

The Beehive Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	107977
Inspection date	21/09/2010
Inspector	Kim Mundy
Setting address	St Michaels Church Hall, Sycamore Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 5DR
Telephone number	01753 891613 or 01753 893 321
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

The Beehive Montessori School has been open since 1990 and it is privately owned. It operates from a large hall and two smaller rooms in St. Michael's Church Hall in Amersham, Buckinghamshire. There is access to an outdoor play area. The school follows the principles of the Montessori teaching method and is open each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15pm with extended sessions until 2.45pm on Wednesday and Fridays.

The Beehive Montessori School is registered to care for a maximum of 32 children under eight years, all of whom may be in the early years age range and there are currently 26 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week. Systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. The school employs two full-time staff and six part-time members of staff and of these, four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are thoroughly enjoying their time at this school. They are making good progress in their learning and development because staff plan and provide for the children's individual needs. The school celebrates an outstanding outcome for children's positive contribution; staff place a very high emphasis on promoting children's uniqueness and exemplary behaviour. Overall, staff work very well in partnership with parents and others, and relevant paperwork is in place. Children's welfare is promoted effectively and they are safe and secure. The setting has systems in place to monitor and continuously improve the service for children and their families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- continue to extend the children's outdoor play experiences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The school is well led and managed. Children are safeguarded because staff maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. In addition, robust recruitment and effective induction procedures for staff and

students are in place to ensure their suitability to work with children. Risk assessments are undertaken so that children are safe and secure in the setting and on outings. Children's welfare is promoted well; several staff hold first aid qualifications to ensure that accidents are suitably managed and the procedure for administering medication is in line with current legislation. A suitable sick child procedure is in place to prevent unnecessary illness. The manager provides a range of good quality resources and materials to entice children to explore and investigate. Staff plan the use of space well to enable children to move around with ease as they select their Montessori activities from low level shelving.

The manager uses the Ofsted self-evaluation form well to help her and the staff team to reflect on their practice and continue developing the service for children and their families. Staff are reflective and proactive about developing their service to benefit the children, for example, they are keen to enhance children's outdoor play experiences. The recommendations set at the last inspection have been thoroughly addressed, which shows commitment and ability for continuous improvement. For instance, staff have increased the children's opportunities to find out about information and communication technology. The staff's continuous professional development is encouraged through attending training courses.

The school places a very strong emphasis on promoting inclusion for all children including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and parents are particularly complementary about the support that staff provide for children with English as an additional language. Staff establish good links with other professionals and seek specialist advice for individual children when required. Children are curious about the items displayed in the South America area, which they handle and discuss with staff, for instance, pan pipes. There is a wide range of toys and resources which help to promote children's understanding of diversity within our society, for example, dressing up clothes, books, puzzles and dolls.

The strong emphasis on partnerships with parents/carers enables children to settle easily into the supportive atmosphere and make the best possible start. Every child is linked to a member of staff called a 'key person' who coordinates their care and development, and liaises with parents. Good information is provided, for example, daily discussions, progress reports and newsletters help parents to understand the curriculum topics which form the basis of the setting's activities. At the inspection, several parents said their children were very happy with the provision and that they are progressing well. They feel their children are well prepared for moving on to school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are developing a good appreciation of healthy lifestyles; they enjoy fresh air and exercise everyday as they play in and outdoors. They are developing control over their bodies as they crawl and balance on apparatus, and have fun steering cars and tricycles. Children learn good hygiene practices and know they must wash their hands to prevent germs spreading. Strong emphasis is placed on

children learning to take responsibility for their own safety and caring for their environment, for instance, as they carry their chairs and scissors safely so people do not get hurt, and sweep and mop up spillages so people do not slip over.

Children's behaviour is exemplary; they know what is expected of them because boundaries are consistently and kindly applied by staff. They are developing meaningful friendships and are learning how to take turns and positively interact with each other. Caring and nurturing relationships with staff enable children to form close attachments and feel secure. The atmosphere is tranquil and inclusive and this in turn enables the children to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Children's learning is observed and assessed comprehensively. A picture of each child's development emerges through staff's observations of the children's involvement in many worthwhile activities. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals; they nurture and support, rather than direct, children's learning. This ensures that children are quickly accustomed to making their own decisions and organise themselves well. There is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by adults.

The children are keen and motivated; their ability to work independently is exceptional as they help themselves to the Montessori activities. They competently tidy away resources when they complete a task without being prompted and respond positively to encouragement. Group teaching sessions are successful, particularly in developing children's social, literacy and numeracy skills. Children demonstrate pride of their work and show a desire to discover and find out about new things. Staff focus daily attention on key skills, such as listening and speaking, early literacy and numeracy. They use a rich vocabulary to encourage and extend children's concentration and independence. Children have a strong sense of belonging as they find their name on their pegs, snack bar name card and drawers.

Central to the school's curriculum are creative and innovative opportunities, based securely on first-hand and real-life experiences. This means that children acquire new skills within a context that they can relate to. They use a range of tools competently, such as needles for sewing, dusters for polishing, and tongs for picking up small beads. Children are developing their creativity as they paint pictures and construct with recycled materials. Children are developing good early reading and writing skills as they recognise their names and letters displayed in the environment. They have many opportunities to write for a purpose, for example, on notepads in the role-play area. Children's communication skills are good; they listen carefully to each other during circle time as they discuss animals which live in the ocean and on the land. Children spend time developing their problem-solving skills, for example, as they sort and match, and grade colour slides. They are learning about living things as they plant vegetables and sunflowers, observe caterpillars emerging in the butterfly box, and feed 'Flopsy' and 'Mopsy' the goldfish. Children are developing a very good insight into cultural diversity as they celebrate festivals, such as Diwali, and explore countries, such as South America. Children are increasing their understanding of technology as they use magnifying glasses, programmable toys and the computer. They particularly enjoy the scientific experiments with eggs, bicarbonate of soda, and ice. These experiences

help children to develop important skills for their future and help prepare them for a positive transition to school.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met