

Rocking Horse Montessori Nursery

26 St. Peters Avenue, Caversham, READING, RG4 7DD

Inspection date	11/07/2013
Previous inspection date	20/09/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children are cared for in a warm and friendly environment. They are happy and form close relationships and secure attachments with staff.
- Staff have expectations of behaviour and consistent boundaries that helps children develop a good understanding of acceptable behaviour. Consequently children behave well.
- Children are motivated, eager to try activities and consistently show their interests and enthusiasm for the experiences available to them. As a result, they make good progress in all aspects of their development.
- Staff place high emphasis on communication and language and have good systems in place to help ensure all children are able to participate fully in the nursery day.

It is not yet outstanding because

- While there are good links with parents they do not receive additional information about learning methods to enable them to share and continue learning at home.
- Although the outdoor area is well equipped, not all equipment is appealing to the children as procedures to ensure it remains clean and attractive are not maintained.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed staff with children as they participated in activities in the nursery and outside areas.
- The inspector sampled documentation including children's progress records and a range of policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to several parents on the day to gather their views on the nursery.
- The inspector and manager completed an observation in the garden.

Inspector

Susan May

Full Report

Information about the setting

Rocking Horse Montessori Nursery School registered in October 2006 and is on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery follows the Montessori ethos and is privately owned. It operates from dedicated rooms within a residential property in Caversham, near Reading. The children have access to an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The nursery is open every week day morning from 9.15am to 12.15pm and for a full day on Wednesdays until 3pm, during term time only. There are currently 24 children on roll. The nursery are in receipt of funding for nursery education for two-, three- and four- year-olds. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are seven members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these staff, four hold Montessori teaching qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- provide further information for parents about learning methods to enable them to share and continue learning at home

- develop procedures to monitor outdoor equipment to ensure it is kept in good condition and appealing to children.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff offer a welcoming environment where children are eager to try the range of resources they can choose for themselves. Children move freely between the indoors and outside as the nursery follows the Montessori ethos. This enables children to be active learners who learn from the environment. Learning is guided by the children's developmental needs, and flourishes when children are given time and space to observe, explore and investigate independently. Staff offer support to enhance their learning and development and as a result, children make good developmental progress. Staff move around play areas, providing individual attention as they join in with children's play at their level. They ask useful questions to extend children's vocabulary and thinking, and take note of children's responses. Staff use pictures, signs, gestures and props to help children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language communicate. This helps ensure that all children are able to take part in activities and

daily events. For example, children can follow the photographic timeline of the daily routine displayed at their level.

Toys are easily accessible for children to make their own choices and follow their own interests. Most activities are child initiated, and some are adult led. For example, children sit together to greet each other at the start of each session and to listen to music and play a memory game. Children are encouraged to finish activities they have started, put on their own shoes and coats, and show respect for each other at group activities. This helps provide children with an understanding of what is expected of them as they move on to school. Children practise early writing skills using crayons, pencils and paper, or chalk boards outside. Children identify their name as they arrive and each has their own named drawer in which to put their work, ready to take home. Children explore their creativity as they select art and craft materials such as sequins and tissue paper. They use scissors, sticky tape and glue, gaining hand and finger control as they put their creations together. Children handle tools carefully. They show increasing respect for toys and equipment as they help sort out resources and put things away when they have finished playing with them.

Children use an attractive and inviting book area where they can sit alone or with staff, to look at fact and fiction books. Other books are displayed around the nursery. For example, reference books next to the tadpole and frog container show how they grow and develop. Stories, songs and activities often relate to a topic or everyday events, and parents contribution by providing information and photographs. Parents are encouraged to share children's achievements. For example, the 'WOW' board celebrates what the children have done well, from creating special pictures to being able to put shoes on by themselves. This helps children feel valued and builds self-esteem.

Activities are available that support children's overall understanding of early mathematical skills, such as puzzles, sequencing activities and construction. Staff use opportunities to extend mathematical learning through everyday play and routines. For example, children count how many red apples they stick on a tree picture, and how many green apples and finally count how many altogether. Children develop future skills as they talk and use everyday resources. Such as talking about traffic lights and going on outings where they may have to cross roads using pedestrian crossings. Children use their imagination as they enjoy role-play, and enjoy being superheroes as they run round the garden using a piece of red cloth as a cape.

Staff make full use of the outdoor area as a learning environment as they recognise that children have preferred methods of learning. They consequently work hard to provide activities to engage all children in order to promote learning in all areas. For example, role play and art activities are available both indoors and outside. Daily fresh air and exercise helps develop children's physical skills as they climb, slide and ride on wheeled toys around the garden. Children find out about the natural world as they grow a range of vegetables, plant flowers, care for the nursery pets and talk about how the caterpillars will eventually turn into butterflies. Staff provide an inclusive setting where children begin to value diversity as priority is given to helping children understand about the world around them. Positive attitudes and images of culture, ethnicity and gender are rooted in daily practice through activities and resources.

Staff find out children's starting points as they talk to parents and request information from them when they first start. Children's individual needs and interests are taken into account as staff get together to complete their planning. Comprehensive observations and assessments, photographs and examples of children's work are included in records of development. These clearly identify children's next steps and are discussed with parents. Parents may see their children's records at any time and receive regular updates and reports. They are involved in the children's learning as they are invited to make comments, and share information about learning at home. However, they do not receive additional information about what they can do at home to help them share and continue the learning process.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children enjoy their time at the nursery, arriving happily, as the manager greets them and their parents on arrival. Home visits by the manager and key person help ensure children settle in quickly as staff know the children and their families well. Staff operate a 'key person' system that helps to build close bonds that lead to trusting relationships. Children clearly feel secure and develop confidence. They are introduced to visitors and approach them curiously with enquiries about what they are doing. Staff help children feel a sense of belonging as they have their own named slipper bags, drawers for their work and talk about their families. Staff have regular discussions with parents in order to respond to the needs of individual children.

Staff work extremely well together adopting a consistent approach to children's behaviour. Children know what is expected of them. For example, they each select a mat to sit on so they have their own space at group times. They tidy away their own resources and begin to understand about taking turns as they play on the slide. Staff praise children for their achievements, however small, and use effective distraction techniques to resolve issues. Independence is encouraged as children choose what they want to play with and begin to become competent in their personal care. Staff provide good role models. They help children begin to understand about keeping themselves healthy. For example, they discuss why they need to wash their hands before helping to prepare the snack. Staff promote healthy lifestyles. Physical activities are a key part of the nursery day as children play with a wide range of large and small equipment and get fresh air and exercise as they play outdoors. Resources indoors are clean and well-maintained and invitingly set out. Equipment outdoors is also easily accessible and safe, although some of the older equipment is not as clean and attractive and therefore less inviting.

Children choose when they want their snack and are encouraged to help prepare it if they want to. They sit with their friends and chat with each other and a member of staff about what they have been doing at the nursery and at home. This helps promote good future eating habits as they enjoy the social occasion. Staff know children's likes and dislikes and dietary requirements and provide appropriate snacks. Drinks are always available to children and they help themselves at any time. Children are eager and interested in activities. They benefit from their nursery experiences learning how to make friends and

look after themselves and others. For example, as they help sweep the floor to make sure it is not a hazard. Children play a large role in their own learning that combined with staffs support; helps build self-esteem and developing skills that will benefit the children as they move forward in their learning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff to help ensure children play in a safe, secure environment and implement risk assessments for the premises and outings. While many of the staff have been in post for several years there have been staff changes that have had some impact on the nursery. However, the manager and current staff team work well together. They support each other, ensuring that they all fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff ratios are high and they are deployed effectively to keep children safe. Accidents are recorded and shared with parents.

The manager and staff receive support from the local authority and other agencies from whom they actively seek advice, acting on it to improve the service they offer. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with the children. Staff development results from an appraisal system and an expectation that staff will update their knowledge through further training. The recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed. For example, all staff have recently a completed food safety course and while many staff hold first aid certificates, training is arranged for those who do not. Policies including safeguarding, and the complaints procedure are implemented. Staff are fully aware of what to do should they have concerns about a child in their care. All children's documentation and related paperwork is in place and stored securely. Parents are provided with several ways to access nursery information, such as discussions, e-mail, the website, newsletters and a parents' information board. Confidentiality is observed at all times. Staff have developed effective children's assessment systems and work closely with parents in order to make informed decisions about the children's progress and next steps in learning. The manager and staff assess nursery practice. Staff, children and the parent/teacher association contribute to the process to promote continuous improvement.

Parents are highly appreciative of staff's work, praising the good communication they have and the regular information they receive. They express confidence in the staff and like that children can choose to play indoors or outside. Although some parents state they would appreciate more suggestions about how they can complement learning at home they generally fully involved in their children's care and learning. Good communication with others involved in the children's care, such as health professionals and teachers help provide a consistent and shared approach to children's learning that benefits children as they move through the education system.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY339096
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	924482
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	24
Name of provider	Vivien Eluned Vincent
Date of previous inspection	20/09/2010
Telephone number	0118 947 7644

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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