

Sunshine Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY417560
Inspection date 10/05/2011
Inspector Aileen Finan

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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 nursery has been established since 1997 and registered at its current premises in 2010. It is a privately owned provision which operates from two main rooms in a purpose-built building situated in the grounds of Downley Primary School, Downley, Buckinghamshire. The nursery opens from 8.30 am to 3.30 pm on Monday to Friday during term time only. Children can attend for a variety of provision as the nursery offers morning, afternoon, full day, early bird, late bird and lunchtime sessions. The nursery follows the Montessori ethos.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children between the ages of two and eight years may be cared for at any one time, of whom all may be in the early years age group. There are currently 56 children in the early years age group on roll. The nursery is in receipt of funding for free early education places. The nursery employs 11 staff, including the Principal and Manager. The Principal has gained Early Years Professional status, a Montessori Diploma and Forest School practice qualification at level 3. Of the other staff including the manager, eight hold an appropriate early years qualification. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children for whom English is a second language.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. The nursery is highly effective in meeting the needs of individual children. The staff's commitment and the quality of teaching ensure that children's learning and welfare is successfully promoted. Overall, therefore, children make exceptional progress in relation to their starting points. Children are safe, secure and happy in their environment and the partnerships with parents are excellent. The leadership and management team are strong and they have a clear vision for future continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- extend the opportunities already in place, using a range of approaches to enhance children's learning using the outdoor environment and helping children to further engage in a range of physical activities
- build upon the effective partnership working which is already in place with other agencies, schools and parents to further enhance the outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery established itself in 1997 and has recently moved to this newly built premises where children and staff have settled extraordinarily quickly. The Principal and her Manager have high aspirations for their ongoing improvement, outcomes for children and a commitment to equality and diversity. Staff are highly effective in providing children with positive experiences. They understand the children well and have a comprehensive awareness of children's backgrounds and needs. Children feel safe and secure. All aspects to safeguard children are effective. Staff are competently aware of how to protect the children they care for, can recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse; and understand their responsibilities should they ever have a concern about a child. All staff complete and update safeguarding training.

Policies and procedures are effective and understood by staff and parents who are consulted on and/or contribute to the writing and updating of these. All paperwork is appropriately conducted. For example, registers, accident and medication records, children's personal records and fire logs meet the legal requirements. Risk assessments for the environment both indoors and out, as well as for outings are clear and appropriate. Staff take on additional responsibilities to update and contribute to these also.

Thorough systems are in place to ensure the most appropriate staff are employed. Systematic systems ensure staff suitability to the posts, and a purposeful induction, training process and appraisal practice is in place to enhance their ongoing and continued development. Morale is extremely high at the nursery and the leadership and management team inspire the hard working staff to work towards and sustain ambitious but realistic targets. As a result of this hard work, outcomes for children attending are extremely high. Resources are of an exceptional standard. The outdoor environment and indoor learning spaces are used to full potential. Effective use is made of the provision to share resources, particularly those relating to multicultural and disability resources and musical instruments with the primary school and special school on the same site.

Partnerships with parents are highly successful. Parents are extremely positive about the nursery and staff; and speak warmly about how they feel lucky that their children can enjoy the experiences offered to them. Parents are heavily involved in their children's learning and development and contribute to planning for their next steps. Parent's views are very important and contribute to the nursery's ongoing self assessment processes. The views of children are captured too through their observations and assessments. Parents are informed about children's progress through meetings held each term, daily handover and feedback and informal discussion. Parents are invited to attend meetings which give additional insight into their children's development and have covered 'how to have fun for nothing', Every Child A Talker, and identifying Dyslexia. The nursery provides various other opportunities to meet more informally which include fun days, outings, parties and celebrations. Partnerships with other agencies and professionals are strong too.

There are excellent links with the primary school and special school on the same site; links with the community, for example with shops, library, the local community police officer and the postman. A nutritionist is also due to give a presentation on the benefits of a healthy lunchbox which the nursery believe will improve the lives of the children attending and enhance children's understanding of the benefits of eating balanced and healthy foods. The Principal has held an information evening to provide other agencies and governors of the primary school on the same site an insight into the Montessori approach. This was an effective and valuable evening. As part of the nursery's ongoing continuous development the goal is to enhance these partnership links even further to include seeking parental views through questionnaires, more enhanced provision for children with special educational needs and extending further the links in the community, with local children's centres and local schools.

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

Children at the nursery are very happy and settled. They approach staff with enthusiasm. The nursery follows the Montessori ethos but has made effective adaptations to successfully link with all six areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The Montessori resources allow for learning through a problem solving approach which helps to develop children's thinking. Staff are knowledgeable in this approach and in the Early Years Foundation Stage and allow children time to think and consider what they are doing, rather than providing the answers and solutions for them. Therefore, children become curious learners who respond to challenges with enthusiasm, imagination, curiosity and confidence.

Delightful adult led activities are in place which encompass the Montessori resources as well as other learning approaches. Children independently use Montessori problem solving resources to identify size, sequence and numbering and the youngest of children can confidently build and construct in sequence. In a musical session children choose instruments and sit with their back to the staff member. They listen to the sounds of the instrument she plays and then decide if their instrument can make the same sound and later learn the names of the instrument. In another session children use templates of nursery characters, tracing them and colouring, recalling the rhymes together and choosing what other characters are needed to complete the rhyme. Children fold out a skeleton book, naming which bone is connected to which. This in turn enhances their knowledge of the human body and how it works. Whilst playing in child led play, opportunities are fully acted upon by proactive staff who seize the moment as children play. For example, as children make and paint bees in a creative art session a staff member reminds children about keeping themselves safe when using the stapler. Another child talks about his dad being 37 and his mum 34 and accurately accounts that his dad is three years older than his mum when asked by a staff member. A child correctly identifies how many legs a spider has whilst another reads a story entitled 'my mother's Sari'. Children happily take part in role play both indoors and outside in the garden. Children have a huge variety of dressing up clothes and role play resources. They can look through photographic books of past events. They

recall these enjoyable activities and name friends or siblings who have attended the nursery in the past. A wonderful book 'when I grow up I want to be' has been collated by a staff member and depicts adults in uniforms and doing jobs not traditionally associated with their gender. Children therefore, are provided with excellent opportunities to challenge common assumptions and stereotypical views. Many opportunities are in place for children to be inquisitive. Binoculars sit on the window ledges, children confidently use the computer controlling the mouse and keys and following instructions with ease.

The quality of children's learning and their progress towards the early learning goals is significant. Children develop and learn well in relation to their starting points. There is a calm and orderly environment all day and the teaching rooms are carefully structured in order to facilitate children's learning. Staff plan for activities indoors and outdoors but this planning is linked to children's current interests and is adapted to meet the needs of children should these interests change. Children are observed and assessed in both child initiated play and more structured activities. Each child has a development book shared with parents and these books are filled with photographs and children's own work. Each child has a progress record which is a working document used extensively throughout the term by the child's key person staff member. These progress records highlight what the child has already recently achieved and may need to build upon or practise. Links are made through the Early Years Foundation Stage goals and the Montessori curriculum. The key person identifies how children are challenged and their achievements gained and at the end of each term the information is collated to a main sheet which identifies children's next steps and any gaps in learning. Parents take part in the whole process by meeting with staff and sharing home and school learning. Children also take home reading books and story sacks which further enhances the partnerships in place between home and nursery. The story sacks were put together following an innovative idea by one staff member, who with help from colleagues and family has made around 50 story sacks in total. These sacks are put together to ensure all age groups are catered for as well as for children with additional needs. These comprehensive sacks are used by parents who share with their children and enjoy the stories, which are excellently resourced with activities, prompts and figures. Following a concern by a parent an additional sack was produced to help children understand 'stranger danger' in a positive way and so as to not scare a child. The story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' was used and has been positively acknowledged by parents. Volunteer parents come in twice a week to organise the hire of the story sacks for a small donation which is later secured for the provision of making more sacks.

Children have excellent opportunities to see other children in different environments. For example nursery children go pond dipping with children from the primary school on the same site, attend nativity plays and musical assemblies. Children also share assemblies with children at the special school also on the same site. Children from these other schools were invited recently to join the nursery when all the children had a wonderful day when a farm visit was organised. The children saw the lambs, fed the ponies and had a delightful time together. Transition support is in place for children leaving the nursery and moving on to the primary schools.

Children enjoy the substantial outdoor play area which backs onto fields and is surrounded by fencing. Children can look out and see the deer, horses and pheasants and look up to watch Red Kites flying overhead. All areas of learning are covered in the exceptionally well resourced outdoor area. Children enjoy climbing, construction, role play, dressing up, writing and mark making, gardening, creative play, musical instruments, exploring activities and the sandpit. A roadway is painted on the floor and children ride their bikes, after putting on safety hats. Children access the garden through the large doors which open electronically for them. Staff are deployed well and supervise children, allowing them to take risks to enhance their confidence and supporting children as they play. The nursery staff have taken on board how different children play. The Principal has recently completed a qualification with the Forest School approach. Planning is in place to further extend the opportunities for children. Staff have also taken up training for 'guns and superhero play' to further enhance their understanding of how boys play. The nursery is currently trialling different ways to use the outdoor environment to develop a more wide ranging approach to learning and purposeful play even further and to encourage children to take their learning to the outdoors. The nursery's continuous improvement plans incorporate ideas to enhance the outdoor environment further, to plan for even more learning and enable children even more opportunities to benefit from exercise and fresh air.

Children are benefiting from their understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They are encouraged to be independent, learn about nutritional food, to wash hands before eating, after using the toilet and after outdoor play. They acknowledge the need for regular exercise. Children display a strong sense of belonging and security at nursery. They are confident to approach staff to ask for help. Children respect themselves, each other, the staff who look after them and their environment. Children's behaviour is good. They form friendships easily and work well in small groups and independently. Children's progress in communication, literacy and numeracy is exceptionally good. They are learning fundamental skills to take forward in their future learning. Children understand the routines of the nursery well. They are extremely confident at communicating their thoughts. They take on responsibilities and demonstrate a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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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

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