



Tree Tops Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY309169
Inspection date	30 January 2006
Inspector	Brenda Turner / Rachael Mankiewicz
Setting Address	1-3 Chesham Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1JS
Telephone number	01926 888050
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Registered person	Treetops Montessori Nursery Co Ltd (5240535)
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Tree Tops Montessori Nursery opened in June 2005. It operates from five rooms in purpose built premises. It is situated in the town of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

There are currently 60 children from five months old to 4 years on roll. This includes 6 funded three-year-olds and 5 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language.

A maximum of 69 children, of whom no more than 15 may be under two years, may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 hours to 18.00 hours throughout the year. Children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

Eight full-time and 6 part-time staff work with the children. The majority of the staff, including the owners, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a recognised 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.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because practitioners follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, parents are informed immediately of any current health issues and adults and children take off their shoes before entering the area where babies crawl and play on the floor. Consequently children's health is well protected.

Babies and children across the age range learn to understand simple good health and hygiene practices, such as washing hands before meal times and after using the cloakroom. Age-appropriate posters and reminders on the wall help children to follow good hygiene routines.

Children benefit from a clean, warm, comfortable and child friendly environment. They are well nourished by healthy meals that are cooked on the premises. Various fruit snacks are available during the morning and afternoon. Children manage their own break for snacks. They 'clock in' by putting a fruit picture by their name. Staff monitor the system to ensure all children take a break as required, four chairs set out around the table manage the number of children eating at one time. They understand they have to be patient and sometimes wait for a space to become available. Children serve themselves to easily accessible drinks of water throughout the day, which helps to foster their independence.

Children have their health and dietary needs well met because staff work co-operatively with parents. Individual needs, particular allergies, dietary and cultural needs are respected and appropriate action is taken. Giraffe bibs suitably marked alert staff to babies' individual dietary needs. Their food is safely named and stored in a cupboard or the fridge and babies use their own beakers for drinks.

Babies and young children rest and sleep according to their needs. Good arrangements such as quiet sleep areas with individual cots and appropriate bedding ensure they are kept calm and comfortable. Staff try to adhere to the routines parents have asked for.

All children take part and enjoy regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors.

They choose when they wish to play outdoors and frequently ask to do so. They take advantage of the outdoor classroom arrangement operated during the summer. Children enjoy pushing prams, pushchairs and riding bikes and using scoot-along toys. They negotiate paths successfully when playing, running and chasing games with other children. There is limited opportunity for more physically challenging play with large-scale resources, which will increase the range of physical activity for more able children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are properly cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment that is suitable for purpose and risk assessed. There are well-implemented policies and procedures. Good security in the form of bolted inner double gates and high outer wrought iron security gates. All outdoor areas are secure and children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. The premises are purpose built they are light, bright and warm and children's paintings are attractively displayed. Babies and young children use a very good range of high quality, safe equipment that is regularly checked and well maintained across the age-range.

Children are kept safe as a result of the staff's good awareness of health and safety. All reasonable steps are taken to reduce the risk of accident and injury. Children learn to keep themselves safe by using equipment properly. For example, handling scissors safely with blades held in the hand with handle uppermost. Their awareness of safety issues is continuously developed through every day activities within the setting. Children learn to stop, look and listen to highlight potential hazards such as water activities. The staff routinely discuss safety issues with children. This helps them to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice.

Children are well supervised by staff across the setting. There are effective procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children and the fire evacuation procedure is regularly practised. Children are further safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem because the staff give good support to all children across the age-range. Babies and young children play and have fun. They sing and laugh with staff and enjoying the attentiveness and company of others. Young children spontaneously dance and smile as they listen to music. They enjoy the genuine praise and caring attention from staff who play alongside children at floor level. Staff engage children's attention and maintain contact with them by facial expression, smiles and tone of voice.

Babies are helped to explore what they look like by the use of mirrors. They begin to

recognise that they are individuals and separate from others. They watch attentively as staff point to their own nose, eyes, and fingers and then to the baby's nose, eyes and fingers. Babies and young children's actions, expressions and gestures are recognised and acknowledged warmly and spontaneously by the staff.

Babies and young children are interested and involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and learning. This is because key staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and associated material that is used effectively when planning for this age group.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are very interested and motivated to learn. Well planned and organised topics capture children's imagination and interest. For example, the Polar topic was extended due to children's on-going fascination and active participation.

Key staff have a good knowledge of the foundation stage. They keep up-to-date by regularly attending relevant training courses and local meetings. The Montessori system of education is modified to operate alongside a range of interesting topics. These are cross referenced to the stepping stones and early learning goals.

The teaching style supports and enables children to become independent learners. An example of this is that suitably graded resources and equipment are very well organised and accessible. Children make individual choices to work alone at an activity or with, or alongside, other children. Challenge for more able children is provided by grading activities appropriately to extend and develop existing knowledge and skills. Staff are on hand to provide support. For example, to give verbal encouragement and practical help to a child cutting up an apple.

Key staff together with parents complete an introductory assessment form when children join the nursery. Children's progress is routinely monitored by regular observations that are dated and record examples of development or achievement. This information is used to assess children's overall development and as a guide to planning. Long-term, medium-term and detailed short-term planning is routinely evaluated. The record of children's progress is regularly shared with parents. The overall written record of children's progress is given to parents annually and the Foundation Stage Profile form is completed for children who are starting school.

The equipment and activities are effectively organised and graded to incorporate varying elements of challenge. They are particularly well-suited for children of different abilities. A wide range of interesting activities and experiences indoors and outdoors help children to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff ask open ended questions to encourage children to think and demonstrate what they know and understand. They are sensitive to what children are doing. Care is taken to give children time and space to concentrate and develop skills. A member of staff may ask. 'What do you think will happen if you add this brick to the building?'

'What number do you think comes after this one?' or 'Who knows what happens next in the story?'

Staff build a very good easy trusting relationship with the children. The atmosphere is calm and relaxed, children work at their own pace and effective use is made of time and resources. Staff provide a child centred and happy learning environment that reflects the community and the wider world. Children enjoy using materials, which reflect diversity and provide positive images of people from different races and cultures. For example, books, dolls, pretend play materials, pictures and posters.

Children operate confidently and independently within the setting linking up with others for support and guidance. They self-select and effectively use activities and resources that interest them and aid their development.

The children are very interested in an exceptionally good range of well graded age-appropriate activities, topics and equipment. For example, counting, matching, comparing, cutting out and drawing, manipulating play dough and listening to Tchaikovsky's Nut Cracker suite whilst painting to music.

Children efficiently manipulate and use a range of objects with increasing control. For example, cutlery at lunch time, tweezers, paint brushes and pencils. They successfully use mark making and pretend writing as a means of communicating. For instance, two children wrote a thank-you letter to a neighbour of the setting for returning a football

Children begin to explore and talk about the shape of every day objects. They begin to use mathematical names for solid three-dimensional and flat two-dimensional shapes. Such as, ordering and comparing blocks and shapes during a stacking and balancing game. They explore, handle and talk about the shape of an egg during the Humpty Dumpty topic. They experience how the egg changes when the shell is broken and how the content of the shell is used to make cakes.

Children ask many questions and provide interesting information. For example, 'This flag is from China look at these stars.' Naturally inquisitive, they ask questions about the computer. Some are very well informed and identify specific keys and their function, such as, 'This turns it on and this makes it louder or quieter.'

Children make positive relationships and friendships they play and work harmoniously together sharing and taking turns. They begin to distinguish between right and wrong. Children develop responsible behaviour by following clear guidelines in respect of how to treat one another and the environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children across the age-range are well cared for by the staff who work closely with parents to meet individual children's needs and ensure they are all included fully in the life of the setting. This is because all staff are given opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding of inclusive practice, disability and special educational

needs.

Children feel a sense of belonging. They are happy and well settled. On arrival they confidently make themselves at home and take an active part in the life of the setting. Children understand responsible behaviour. Their behaviour is very good. They take responsibility to serve themselves at snack time and pour their own drinks throughout the day.

The children make choices, take decisions and are very self-reliant. They are well disposed towards one another and show care and concern for those around them. They benefit and enjoy topics and activities linked to celebrations and festivals from different cultures like painting henna patterns or trying various foods.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. For instance, they are supported to send a letter of appreciation to a neighbour for returning a football.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Good systems are in place for parents to share what they know about their child. When their child joins the nursery, clear information in the form of a full prospectus, covering all aspects of care and education is supplied. Parents from different cultures provide useful phrases and information to support celebrations and topics. All parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and to share any particular interest or skill as part of a topic or activity.

Children's welfare and development is promoted effectively with parents. This is due to good communication, the regular sharing of information at collection time and routine written information provided about their child's development and progress.

Parents' views and comments about the care and education of their children are welcomed by the setting. The verbal and written views of parents are very positive. For example, a parent commented that 'My child has continued to be an independent learner.'

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff team has a real sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. There are clear aims for all children across the setting. An example of this is that the Montessori ethos is adapted to include topics that capture the imagination and interest of the children. Staff are actively supported to attend regular training and local authority cluster group meetings. Sound recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for. Staff are well-qualified and have a good knowledge and understanding of child development.

Group sizes and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Effective policies and procedures, which work well in practice also promote children's

well-being.

Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and Management are good.

Good leadership and management of the nursery education contribute effectively to children's steady progress towards the early learning goals. One of the owner-managers is present at all times when the nursery is open. They are both qualified and experienced Montessori teachers and work alongside the staff at various times across the age-range. Consequently they are fully aware of what is happening throughout the setting.

High aims and expectations support children to develop a positive attitude to learning. The managers regularly evaluate the record of children's achievements. The aim of the nursery is to set the learning challenge at the right level for individual children. There is no pressure as children have freedom of choice to self-select activities, to join a group of children or learn and play on their own.

Through regular communication with the staff the managers recognise and praise good practice. They welcome ideas and suggestions. A helpful guidance sheet is provided to support new staff. Topics covered include, staff and child interaction, how to encourage children to engage in activities and when and when not to offer assistance.

The professional development of staff is well supported. They regularly attend local authority and in-house training events. The quality of care and education is regularly monitored through children's records, feedback from parents and observation of the children. Key personnel know who is doing a good job through planning, informal staff meetings or groups and staff evaluation and appraisal. The strengths of the setting and areas for development are routinely assessed, discussed and recorded.

The owner-managers develop their own knowledge and skills by reading, attending relevant training and local meetings. They are both proactive and consistently review the quality of care and education throughout the nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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

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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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education section below

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):

- provide opportunities for more challenging large-scale physical play (also applies to care).

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