

The Rocking Horse Montessori Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127502
Inspection date	24/03/2011
Inspector	Stacey Sangster

Setting address	8 Lansdowne Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2NJ
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Telephone number	01892 532704
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Email

Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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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.

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Description of the setting

The Rocking Horse Montessori Kindergarten opened in 1990 and is privately owned and managed. It operates from the basement of the owner's home and is situated in Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

A maximum of 34 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.30am to 4.00pm during term time only. Children may attend on a sessional or a full time basis. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

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

There are currently 82 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 55 children receive early education funding. Children come from the local area. The nursery makes provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff, including the owner, who work with the children. Four hold early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

The nursery receives support from the Local Authority

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The kindergarten meets the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage well. The majority of the systems in place are well established and support the provision of high quality care and education. The kindergarten's capacity to continually improve is strong and staff consistently review and reflect on practices to build on their successes. Any weaknesses identified are addressed promptly and development plans are organised to prioritise action which will have the most positive impact on the childcare provided.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- include benchmarking within the assessment process to enable the prompt identification of gaps as they arise in children's learning so that these can be addressed without delay
- extend the partnership with parents in relation to education by obtaining information about children's starting points and by systematically involving

parents in their child's continuous learning and development and linking this to home learning opportunities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding within the kindergarten is given high priority. The recruitment procedures are generally robust with a thorough interview process, verification of qualifications and Criminal Record Bureau checks, which are updated on a regular basis. The kindergarten has recently identified that adding enquiries about the health of applicants when determining their suitability will enhance the arrangements further and steps are being taken put these checks in place. Risk assessment arrangements are good and support the provision of a safe environment for children to play in and explore. Children's individual needs are met effectively. Considerable care is taken to ensure that all children have equal access to the resources and equipment. Current arrangements for assessing children's progress do not always include benchmarking against the Early Years Foundation Stage, which can delay the prompt identification of gaps in children's learning. Steps are taken to close gaps in children's achievements where they are identified. Relationships with parents are good and the staff work hard to engage parents. Effective partnerships exist in relation to care, with a well established, good two-way flow of information in place. Partnerships with parents and others in relation to education are emerging and this is beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The deployment of resources, including the highly committed, experienced and well qualified staff team, is exceptionally good, which impacts positively in all aspects of the children's care and education. The environment is stimulating, the care nurturing and the atmosphere conducive to high quality learning opportunities. The self-evaluation process embedded within the kindergarten involves staff and, in general, provides an accurate picture of the kindergarten's strengths and how these will be built on. Plans for further improvements are well targeted and prioritised appropriately. The management communicates ambition effectively and staff are fully supportive and contribute towards the continuing success of the provision.

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

Children's welfare is promoted well within the kindergarten. Policies and procedures to protect children's health and wellbeing are implemented consistently and provided in writing to inform the parents and guide the staff. Children demonstrate that they feel secure in this setting. They approach staff without hesitation and smile and laugh often. They show a clear understanding of the routines and understand the behaviours which will help to keep themselves and each other safe.

All children in the kindergarten clearly know and understand the hygiene procedures and the reasons for them. They chat spontaneously about washing the

germs off their hands and are familiar with the routine of cleaning tables before lunch. The children cover their mouths when coughing and dispose of tissues hygienically in bins. The children enjoy access to regular exercise and gain a secure understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The outdoor play space is well used by the children and is available to them in all weathers. Only healthy foods are served in the kindergarten and children learn about unhealthy foods from discussions with staff. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of which foods are good for them and which may cause them detriment, identifying, for example, that eating too many sweets can make your teeth go bad and make them hurt. Working in partnership with parents ensures that children enjoy healthy snacks and lunches, which are put together with reference to published guidance about appropriate nutrition for the under fives.

Behaviour in this setting is excellent and the children demonstrate exceptional negotiation skills and an ability to resolve disagreements fairly and without the need for adult intervention. They show high levels of self esteem and are respectful of each others different beliefs, views and ideas. Care is taken to identify how the kindergarten can support children's various cultural and religious needs. All children are able to celebrate and share details of festivals and holy days which are important to them and their families, as well as exploring those which are special to others in the community. Every child is able to access resources and images which positively reflect them and their families.

Children make good progress in this setting, given their abilities and starting points. They demonstrate that they very much enjoy their time and are fully engaged with the wide range of activities on offer. Children are active learners, keen to explore and discover how things work for themselves. They are successfully able to work alone or in groups. All children are developing skills which will support them in the future and most are well equipped with the skills needed to secure future learning

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	1
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
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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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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