



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

## **NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT**

**URN 127682**

**DfES Number: 543351**

### **INSPECTION DETAILS**

Inspection Date      30/11/2004  
Inspector Name      Ann Revell

### **SETTING DETAILS**

Day Care Type      Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name      Childrens House Montessori  
Setting Address      Birling Village Hall  
                            Birling  
                            West Malling  
                            Kent  
                            ME19 5TG

### **REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS**

Name                      Mrs Candida Rose Balfour

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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

The Children's House Montessori Nursery meets in shared accommodation in an old Victorian village school hall in the village of Birling close to West Malling, Kent. The nursery caters for children from the local area and the surrounding rural community.

It is open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 09.30 to 12.30 during school term time.

It is registered to take 18 children from two and a half to five years at each session. There are currently 13 children on roll. Of these, eight are in receipt of nursery education funding. There are currently no funded children who have been identified with special educational needs and none who speak English as an additional language.

The owner / principal works with two members of staff. The principal holds a recognised Montessori qualification and one member of staff is working towards an appropriate qualification in Childcare and Education. The nursery receives support from an early years teacher through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The teaching in the nursery is strongly influenced by Montessori methods.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Children's House Montessori Nursery provides high-quality nursery education. This enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Children benefit from the structured Montessori programme which systematically progresses children through tasks using specially designed learning materials and engaging them in practical life experiences. To ensure children are working towards all aspects of the early learning goals, staff provide additional resources and activities, for example, for role-play and model making, although resources for information technology are limited. They monitor participation in activities and give high priority to literacy and mathematics enabling children to progress very well. They manage children in a calm, quiet manner and encourage children to think about the consequences of their behaviour. Children respond very well. The organisation of both the resources and the session encourages children to be independent learners and to be very responsible. Staff keep careful records of children's response to activities in all the areas of learning and use these to identify any special educational needs and to plan for what each child needs to know next. This ensures that all children are very steady progress.

Leadership and management are very good. The proprietor provides strong leadership and works alongside an experienced team who all support her commitment to high quality education and care for the children. Staff attend training courses to update their knowledge and skills and regularly evaluate their practice.

Partnership with parents is generally good . Parents are given good information about the Montessori programme but are not so well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents receive written reports of children's progress in all the areas of learning one term during the year but do not have opportunities to see children's records in the other two terms.

### What is being done well?

- Children are motivated to try all the interesting activities. Resources are all accessible to the children and they initiate their own learning confidently and work purposefully throughout the session.
- The teaching of letter sounds is systematic and this enables children to have a very good knowledge of the sounds that letters make. The older children use this knowledge to independently read and write simple words.
- Children's number recognition, counting and calculating skills are developing well. They benefit from a structured teaching approach, well planned routines and good use of many incidental opportunities to further their learning.
- All the children are appropriately challenged. Staff use their records of progress to carefully plan for what each child needs to learn next.

- The organisation of the nursery effectively encourages children to be very confident in making choices and to have very good personal independence.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the information given to parents about the curriculum
- the reporting of children's progress to parents
- the resources for information technology.

**What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and secure in the nursery. They are able to listen and show very good concentration both in group sessions and when working on their own. They are confident in choosing their resources and persist at difficult tasks for good periods of time. Staff encourage them to succeed and this promotes their self esteem effectively. Children are very responsible and independent. They automatically put away resources, set the table for snack time and mop up any spills.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy talking with adults. They speak clearly and show confidence when learning new words. They listen attentively and take turns in conversations. Children recognise their names, and other familiar words as they complete the weather board. All the children are familiar with the sounds that letters make and the older children use this knowledge to read and write simple words independently. All the children 'write' their names on their work. They are learning to form letters correctly.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

All the children are developing a good understanding of number through the daily use of structured apparatus and the older children are showing an understanding of addition and subtraction through a range of practical activities. They are familiar with 'big' numbers as they write the date and can write numbers correctly. All the children are building on previous learning and their progress is good. Children confidently name shapes, create patterns and order the wooden blocks by size.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from frequent use of the garden and interest tables, where they closely observe nature. They enjoy handling unusual objects, such as in the treasure box. They learn about pattern and change as they record the weather and, cook bread and cakes. They talk about past and present events in their lives. Visits help them to understand the features of their locality. There is limited access to information technology. They celebrate festivals from both their own and other cultures.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy energetic play at each session. They move imaginatively to music, practise bunny hops and use large apparatus that is effectively developing their skills. Children use a variety of tools with increasing control to achieve set tasks, for example, spooning lentils from one pot to another. There are many opportunities to extend these fine motor skills in activities that develop their independence, such as, pouring drinks, pegging paintings on a rack to dry and putting their shoes on.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children learn good skills during structured activities and enjoy practising them as they choose their resources to express their own ideas and imagination. They learn about shades of colour and how to manipulate the clay. Children sing tunefully and sometimes accompany their singing with the instruments. They count themselves in and can maintain a simple rhythm. They act out scenarios using the farm and enjoy dressing up. They respond to their senses as they cook and explore the interest table.

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.**

## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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**

*There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:*

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- find ways for parents to receive information about their child's progress on a more regular basis
- ensure that parents receive information about the stepping stones and the early learning goals
- develop the resources for information technology.

*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.*