



**Office for Standards
in Education**

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 107977

DfES Number: 519911

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 13/02/2004
Inspector Name Glenda Pownall

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name The Beehive Montessori School
Setting Address St Michaels Church Hall
 Sycamore Road
 Amersham
 Buckinghamshire
 HP6 5DR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Miss Lyndsey Maclaren Nelson

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

The Beehive Montessori School has been established since 1990. It moved to the current premises in 2001. It operates from a large hall and two smaller rooms in St Michaels Church Hall, Amersham. The nursery is privately owned. It serves the local area.

There are currently 25 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 8 funded three-year-olds and 4 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

Children are organised and educated according to the principles of the Montessori teaching method.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:15 with extended sessions on Wednesday and Friday until 14:45.

There are four part time and two full time staff who work with the children. Over half the staff have Montessori teaching qualifications equivalent to level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The Beehive Montessori School provides good quality nursery education overall which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Four of the areas of learning are particularly well-planned and children make very good progress in these areas. In the other two areas of learning, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, there are some aspects for improvement.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals and implement these through well-planned activities. Staff extend activities to challenge more able and older children. There is an effective system in place to provide support for children with special educational needs. Planning of the Montessori curriculum is linked to the Foundation Stage areas of learning and covers most aspects of the stepping stones. Staff act as good role models. They are respectful and caring and have high expectations of the children's behaviour. The children relate well to the staff and are very well behaved.

The leadership and management is generally good. The staff team work well together and know their roles well. This ensures the sessions run smoothly and the children are secure and settled. There is a system in place to identify the training needs of staff. The effectiveness of the education programme is assessed through management working in the setting on a day to day basis, weekly staff meetings and listening to parents. There is no system in place to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum to ensure that all aspects of each area of learning are covered.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are provided with good quality information on the education programme. They are well informed of the child's progress through daily exchanges of information, termly open days and yearly reports. Parents state they are very happy with the care and education their children receive.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal independence is fostered well through a wide range of resources and activities that they can select and complete for themselves.
- Children have access to an excellent range of activities to develop their small-muscle skills. They manipulate tools such as tweezers, scissors and pencils with increasing dexterity.
- Children benefit from the carefully framed questioning techniques used by staff. This encourages children to problem solve and think things through for themselves.

- Children learn to link sounds to letters. Some children can phonetically sound out three and four letter words.
- Children's mathematical skills are promoted through many excellent opportunities to learn number skills, shapes and positional language. They freely choose to count and match numbers using the mathematical equipment.

What needs to be improved?

- the opportunities children have to use information and communication technology and everyday technology
- the opportunities children have to freely express their own creativity through imaginative play.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made since the last inspection. The management has introduced training records detailing training staff have undertaken. An informal staff appraisal system identifies future training requirements for individual staff. This enables staff to further their professional development and put the theory learnt into practice to enhance the education programme offered to children.

Children have few opportunities to find out about the uses of everyday technology or information and communication technology. This forms part of the key issues to be addressed in this report.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's personal independence is fostered well. They are able to freely select resources and activities for themselves, for example they pour their own drink and wash the glass up. Children settle quickly into the session and can work independently, persevering to complete tasks. They develop a sense of self-worth through receiving praise and encouragement in their play. Children relate very well to each other and adults, they listen when others are talking, are polite and very well behaved.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy sharing books with each other and listen with enjoyment to stories; they contribute ideas and predict what might happen next. Staff use good visual props to support storytelling and extend children's vocabulary by explaining the meaning of unfamiliar words. Children are learning to link sounds to letters and some children can phonetically sound out three and four letter words. Children are confident in making marks and some can write their name using clearly recognisable letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have many excellent opportunities to learn number skills, shapes and positional language. They confidently count to 10 and beyond and recognise numerals from 1 to 9. They are developing an awareness of larger numbers using the wide range of equipment such as number rods and tiles to reinforce learning. Children are developing an understanding of simple addition and subtraction by singing number songs and rhymes. Children use mathematical language to compare shape, position and size.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

A wide range of topics enables children to find out about features in the natural world. For example through planned activities they understand that beans need sunlight, water and warmth to grow. They show an interest in exploring how things work. Staff provide effective support asking open-ended questions to make children think. Children have few opportunities to construct using their own designs or to find out about the uses of information and communication technology and everyday technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have access to an excellent variety of activities to develop their small-muscle skills. They manipulate a wide range of tools and equipment such as tweezers, scissors and button and lacing frames with skill and dexterity. Children move confidently around the hall and outside adjusting their direction and speed as required to avoid obstacles. They are developing skills in balancing, running, climbing and pedalling.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are able to recognise and explore sounds and music through well-planned activities such as music and movement, singing songs, using musical instruments and clapping rhythms. They have limited opportunities to freely express their own creativity and imagination. For example inside home corner equipment is used to complete a set task such as washing up. The equipment provided outside is not planned for or easily accessible. Children are able to do free painting, drawing and collage daily.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- provide opportunities for children to use information and communication technology and everyday technology
- increase opportunities for children to freely express their own creativity through imaginative play.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.