



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 223230

DfES Number: 539396

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 16/03/2005
Inspector Name Alison Edwards

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Lilliput Montessori Day Nursery (Coalville)
Setting Address Railway House
Hotel Street
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 3EQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Lilliput Day Nurseries Ltd 2894803

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Lilliput Day Nurseries Ltd
Address Railway House
Hotel Street
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 3EQ

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

Lilliput Montessori Day Nursery (Coalville) opened in 1999 and is one of a local chain of four privately-owned nurseries. It operates from a converted hotel near the centre of Coalville in the district of North West Leicestershire and serves the neighbouring community. A maximum of 66 children under 8 years of age may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery offers full day care to children under school age including nursery education to funded 3- and 4-year-olds and out-of-school care to school-aged children including older children up to the age of 11 years.

The nursery is open from 07:30 to 18:00 from Monday to Friday throughout the year. Funded nursery education sessions are time-tabled between 09:00 and 11:30 and 12:30 to 3:00 daily. Children attend a variety of sessions. There are currently 63 children under 8 on roll of whom 17 receive nursery education funding.

Younger children are based in two ground floor rooms with associated nappy changing and toileting facilities. Older children are based in two first floor rooms with associated toileting facilities. Children also use a messy play room and dining room on the ground floor. Accommodation includes kitchen and staff facilities. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play.

Excluding the proprietors there are 13 regular childcare staff based at the nursery. Of these 10 hold recognised early years qualifications including one with Montessori training.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Lilliput Montessori Day Nursery (Coalville) provides good quality nursery education where children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Children settle well and are usually busy and interested in their activities. Staff establish clear expectations for children's behaviour and are calm in their dealings with them. They plan a generally balanced programme of activities and use a variety of generally appropriate teaching methods incorporating use of Montessori apparatus. They regularly observe and record children's progress, but do not yet use these assessments well to ensure activities offer appropriate challenge and progression for younger or more able children. Resources and routines are sometimes not used to best effect to fully extend children's learning across all areas.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff and management are currently re-establishing responsibilities after recent personnel changes. Internal staff support and appraisal systems are in place and several current staff are now training in aspects of the foundation stage and Montessori methods. Current Investors in People status indicates an on-going commitment to overall development. However there is currently limited systematic review of the effectiveness of the nursery education programme.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Well-presented information provides useful details of the nursery's provision including an outline of the Montessori approach although with less emphasis on aspects of the foundation stage. In addition to informal discussion with staff, parents are offered twice-yearly parents' evenings to review children's progress and developmental records. Notice boards include an outline of current topic-based activities and parents are able to make some links with planned learning, for example by contributing items for an interest table.

What is being done well?

- There is a calm atmosphere where children are relaxed in their dealings with peers and familiar adults and show a positive attitude to learning, often showing interest in their activities.
- Children show familiarity with established routines and understand what behaviour is expected of them. They begin to show care and concern for each other and their surroundings, noticing each others' needs and willingly taking part in activities such as tidying up or caring for plants.
- Staff are usually directly involved with children and use various generally appropriate teaching methods including outdoor and indoor play, group and

individual activities, and opportunities for child-chosen play as well as adult-led activities to encourage children's enjoyment of their activities.

What needs to be improved?

- organisation of time, space and resources to promote children's sustained and independent expression of their own creative ideas using different media and materials, and more purposeful and challenging exploration and investigation of natural and man-made resources to encourage critical-thinking and problem-solving
- more effective use of observations and assessments within short-term planning to ensure learning objectives and teaching strategies are well-matched to children's abilities and stage of development to provide appropriate challenge and progression in all aspects of learning through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals
- more systematic arrangements for staff and management to evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education provision.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The nursery has made generally good progress in addressing the four issues raised at the last inspection of funded nursery education in 2001 despite significant staffing changes since that time.

The nursery has improved the challenges given to 4-year-old children in climbing and development of large motor skills by installing an additional larger climbing frame and a wider selection of wheeled toys which children enjoy using during regular outdoor play sessions. The nursery also uses a structured programme of activities using equipment such as hoops and balls in its regular weekly routines. However staff do not yet systematically match planned activities to children's stage of development to fully extend progression in large physical skills.

The nursery has taken suitable steps to improve staff's curriculum knowledge by ensuring the current room supervisor has relevant foundation stage and Montessori teacher training and that other staff are undertaking relevant training. Additional staff training on specific aspects of learning has also been recently agreed.

Staff use Montessori materials such as sandpaper letters to help older children understand correct letter formation, so improving the specific issue raised in the previous inspection. However staff do not always use assessments of children's developmental stage to plan effectively for the earlier stages of fine motor development and mark-making skills.

Staff have reviewed and adapted planning documentation so it now includes links to specific aspects of the curriculum, providing generally balanced coverage across all areas. Observation and assessment systems are in place linked to Montessori-method activities and to the stepping stones leading to the early learning

goals. However, as identified above, these are not yet used well to match planned activities to individual learning needs. This issue has been incorporated in a key issue raised at this current inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children usually settle well and are often busy and interested in their play. They have regard to what behaviour is expected of them and begin to show care for each other and their surroundings. They are often independent in simple self-care skills like putting on outdoor clothes. Topic-based activities help them learn about the local and wider community. Routines and resources are not always best organised to promote their sustained and purposeful independent learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children listen attentively to stories and begin to handle books with care, showing some awareness of print. They use simple statements when talking about their experiences and needs, though less often use more complex spoken language to extend their ideas by explaining or predicting. They begin to use purposeful independent writing in their play. However adult-led activities linked to the early stages of letter-formation are not always well-matched to children's individual developmental stage.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children often count and recognise numbers to 20 and above in planned activities and daily routines. They use 2 and 3D shapes in construction and craft activities, and compare sizes in practical play and when using Montessori apparatus. They begin to consider simple number problems in practical play, for example knowing how many more cups they need for customers in the café. However daily routines and planned activities are not always well-planned to extend their calculation skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn about change over time, the local and wider environment, and their own and different cultures in topic-based activities. They use construction sets for simple building and items of everyday technology, such as a pretend microwave oven, within role play. They enjoy handling materials such as rice and pasta and using simple tools such as magnets. However they less frequently extend their independent critical thinking and problem-solving in well-planned investigative activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children often show focussed attention and increasing control when using small tools, for example spooning out rice or picking up small objects with a magnet. Daily routines usually include good hygiene practices such as cleaning teeth after meals. They regularly take part in simple balancing activities and use equipment such as hoops and balls. However indoor and outdoor activities are not always well-planned to extend children's purposeful challenge and progression in large movement skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Adult-led activities introduce children to a selection of materials and techniques such as paper weaving, sponge-printing and string-painting, helping them to learn about colour, texture and shape. However they less frequently explore and express their own creative ideas. They enjoy simple pretend play, for example in a café, and sometimes begin to develop this into more co-operative role play. They handle musical instruments with care and enjoy joining in with familiar songs.

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

- improve organisation of time, space and resources to promote children's sustained and independent expression of their own creative ideas using different media and materials, and more purposeful and challenging exploration and investigation of natural and man-made resources to encourage critical-thinking and problem-solving
- make more effective use of observations and assessments within short-term planning to ensure learning objectives and teaching strategies are well-matched to children's abilities and stage of development to provide appropriate challenge and progression in all aspects of learning through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals
- develop more systematic arrangements for staff and management to evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education provision.

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.