



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127502

DfES Number: 580446

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	29/02/2004
Inspector Name	Jenny Kane

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	The Rocking Horse Montessori Kindergarten
Setting Address	8 Lansdowne Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 2NJ

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Linda O'Brien
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## 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 Rocking Horse Montessori Kindergarten has been registered since November 1990 and is privately owned and managed.

It operates from the basement, part of the first floor and a unit in the garden of the owner's home in Tunbridge Wells. There is a safe, fully enclosed outside play area.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 16:00 during term time. Children attend on a sessional or full time basis.

Rocking Horse follows the Montessori philosophy and incorporates Montessori teaching with traditional methods.

There are currently 30 funded three-year-olds and 11 funded four-year-olds on role. The group supports several children with special needs and some who speak English as an additional language.

Nine staff work with the children. Six hold Montessori childcare qualifications and the majority hold current first aid certificates.

The group receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). They are also members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The Rocking Horse Montessori Kindergarten is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all the six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff use a mix of Montessori and traditional methods of teaching. They have a very good understanding and knowledge of the stepping stones and the foundation stage. Long, medium and short-term planning ensures children are provided with purposeful, stimulating and challenging activities. Effective observations and assessments are used daily to monitor progress and to plan children's individual learning. Children are very independent, choosing from toys and activities and taking responsibility for clearing away equipment. The children's behaviour is very good.

The leadership and management is very good. The owner also manages the nursery and takes a very active role. She supports her staff well and delegates to her very capable deputy. The staff are well established and work effectively as a team, meeting regularly to plan and monitor the curriculum. The staff are committed to their own development and attend a variety of training courses and workshops. The manager is very keen to work with parents, listens to their views and opinions and is open to making changes and improvements.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents receive very well produced written information about the six areas of learning and the curriculum. Staff maintain good daily contact with parents and feed back information about the children's progress. There are regular consultations and meetings where information regarding topics and curriculum is shared with the parents, who are then encouraged to continue their child's learning at home.

### What is being done well?

- Children have many opportunities to learn about others, to explore the wider world, to celebrate a variety of festivals and to look at differences and diversity .
- Priority is given to working with parents and carers. Staff have formed very good, effective systems of communication both written and verbally. The written information is very good and reflects the professionalism of the setting.
- Children have very good, confident relationships with the staff. Independence is encouraged and the toys and equipment are set out attractively so that the children make maximum use of them.
- Staff have a good understanding of how children learn. The activities are well planned with children's development in mind. Staff are enthusiastic, join in

with the children and make the learning enjoyable and meaningful.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the role play opportunities by providing dressing up clothes, resources and props which link into the topic.

**What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to look at two areas:

- 1) Provide more opportunities for children to record their own observations.
- 2) Provide more opportunities for children to solve problems in the context of everyday experiences.

The nursery has made very good progress in both these areas:

- 1) Additional opportunities for mark making and writing has been introduced. There are mark making materials out permanently which are well used by the children.
- 2) Children are encouraged to be independent, solve problems in a variety of scenarios and to help themselves when using equipment.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy, interested in activities and participate well. They have very good relationships with staff, other adults and their peers. Children choose from activities and move around their environment with purpose and confidence. They are independent, taking themselves to the toilet, selecting toys and pouring drinks. Children are well occupied and therefore behaviour is very good. They have many opportunities to explore the wider world and to explore other cultures.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children interact well with adults and others, speaking clearly and confidently. They have the opportunity to speak French each week. Children enjoy singing and listening to stories, joining in with enthusiasm. The library area is well used with a good supply of books. Staff encourage children to use books to find out information about topic work. There are good displays of letter and word around the room and areas are well labelled. Children have many opportunities to use writing during play.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children participate in a very good range of counting activities throughout the day and the equipment is laid out well. There are good opportunities to explore number, shape, size, volume, colour and quantity during many practical activities, topics and role play. Children have a good understanding of addition and subtraction and can count up to 10 and higher. They use maths in everyday situations, there are good displays of number around the room and staff make the activities enjoyable.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about their environment, look at living things, grow plants and help to feed the nursery pets. They show an awareness of how things work, they investigate and explore using natural and unusual objects and materials. They have regular access to a computer and programmable toys. Visitors are encouraged to share differences and diversity. Children show a good understanding of their own and other cultures and there are very good opportunities to learn about the wider world.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have good access to outdoor play daily. The garden is interesting and has a very good range of equipment. There are many opportunities for climbing, balancing, throwing and catching and children show a good awareness as they move around their environment, safely avoiding obstacles and others. The children also take part in regular music and movement sessions. They show very good control when using small tools, they handle scissors, brushes, hole punches, tweezers and pencils well.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy a wide range of activities which encourage their creativity. They use their imaginations well and enjoy role play scenarios, sharing and co-operating well. Children take part in regular music and movement sessions where they listen and respond well. They have access to a range of interesting art and craft materials, they can try different techniques and experiences and communicate their own ideas freely.

**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:*

- further develop the role play opportunities by providing dressing up clothes, resources and props which link into the topic.

*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.*