



## **College Fields Montessori Nursery School**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	146048
<b>Inspection date</b>	03 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Nikki Whinton

<b>Setting Address</b>	College Fields, MARLBOROUGH, Wiltshire, SN8 1UA
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<b>Telephone number</b>	01672 515486
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<b>Registered person</b>	Elizabeth Barnes
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care
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## 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](http://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?

The College Fields Montessori Nursery School moved to the present site, near to Marlborough Leisure Centre in 1992. The nursery operates from it's own timber single storey building which provides 1 large play room, kitchen and toilet facilities. It serves the local area, a maximum of 24 children aged from 2 to under 8 years old may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week for 48 weeks of the year. Session times are 09.15 to 12.15/13.15, 12.15/13.15 to 15.15, or

all day from 09.15 until 15.15. Children attend for a variety of sessions. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 35 children receive funding for nursery education. At present the group supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four staff. All of the staff, including the proprietor, hold appropriate early years qualifications, including Montessori training. In addition one member of staff is working towards a further qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children gain an understanding of healthy eating through the varied range of nutritious snacks they enjoy whilst in the nursery. Allergies and parental wishes are discussed prior to a child commencing in the provision, it is recorded and accommodated. Children freely help themselves to drinking water in sufficient quantities to meet their differing requirements. Their dietary needs are successfully met.

Children manage self-care skills well and are learning about the importance of good hygiene routines. For example, they are aware of the need to wash their hands prior to eating and after toileting. They benefit from staff acting as positive role models, having a good understanding of first aid and understanding the correct administrative procedures to be followed if accidents occur or children require medication. Required documentation, such as for emergency treatment, is in place.

Children experience a healthy lifestyle whilst in the provision. They have frequent opportunities for fresh air and exercise within the provision's secure, enclosed outdoor play area. Children move freely, confidently and safely, whilst demonstrating good spatial awareness. They take part in planned and spontaneous activities, such as moving to 'Sticky Kids' tapes or exploring the group's outdoor balancing equipment, to help develop their large muscle skills. Children gain extremely good small muscle control and co-ordination through interesting activities such as pouring coloured water into a variety of tiny containers or by the safe handling of tools and materials including pencil sharpeners and hole punchers.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children play and relax within premises that are clean, well maintained, warm and welcoming to parents and children. They benefit from the staff having a good understanding of safety issues and the need to take positive steps to prevent

accidents. For example, staff are well deployed, the premises are secure, socket covers are fitted to exposed electric points and a stair gate prevents children accessing potential hazards within the office. Children are learning to share responsibility for their own safety through practical activities, such as taking part in emergency evacuation drills and tidying away resources after use to prevent trip hazards. Children move around the playroom freely, safely and independently.

Children enjoy self-selecting from a wide range of clean, well-maintained, stimulating resources. They benefit from the staff's good understanding of safety issues regarding the purchase and maintenance of equipment. As a result, children are able to play with toys that are safe and suitable.

Children's welfare is protected by staff that have a secure understanding of child protection issues. Their well-being is actively promoted. However, there is no system for advising parents of the provider's responsibilities prior to a child commencing in the setting.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are confident, enthusiastic and well motivated to explore the wide range of easily accessible resources and activities. They independently make choices on arrival. For example, some children decide to build the pink tower, whilst others choose to explore the role-play area. The very small number of children who are a little reluctant to be separated from their main carer, receive very good staff support to help them quickly settle and become involved in the session. Children are consistently well occupied, demonstrate good self control and are able to concentrate for short periods, for example, when listening to a planned story. They have good social skills, share resources successfully, such as when playing together with wooden bricks and are able to take turns.

Children have formed positive relationships with peers and staff. They benefit from staff knowing them well and having an awareness of their home circumstances. Children are very self assured. They successfully develop their self-care skills through practical activities, including pouring their own drinks at meal times and taking turns to be a monitor. They appear relaxed, at ease and demonstrate good self-esteem.

Activities are fully inclusive. Each planned activity is adapted by the staff to enable the youngest children, who have not yet started on the foundation stage curriculum, to participate. They benefit from the care and attention they receive in the setting. Children are listened to and acknowledged as individuals, which helps to support their developing confidence and sense of belonging.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The playleader and her staff have a good understanding of the foundation stage. They work well as a team to plan and provide a varied programme of practical activities to support children's progress

towards the early learning goals. Staff undertake regular written observations and assessments of the children. Information gathered is used to complete the Wiltshire Building Blocks scheme. However, some aspects of the curriculum are not covered on a regular basis. As a result, children's learning is not always maximised. Staff act as positive role models. They know the children well and have a good relationship with them. They actively support children in developing their confidence, independence and self-esteem.

Children have a good range of vocabulary, which they use confidently when talking to adults and peers. For example, a child patiently explains to a member of staff 'Underground trains don't take you to London. They just take you to the London Eye'. They are learning to recognise their names in print through meaningful activities including self-registration and placing their artwork in named trays. Children learn to link sounds and letters and to match an increasing range of printed words to everyday objects. Children love sharing books, both spontaneously with their friends and during planned group story times. Through practical activities, such as measuring their heights, building with construction or completing puzzles, children are gaining an awareness of shape, space and measure. However, children do not have regular opportunities to use numbers or solve simple mathematical problems as part of their daily routine.

Children enjoy exploring the natural world. For example, they tend and grow produce in the setting's garden, participate in mini beast hunts and enthusiastically take turns to feed the setting's snails and fish. They welcome visitors to the setting, including zoo lab, a local potter and reception class teachers, to help them gain an awareness of their local area. Children become absorbed designing and building with an extensive range of construction materials. However, they have limited chances to use information and communication technology to support their play and learning. Children have daily opportunities to explore media and materials. They love using their imagination to initiate and develop their ideas, particularly through role-play, art and craft.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children behave well. They benefit from the staff's good role modelling and their effective use of praise and encouragement to promote children's positive behaviour. Children relate well to each other and are developing their awareness of right and wrong.

Children are valued and acknowledged as individuals. They benefit from staff understanding and meeting their differing needs. For example, the parent of a child with a dairy intolerance is always consulted over ingredients, prior to the commencement of a cooking activity. Children attending with special educational needs and English as an additional language receive appropriate support to assist their development and learning. Children have access to a limited range of resources such as books and puzzles, to help them increase their awareness of diversity.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children

demonstrate confidence, independence and self-esteem. They spontaneously share news about their home lives and are learning to listen to others, for example, two children discuss their food preferences whilst watching the provision's snails devour a piece of cucumber. 'I like chicken nuggets. I don't like cucumber'. Children begin to understand and express their emotions, for example through imaginative play. They start to learn more about other cultures and the wider world through activities including tie dying, food sampling and welcoming visitors from Gambia and Nigeria to share their experiences.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the good rapport that exists between parents and staff. Parents are kept up to date with information about the provision through a notice board and regular newsletters. In addition, there are daily opportunities for parents to discuss any care issues with staff. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning, such as through sharing their skills. They are not given information about the early learning goals when their child becomes involved in the foundation stage curriculum. Parents have constant, easy access to their child's assessment records. However, they are not encouraged to share with staff what they know about their child's academic achievements to assist staff's initial or ongoing educational assessments.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare and education is supported by staff that are appropriately qualified and experienced in caring for young children. There is an effective operational plan in place, which helps to ensure sessions run smoothly and children benefit from stable routines. Children's personal information is securely stored and easily accessible to support children's care, such as in an emergency. There are thorough systems for recording the daily attendance of children, staff and visitors, which has a positive impact on promoting children's safety.

The leadership and management is good. The setting's proprietor and playleader are suitably qualified and very experienced in their roles. They support their small staffing team well and regularly monitor the written observations and assessments completed on the children. The group is aware of the nursery's strengths and areas for development. There is a genuine commitment to further improvement. Strategies have been put in place to further develop the quality of care and education offered to the children. For example, staff take part in professional training opportunities and the setting is forging links with early years networks and advisory teachers.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

As a result of the last combined inspection, the group was given key issues, non-regulatory actions and recommendations to help improve the quality of the provision. Within the care inspection, the group was asked to ensure written parental permission is in place for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice, parents

sign to acknowledge when medicines have been administered and that the daily register of children's attendance is accurate and up to date. The group was requested to make sure new staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and that appropriate support is provided for children with speech delay and English as an additional language. The educational inspection report requested staff increase their knowledge of the early learning goals and the different ways in which children learn, so that children's learning, including mathematical and imaginative development, is extended and continues in all activities. The nursery was asked to provide opportunities for children to learn about the every day use of technology and information and communication technology. In addition, the setting was requested to ensure inappropriate behaviour is seen and consistently and appropriately managed by staff.

Staff manage children's behaviour effectively and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Written parental permission is in place for seeking emergency treatment or advice, parents sign to acknowledge when medicines have been administered and the daily register of attendance is accurate and up to date. Appropriate support is given to children with special needs and English as an additional language. Staff have a good understanding of the early learning goals and the different ways in which children learn. Children have daily opportunities to initiate and develop their imaginative ideas. These improvements have had a positive impact on the quality of care and education offered to the children. However, children have limited chances to explore information and communication technology or to develop their mathematical understanding as part of the daily routine.

### **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.

## **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 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):

- ensure parents are made aware of the provider's child protection responsibilities prior to a child commencing in the setting
- increase the range of resources available to the children reflecting positive images of diversity

### **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):

- improve the planning of the educational provision to ensure children have opportunities to use number and to solve simple mathematical problems as part of the daily routine. Increase opportunities for children to use information and communication technology to support their learning
- Develop opportunities for parents to share with staff what they know about their child to aid initial and ongoing assessment. Ensure parents are given information about the early learning goals.

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