continuity in children's care is used with regard to confidentiality, although entries for recording any administration of medication are all noted on one page. Risk assessments are completed regularly and this helps to minimise any accidents. However, although the premises are overall kept secure, at arrival and collection times in the morning and afternoon the main entrance is left unlocked, which leaves a risk of unauthorised entry. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been met, which has improved health and safety procedures. Evaluation takes place through several different systems, for instance, staff appraisals, meetings and liaison with other agencies. This supports staff in identifying most of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery and emphasis is given to continued improvement to promote outcomes for all children. Staff recognise the importance of forming partnerships with other settings and agencies that are involved in children's care and initiate this liaison through an introductory letter. They maintain good relationships with their feeder schools and children moving onto their 'big school' have visits from their reception teacher, which helps provide a smooth transition.

Excellent relationships are formed with children's parents. Children's developmental starting points are detailed on registration, which gives opportunities for parents to share with staff what they know their child can do. This significantly enhances the early planning of appropriate activities based on each child's existing skills. Information on children's activities is displayed and shared with parents so they know what their child will be doing each day. Daily journals are used with parents to share the observations made of children in their play at the nursery and at home. This encourages parents' involvement in their child's learning and regular

opportunities to talk with key workers are offered, which promotes open, ongoing communication.

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

Children are confident and enthusiastic learners who become engrossed in a variety of meaningful and exciting play activities. For example, they listen carefully to a favourite story about the 'Rattle Trap Car' and ask questions about what is happening as it starts to fall apart. They enjoy joining in with the rhyming refrains, such as 'lumpety, bumpety' or 'wappity bappity' as different objects, such as a beach ball or surfboard, are used to help the car work. This encourages children's imagination and helps them start linking sounds with letters. Staff make excellent use of this interest and provide further purposeful activities as children have great fun making their own 'Razzleberry, Dazzleberry, Snazzleberry Fizz' that they hear about in the story. They count out the strawberries and watch with interest as the mixture changes and then fizzes as they add some special liquid. They go for a walk to a nearby car park to look at different vehicles and have fun learning to control the remote control cars. As a result, these activities effectively promote all areas of children's learning. Staff make good use of their observations of children's play to provide activities, which follow each child's particular learning style. This effectively supports them in planning stimulating activities clearly based on children's interests and which build on their existing abilities.

Children benefit from the careful and effective questioning staff use to encourage their ideas. For example, in asking questions such as, 'What do you think will happen next?' or 'How do you think this might happen?' This helps children to start thinking for themselves and they begin to confidently initiate their own ideas in play. This is evident within their art work, for instance as they talk about what they might find under the sea and decide how they will reflect this in their pictures. They use a range of materials to create these images, such as strips of tissue to make the waves of the sea. This enables children to freely develop their creative expression. Children have interesting and purposeful opportunities to mark make. For example, they use piping bags of shaving foam to make dots, lines, letters and numbers. They have great fun playing a giant snakes and ladders game, which promotes their awareness of numbers and problem solving. Children are very well supported in developing their self-identity and explore their community through frequent walks in the locality, discussions and creative activities. They are keen to find out how others live and make displays of their homes in the country and town and learn about the lifestyle of a friend who lives in Africa. This enables them to develop a positive approach to differences within their world. Children benefit from the positive approach staff give to supporting their natural curiosity. For instance, opportunities are provided to see how bubbles are made or to explore stretching with elastic bands, material and their bodies. They learn how to use a photocopier and show great delight as they see copies of their pictures appear at the press of a button. Emphasis is given on helping children develop the independence and confidence to try out new experiences which promote their future skills. Consequently, children are effectively supported in reaching their full potential and develop well adjusted all round personalities.

Children are very well supported in learning about healthy lifestyles. They enjoy nutritious snacks and can access drinks of water throughout the day. They go for regular walks, for instance to the shops to buy ingredients for their cooking activities when they make vegetable soup or fruit kebabs. They like to make an obstacle course with their friends, which they climb, balance and crawl around. They play parachute games or limbo under a pole. As a result, they have opportunities to exercise while having fun. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they talk with the policeman who visits and they act out this experience later, dressing up in police uniforms and helmets and using walkie talkies to communicate with their friends. Overall, suitable safety prevention is in place to help children stay safe, for example, heaters are guarded and a stair gate is fitted on the top landing. However, the main entrance is left unlocked for short periods at the beginning and end of the day as parents and children arrive and depart, which impacts on children's security as this allows unauthorised entry to the nursery during these times.

Children behave exceptionally well. They learn to respect the needs of others and show as kind and considerate to their friends. They willingly help a friend to carry a big box of building bricks and chat happily together as they make their colourful models. Children are very well supported in resolving any conflicting situations as staff carefully explain the consequences of any actions and give gentle guidance to enable them to make appropriate decisions. Consequently, children develop positive attitudes and play harmoniously together.

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	3
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	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	1
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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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