



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 129338

DfES Number: 584274

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	24/01/2005
Inspector Name	Kim Wailling

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Clarendon Montessori School Ltd
Setting Address	Meadowbank Alexandra Road Kings Langley Hertfordshire WD4 8EP

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Alison Redmond
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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

Clarendon Montessori School opened in 1997. It operates from a single storey building consisting of two rooms, a separate cloakroom and toilet area. There is a secure enclosed play area. It is situated in Kings Langley Hertfordshire.

A maximum of 40 children may attend the setting at any one time. It is open each weekday from 08:30 to 15:00 term time only.

There are currently 48 children on roll. Of these 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Most of the children attending live locally.

The setting currently supports seven children who speak English as an additional language. There are no children on roll with identified special educational needs.

Clarendon Montessori School employs eight staff. Seven of the staff, including the Directress and manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is currently working towards further qualification.

Clarendon Montessori School adheres to the Montessori method of learning.

How good is the Day Care?

Montessori School offers satisfactory care for children.

They provide a high staff/child ratio which ensures that individual support and attention is offered to children. The classrooms are attractive and welcoming. Both outdoor and indoor space is well used to meet children's needs, however the current nappy changing area does not offer children privacy. There are a variety of age appropriate equipment available but those for younger children do not sufficiently reflect the diversity within society. Storage areas are well organised in the classrooms and children are able to access toys and equipment independently.

Health and safety procedures are in place, however Ofsted need to be informed of relevant changes in line with care standard requirements. Positive steps to prevent

the spread of infection need reinforcement. Child protection policies are known by staff but recording procedures are limited.

The school uses Montessori methods of instruction to enable children to make progress in all areas of learning. Staff use observation and other information to help plan appropriate activities for the next steps in children's development and learning for older children, this is not fully implemented for younger children. Staff have a calm and consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. As a result children know and understand what is expected of them and this is reflected in their good behaviour and social skills.

The setting offers parents flexibility with their childcare needs by providing both breakfast and lunch club. Staff welcome parents at all times and share information about children on a regular basis both informally and formally. New parents are given a comprehensive prospectus and there is a parent notice board which is used to keep them informed about the day to day operation of the school. Parental questionnaires particularly reflect their satisfaction with the caring learning environment provided by the staff. .

What has improved since the last inspection?

All actions from the last care inspection have been addressed.

Suitable staff induction programmes have been introduced.

Risk assessment procedures are in place in both classrooms and are fully understood and implemented by staff.

Fire evacuation procedures are displayed and a fire drill log has been established.

The setting has a comprehensive sickness policy that is implemented.

There is a Special Educational Needs policy, which includes a procedure for staff to follow if a child is identified as having special needs.

Information contained in the Clarendon Montessori School prospectus, which is available to parents, includes the Ofsted contact number.

What is being done well?

- The staff effectively work in partnership with parents to help children settle happily into the setting. High staff/child ratios ensure that there are always sufficient staff to support children and engage them in activities.
- Mobile storage units provide space in which resources are attractively displayed. All Montessori equipment is complete and ready to be used by the children. Older children can access toys and resources of their choice easily and are encouraged by staff to replace the equipment back to its original space carefully.

- Good behaviour is valued and encouraged by all staff. The staff have consistent approach and take time to reinforce social skills such as using please and thank you when it is appropriate to do so. The staff are good role models and are calm and patient. They have clear expectations such as the importance of lining up quickly and quietly before outdoor play which the children adhere to.

What needs to be improved?

- procedures to inform Ofsted of any significant changes
- planning and assessment procedures for younger children
- availability of resources for younger children that reflect diversity of society
- positive steps to prevent the spread of infection
- nappy changing procedures to ensure the privacy of children
- child protection recording procedures. .

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.)

Since the 1st of April 2004 Ofsted has not received any complaint about this setting.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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 must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
1	To inform Ofsted of significant changes.	06/02/2004
1	To ensure that there are effective procedures for vetting staff.	06/02/2004

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

Std	Recommendation
3	To observe and plan what younger children can do and plan the next steps in the children's learning.
4	To review nappy changing arrangements to ensure that the privacy of children is respected.
7	To take positive steps to promote the good health of children.
9	To increase the range of resources for younger children that reflects positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.
13	To establish a procedure to record existing injuries to children.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at Clarendon Nursery School is of good quality. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Montessori principles of teaching and children's learning is being promoted. Links with the Foundation Stage curriculum are made but need to be more clearly defined to ensure effective monitoring.

There is an engaging range of resources displayed at the children's level from which the children can choose freely. Children develop independence skills and are able to follow interests. Staff use Montessori assessment sheets to monitor progress effectively. Planning for progress takes place based on what children already know and can do.

Staff introduce Montessori activities clearly and support children in their use. Time for activities to promote creativity is given, although there are few opportunities for children to work collaboratively or on challenging large scale projects. The key worker system in place allows staff to develop meaningful relationships with children which fosters children's happiness and a sense of belonging.

Staff have high expectations of the children's behaviour. Children sit still when it is appropriate to do so and are eager to answer questions. Staff use of questioning however does not challenge children sufficiently and needs to be extended to elicit a range of responses.

Leadership and management is generally good. The Directress has clear objectives. She has appointed a team of staff whose skills and experience complement each other. Staff members work well together and are consistent in their approach.

Partnership with parents is generally good. There are many opportunities for information to be shared. Highlighting links between Montessori principles and Foundation Stage curriculum would facilitate a greater understanding of children's progress.

What is being done well?

- Staff work hard to provide an inviting environment which is organised to promote children's learning. All Montessori equipment is well maintained and complete. Resources are stored so that children can easily access them. Staff help children use the equipment and monitor individual progress effectively. The staff take advantage of training opportunities to help them implement the Montessori curriculum.
- Children behave well with self control. Staff set clear and consistent

boundaries to help children manage their behaviour and develop self esteem. Good behaviour is praised and valued.

- Planning and assessment is systematic and based on what children can do. Children are given opportunities to develop concentration skills and develop confidence. Children readily involve themselves in individual tasks such as word building which they can continue to practise at home.
- There are many opportunities for children to develop fine manipulative skills. Children have access for example to sponges to squeeze, threading beads, scissors and a wide variety of writing implements. Children confidently attempt writing.
- The staff have developed a good rapport with parents. Every child has a home/school diary which accompanies the regular homework tasks which are set by staff. Key workers make themselves available to share information with parents at the beginning and end of each session. Formalised parent/teacher consultation meetings are conducted alongside written progress reports which many parents like.

What needs to be improved?

- planning to the Foundation Stage curriculum
- information for parents concerning the Foundation Stage curriculum and its links with the Montessori system of education
- opportunities for challenge.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There has been generally good progress since the last inspection. A point of consideration was made to build upon current good practice by extending children's learning through the effective use of questioning by staff. This has been partially addressed. Staff introduce activities well and engage children in discussion. However, different styles of questioning are not used frequently enough by staff to extend children's learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident, well behaved and polite. They adhere to the high expectation of conduct set by staff. They happily approach staff for help and are motivated by the encouragement they receive. Children have opportunities to follow their interests, concentrate and persevere for long periods, especially when involved in individual Montessori tasks. However, there are few opportunities for children to work collaboratively in groups and share ideas.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff encourage children to express their needs and listen to others. New vocabulary is introduced, however styles of questioning limits children's responses. Systematic procedures for introducing children to phonic word building are in place which extended by the setting of homework tasks. Children have access to a variety of writing implements and structured pre-writing activities. Children listen attentively to stories and make up their own narratives when playing with small world toys.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

There are many opportunities for children to use mathematical language. Children are confident to count, recognise number, shape and sizes. They are secure in simple problem solving, addition and subtraction through using Montessori equipment. They experience activities which promote an understanding of space and measure through the use of graded equipment which is constantly available. Children use positional language in their play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children develop a sense of time and place through themes which are planned by staff. The weather and days of the week are discussed daily. Knowledge of the wider world is introduced through festivals and looking at maps and a globe. Information books are available so that children can check facts. Children have a daily opportunity to explore methods of construction as free choice activities and have some access to forms of technology, such as a hand held keyboard and a cassette player.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are able to use a range of small equipment with increasing skill. They have access to tools such as tweezers, pipettes and scissors and a wide range of drawing and writing implements. Staff monitor progress carefully and encourage children to practise and consolidate their skills. There are opportunities for children to run outside, use a small range of pedal bikes and develop ball skills. Children's bodily awareness is explored in topic work, currently based on 'our bodies'.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have the opportunity to use a range of art materials but are usually involved in individual projects. Displays are carefully mounted. Movement sessions are planned which staff support by joining in. Children create their own make-believe games in the playground. Staff value creativity and understand that the Montessori equipment can be used in differing ways, for example a four year old used a mathematical sorting and pairing activity (baby and adult model animals) as part of a story.

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

- link planning to the Foundation Stage curriculum
- extend information for parents concerning the Foundation Stage curriculum and its links with the Montessori system of education
- monitor opportunities for challenge through group work, children's involvement in large scale projects and staff use of questioning to elicit a range of responses from children

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.