



Hare Hatch Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148660
Inspection date	08 February 2006
Inspector	Judith, Mary Butler
Setting Address	Hare Hatch Village Hall, Tag Lane, Hare Hatch, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 9ST
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Registered person	Patricia Cuss
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?

Hare Hatch Montessori Nursery School opened in 1995. It is a privately owned nursery and operates from the village hall in Hare Hatch. The children have access to a large hall, small room, kitchen and cloakroom facilities. There is a large garden available for outdoor play. A maximum of 26 children aged from 2 to 5 years may attend at any one time. The nursery is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:45 until 15:00. The nursery serves the local surrounding

area.

There are currently 51 children on roll; this includes 44 children in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

There are eight staff members employed to work directly with the children; all staff hold relevant early years qualifications. The nursery promotes the Montessori ethos.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy and participate in an excellent range of activities that assist them in developing their large muscle skills and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They move freely from the hall to the garden for the majority of the session. Children are very confident in their physical skills and enjoy using the variety of equipment available to them, for example, constructing the balancing bars, sand play and using the sit and ride toys. Staff provide children with opportunities to develop their physical play within the hall through fun and interesting activities such as music and movement and action songs during the large group time.

Children are extremely competent in their personal care, and most go to the toilet unaided. Staff are very aware of younger children and offer support to those who require assistance in the cloakroom. Children deal with personal hygiene issues confidently and with ease, for example, taking a wipe to wash their hands before snack time and placing it in the bin. Older children are aware that washing their hands removes germs and stops them from becoming ill. Staff act as good role models and follow very effective procedures to ensure the health of children at all times. These include gentle reminders to children about hygiene procedures and wearing gloves when administering first aid. Staff have a very good knowledge of the procedures to follow should they need to record an accident or administration of medication. All of the required documentation is in place and staff record clear accounts of accidents that have happened. They share these with parents who countersign the completed paperwork and receive a copy of the report. This ensures that parents are fully aware of any incidents occurring to their child and contributes towards protecting the health of children.

Children receive a wide variety of healthy and nutritious snacks at the nursery. Older children are very aware of the importance of healthy eating and chat to staff about their favourite fruit and vegetables. Children are very independent and are encouraged to serve themselves at snack time. They confidently pour their own milk or water into china cups and saucers and carry these to the snack table. Children are clear about the expectations and enjoy washing their crockery following their snack. Staff discuss and record the individual children's dietary requirements and parental preferences to ensure that they meet the needs of the individual children at all times.

Children staying for lunch bring this from home. They choose different tasks to help in the general routines of the day and particularly enjoy laying the table for lunch. Meal times are sociable occasions with children and staff sitting together. Children join in with conversations about their time at nursery or events that have happened in their personal lives with enthusiasm.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally happy and at home in the warm, welcoming and child centred environment where they can play freely and safely. Staff identify and minimize risks to children through daily safety checks and regular risk assessments. They have a very good awareness of setting safe limits whilst allowing the children to explore their environment. Children are learning to keep themselves and others safe in their play and develop this through gentle reminders and requests from staff, for example, mopping the floor when water is spilt. Staff and children practise procedures to protect their safety, such as evacuation of the building in an emergency. Children are secure and safe in their environment due to the staff's vigilant attention to safety issues.

Staff ensure that the premises are welcoming to children on arrival. The layout of the nursery and planning of the daily routine enables children to choose where they wish to play and the toys and resources they want to use. Children confidently and purposefully select their own equipment from low shelving and easily accessible resources and toys throughout the nursery. The effective procedures in place for cleaning and checking the resources ensures children can play safely with the excellent range of age and stage appropriate resources.

Children are protected by staff who have a very clear understanding and sound knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. Clear and effective procedures are in place for staff to follow should they have concerns regarding a child in their care. These include recording concerns and a clear referral process. Staff identify and attend regular training to update and extend their individual knowledge. This ensures the welfare of children in their care at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and at ease in their surroundings, new children settle quickly into the nursery routine with support from staff. Children are very independent and select the toys and Montessori resources they wish to use from the good range available and attractively displayed in low shelving units throughout all areas of the nursery. They use the available resources enthusiastically and chat with confidence to each other, staff and visitors to the setting. Staff and children have developed strong relationships; staff involve themselves in children's play and offer a high level of support. They adapt activities to suit the age and stage of the children they are working with. Children really benefit from this involvement and enjoy the interaction

they have with staff in one to one, small and large group situations. Staff show a good knowledge of the Birth to 3 matters framework and Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. They use this to plan a fun and varied curriculum for children in their care.

Nursery Education.

The quality of nursery education and teaching is good. Children participate in a good range of activities with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Staff's effective planning ensures children access and take part in a good range of activities that allows them to make good progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. Children develop their independence skills through freedom of choice and the wide range of resources available to them. Staff encourage the children to participate in group discussions and join in with the conversations, such as thinking about the weather and recalling events that have happened in their personal lives. Children enjoy books and stories both in large and small group situations; they sit, listen and contribute their thoughts and feelings. They especially enjoy 'being the teacher' and reading the books to other children. Children confidently recognise their names as they enter the setting and at snack time and are becoming aware that print carries meaning. Staff provide children with a good range of opportunities to develop their imaginative play, such as art and craft activities, dressing up and role-play. Children enjoy singing and have a good repertoire of familiar and new songs. They are keen to join in at group times with many children confident to sing on their own to the whole group.

Children co-operate and show consideration to their peers in their play, staff act as good role models and encourage the children to share the toys and resources. Children are learning right from wrong through the consistent boundaries. They are confident in their use of numbers and use simple calculation in everyday activities, for example, counting the pieces of fruit as the staff member cuts them. Staff provide children with a range of activities and equipment to encourage their mathematical language, children confidently match, compare and sort objects by shape and size. Children have opportunities to use a variety of resources to assist them in developing their large and small muscle skills. They use a good range of tools confidently and with ease and have good hand and eye co-ordination abilities, for example, threading beads and pouring activities. Children move freely between the nursery and outside area within the daily routine. They access a range of equipment and resources. However, staff miss some opportunities to provide children with a wider selection of toys and resources in the garden during winter months. Children learn about the world around them through different themes and topics, and are becoming aware of the cultures and traditions of other people. They use the computer with confidence and most children are able to navigate their way around simple computer programs using the mouse.

Staff find out about the child through discussion with parents who complete an entry profile for their child. This identifies information about their individual family backgrounds, needs and preferences. Staff use this to provide a range of activities to suit the individual children in their care. All staff are involved in the planning process, with one staff member taking the responsibility for putting the final product together. Staff use a good range of techniques to reinforce children's learning, for example, questioning and re-visiting topics and themes. They undertake and record daily

observations on the children in free play and planned activities. Staff use these observations to update the children's developmental records and plan for their next steps in learning. Staff record children's progress through Montessori and Foundation Stage documentation.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff greet and welcome parents and children as they arrive; they know the children well and value them all as individuals. Children develop a positive attitude towards other children and behave well. They share, take turns and co-operate with other children in their play and work. Staff act as good role models and reinforce positive behaviour through praise, encouragement and consistent boundaries. They display and share children's work and individual achievements with parents and this helps build children's self-esteem. Children access a very good range of toys, resources, topics and different activities to reflect the diverse society we live in. This enables them to develop a positive attitude to the cultures and traditions of other people. Children have especially enjoyed celebrating and taking part in traditions associated with Chinese New Year. There are very effective procedures in place for the care and support of children with special educational needs, although none currently attend. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met.

The partnership between the staff and parents is good. They work effectively together to enable children to make the transition from home to nursery with ease. Staff encourage parents to enter the nursery at the beginning of the session and spend time settling their child. This provides staff with an opportunity to discuss the children with parents and ensures they meet the needs of the individual children in their care. Parents receive comprehensive information about the nursery routines, curriculum, policies and procedures through the prospectus, regular newsletters, verbal communication and the parents' notice board. However, the presentation of documentation on the notice board sometimes prevents parents from clearly seeing the notices displayed. Staff invite parents to take an active part in their child's learning, for example, spending time in the nursery, skill sharing, choosing and taking a book home. Effective systems for sharing information about the child with parents are in place, such as verbal communication at the beginning and end of the session and regular formal meetings with parents when they can discuss their child, view their work and look at their developmental records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff make very good use of the available space within the nursery and outside areas to maximise play opportunities for the children. The experienced and stable staff team offer children a high level of individual support within their daily routines. Staff are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities within the setting, with the emphasis being on spending time with the children which they do with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The management and staff regularly review the policies and

procedures and all of the required documentation is in place. An effective recruitment system ensures that all staff are suitably qualified, and undergo the required checking processes to work directly with the children. This ensures the safety and welfare of the children at all times. All staff hold relevant Early Years qualifications and are committed to updating their knowledge and skills by attending training, support groups and sharing information with other staff in the nursery. Effective procedures are in place to support staff in working successfully with parents.

Leadership and management are good. Staff identify their individual strengths, weaknesses and training needs at regular staff meetings and individual discussions with the management. All staff demonstrate a good knowledge of early year's guidance, including the National Standards for day care, Birth to 3 matters framework and the Foundation Stage. They confidently apply this to ensure children's welfare, safety, learning and development within the nursery. Daily meetings each morning ensure staff have opportunities to discuss the planned activities and individual children's achievements and identify their next steps in learning. Further meetings each term are used to formulate the planning, evaluate activities, review policies and procedures and identify and share training issues. Staff evaluate the activities through regular discussion and observations undertaken and recorded on the children's developmental records. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was requested to encourage children to wash their hands before eating food.

Staff have reviewed the procedures for washing hands and now provide children with wipes placed on the table where they pour their drinks. Staff offer children gentle reminders at large group times and quietly as children approach the table about washing their hands. This enables children to be independent in their personal care and contribute towards protecting their health.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.

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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):

- further improve the information parents receive about the setting by displaying information clearly on the notice board

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 further opportunities for children to choose from a wider selection of toys and resources when playing outside during the winter.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk