



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 148154

DfES Number: 583299

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	16/11/2004
Inspector Name	Margaret Coyne

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Annabel's Montessori School
Setting Address	Lemsford Village Hall Brocket Road, Lemsford Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL8 7TT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Jagvinder Kaur Johal
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ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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

Annabel's Montessori School opened in 1992 and operates from one main playroom with additional access to toilets and a kitchen. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outside play area along with an enclosed children's play area in the adjacent park. The group is situated in the village hall at Lemsford village close to Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire.

A maximum of 25 children may attend the school at any one time. The school is open each weekday from 9.00 to 12.00 and 12.30 to 15.00 on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday with a lunch club available for older children from 9.00 to 12.00 on a Tuesday and Thursday. The school is open for 38 weeks of the year.

There are currently 28 children aged from 2.6 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The school currently supports children with special educational needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The school employs seven staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications including Montessori training.

The nursery subscribes to the Montessori educational approach.

The nursery receives support from an early years teacher and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Annabel's Montessori School provides a good standard of care for children.

All aspects of the provision are well organised and staff are deployed effectively throughout the setting. They have a high regard to the policies and procedures that they implement consistently. High priority is given to children's safety both in and out of the school and a thorough risk assessment has been developed to identify and minimise any hazards. All documentation and records are in place which support the

effective management of the group. These are stored in a safe and confidential manner.

There are excellent key worker systems throughout the setting. These enable staff to establish supportive relationships with children and parents. Key groups ensure the children have suitable activities appropriate to their ages and abilities with opportunity to mix together with older children often helping and supporting the younger ones. Staff plan a range of activities in which the children have opportunity to explore and investigate using natural and manmade objects. They play confidently, independently and with support. There is a wide range and balance of stimulating and challenging toys and equipment for children to access in line with the Montessori learning principals. However familiar role play experiences are limited. Staff are attentive to the children's needs and support and direct them. Good use is made of the outside areas. Snacks and lunch times are a happy social occasion and children gain a view of healthy eating. Children are well behaved and respond positively to direction from staff.

The school has developed a supportive partnership with parents and carers. They are kept informed of their child's progress both informally and formally during conference evenings and feedback from parents is addressed. Staff are approachable and friendly, this fosters good relationships between parents and staff which impacts on the children's feelings of security.

What has improved since the last inspection?

not applicable

What is being done well?

- The staff's relationship with the children is excellent. They provides a good range of toys and resources that meet each child's individual needs and promotes their confidence and self-esteem many in line with the Montessori principals of teaching. Children are happy and secure and staff present themselves as positive role models. The children are learning to respect and value those around them and their environment. They know what is expected of them, behave well and respond positively to direction from staff.
- The school make productive use of the premises. It is used to it's full potential and the children are secure in their surroundings. The room is divided into different areas of play and learning with constructive use made of low level storage units which provides easy access to equipment for the children.
- The presentation of toys and activities encourage the children to take part and show respect for the equipment. Activities are available for every child to take part and are age appropriate for individual stages of development. Resources are available to reflect positive images of culture, gender, and disability that allow the children to extend their learning outside their day-to-day experiences and to investigate and explore both natural and manmade objects.

- The organisation and presentation of the groups records and documentations is of a high standard. Staff ensure records are informative and up to date and provide a wealth of information for a safe and efficient practise and for the welfare, care and learning of each child.

What needs to be improved?

- resources, with regard to provided familiar role play experiences for children.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
5	Provide a suitable range of role-play resources for children to support their imaginative play.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Annabel's Montessori School is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is very good. It ensures children become independent and self-motivated. Staff have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals and of what children are expected to learn. Effective teaching methods using both traditional and Montessori principals create a stimulating and challenging environment for children of different abilities. Excellent questioning skills by staff provide opportunities for children to think for themselves. A language rich environment provides children with opportunities to develop their skills for speaking, listening, early reading and writing. An assessment of the children's learning effectively tracks their progress against the stepping-stones. The children are happy, secure and confident in their environment they have a sound awareness of their boundaries and know what is expected of them. Staff support the children as they learn to share and take turns. The group has a wide range of interesting resources. These are presented in a thoughtful and meaningful way to encourage the children to take part and build on their skills. However they have limited opportunity to use their imaginations with regular, familiar role play situations.

Leadership and management is very good. The group has a clear vision and constructive aims to continually monitor, evaluate and review their practise. The dedicated directress leads a committed team of staff and supports them in their practise.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are provided with effective information about the routines and activities and have access to information about the Foundation Stage. Staff are friendly and approachable, share information informally and invite parents to take part in formal consultation times to discuss their child's progress and play an important part in their learning.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority which helps children gain in confidence and fosters feelings of security. Staff set achievable boundaries and activities for the children which has a positive impact on their behaviour and helps develop their self-esteem and confidence. Staff interact well with children giving them opportunities to become self-motivated, responsible and independent.
- Children are well motivated and demonstrate high levels of concentration. They learn through meaningful, purposeful and interesting activities which are practical and based on their own experiences. The productive use of the daily routine support children in developing their resourcefulness, independence skills and creativity. Staff ensure children have enough time to complete

tasks, respecting the importance and value of child initiated play in line with the Montessori teaching principals.

- Children are confident speakers and listeners. Staff develop children's confidence to speak as part of the group and in smaller peer groups. Children take turns to talk and interact well developing good conversation skills. They listen well to others and become absorbed during group and story times. Children's early reading and writing skills are also well developed and fostered by staff with the meaningful use of books, labels, and writing and mark making equipment.
- Children use mathematical equipment confidently. Staff support children in activities allowing them opportunities to develop and discover mathematical knowledge for themselves. They have adult support in some structured learning and can confidently apply practical problem solving skills, recognise, count and write numbers and are involved with a range of other mathematical concepts.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to use their own imaginations and free expression during regular, familiar role play situations.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Annabel's Montessori School have made very good progress since their last inspection. The group were required to extend their planning to identify how children are grouped and to modify activities for children with English as an additional language. To update labelling of displays and apparatus to support the development of language and literacy.

These issues have been addressed effectively. Planning clearly shows how the children are grouped so older children have opportunity to act as role models for younger children and differentiation is identified for activities. Staff ensure they make more use of body language and visual aids also enrolling help from parents through a strong partnership to aid and progress children with English as an additional language. Productive use is made of clear and bold labels around the room to help progress children's understanding that print carries meaning for the development of language and literacy skills.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children form good relationships with others in the group. They make independent choices and work confidently, helping each other out at activities. Concentration is high as they become absorbed in activities and tasks. They share resources and behaviour is good. Children respond well to direction, and play cooperatively together. They are secure and confident, staff reinforce this with constant praise and encouragement. They willingly try new experiences and demonstrate pride in their work

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Specific language and literacy resources extend children's learning of the formation and sounds of letters i.e. sand paper letters, word jigsaws, and matching cards. Some children take part in the Montessori reading program enjoying a range of books. Children make excellent use of the clear labels around the room to recognise familiar words and some can write or copy short sentences. Their listening and speaking skills are well developed as they share personal experiences and listen to others.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children gain an understanding of different mathematical concepts. They confidently use numbers and counting and apply these skills using a range of Montessori equipment. They use their knowledge to solve problems i.e. when using knob cylinders and shape boxes. Children's matching, sequencing and ordering skills have been developed through a range of practical activities. They have a sound understanding of shape i.e. exploring two and three dimensional shapes wearing an eye mask.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are curious as they explore both natural and manmade objects i.e. they examine stones and shells using magnifying glasses. They show an interest in how things grow and change with topics about the life cycles of insects, animals and plants. They show an interest in ICT, which support other areas of their learning. Children gain a valuable insight into different cultures and beliefs with well-planned topics using resources outside their day-to-day experiences.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children use a range of equipment both inside and outside to develop large motor skills. They confidently climb, jump, balance, swing and pedal. They negotiate available space when using the indoor and outdoor areas and enjoy time in the park. Children's dexterity is developed well they have good hand and eye coordination and successfully thread beads, use tweezers, complete jigsaws and manipulate one handed tools. Children collaborate in sharing tasks at tidy up time.	

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children explore using colour, texture and with different techniques. They create in an imaginative and spontaneous manner with an effective balance between adult and child initiated activities. They enjoy singing and are presently learning new songs for Christmas. Children create loud and soft tones using voices, bodies and instruments. They use their imaginations with small world figures and role-play, although experiences could be further extended and more regular opportunities provided.	

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report but consideration should be given to improving the following;
- Extend opportunities for children to use their own imaginations and free expression during regular, familiar role play situations.

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.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.