



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127587

DfES Number: 510636

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 27/11/2003  
Inspector Name Jane Wakelen

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name St Helens Montessori School  
Setting Address St. Helens, Lower Road  
East Farleigh  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME15 0JT

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Ms Jeannelle Dening-Smitherman

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Ms Jeannelle Dening-Smitherman  
Address St. Helens, Lower Road  
East Farleigh  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME15 0JT

## **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**

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

St.Helens Montessori School offers children the opportunity to make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children learn through the Montessori method of teaching allowing children to progress through a variety of specially designed learning materials, and engage in practical life experiences to gain an understanding and learn for themselves what materials can do. However, there is a lack of creative opportunities for the children to use their imagination and construct and develop an end product, without adult intervention.

Teaching is very good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals and understand how the Montessori approach can be implemented to ensure the six areas of learning are included in the planning. Staff allow children to self select activities and learn from 'doing', only intervening when necessary. They support children and encourage them to try, ensuring they select activities suitable to their stage of development and understanding. Assessment is detailed and staff record when the child has achieved a particular task. However, the brief comments written by the staff are not evaluative and do not carry meaning to adults not trained in the Montessori approach.

Leadership and Management is very good with all staff being involved in the delivery of teaching to the children including the proprietor. The staff are encouraged to attend training courses to further extend their knowledge and all have a good understanding of the Montessori principles. There is no formal appraisal system in operation, although the proprietor has an open door policy, which all staff are aware of.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are verbally informed of their child's progress and can attend an open day once a year to have a private consultation with the proprietor if they so wish. However, they do not receive a written report on their child's development or receive any of the written records kept by the staff.

### What is being done well?

- Children are able to sit still, listen attentively and show good concentration skills when working independently and in large group work with an adult.
- Children have a good knowledge of letters and numbers, are able to form letters and numbers correctly, and name the letter sound and spell simple words.
- Staff extend children's language skills and vocabulary through conversation and introducing new experiences and artefacts from around the world.

- Staff make effective use of all equipment and activities to expand children's knowledge and understanding and allow them to feel secure within the setting.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- opportunities for children to use their imagination and creativity through the use of role play, dance, singing and reciting simple songs, and creating their own models using a variety of materials.
- opportunities for the use of large construction materials.

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

There has been poor progress to what needed to be improved since the last inspection. One issue was raised at the previous inspection regarding children having the opportunity to use large construction materials. This issue has not been addressed.

Children do not have the opportunity to construct using large construction kits or re-cycleable materials. There is no opportunity to build using building bricks of any description. Children have limited use of re-cycleable materials with adult support and a pre-determined end product.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident, able to listen and show concentration in group sessions and on their own. Staff promote positive views about different cultures, views and beliefs and promote children's self esteem by encouraging them to succeed in their chosen task. Children are independent and show consideration to others, especially helping younger ones with different tasks or problems.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are able to recognise letter names and sounds and recognize and write simple words, forming letters correctly. Children recognize their own name and have opportunities throughout the day to practice, such as labelling their pictures. Children interact well with adults, speak clearly and show confidence when learning new words and are effective listeners at story time.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a good understanding of number and can order and write numbers correctly. Four year olds are beginning to show an understanding of addition and subtraction through practical activities and number lines. They recognise, 2D and 3D objects and can differentiate and recreate simple patterns. There are some missed opportunities to extend the more able child's understanding of larger numbers through practical activities, such as register time

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children handle unusual objects and artefacts with interest and are able to observe differences and patterns. They are gaining an understanding of their world around them and the requirements of living things through practical activities and books. They learn about cultures of other people and talk about past and present events from their own experiences. Children use technology to extend topic work and listening to music.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use a variety of tools, with increasing control to achieve set tasks, for example, tongs to pick up pasta to fill a pot. They have many opportunities to extend their fine motor skills in all activities developing their independence in self care skills. There is a good range of large play equipment outside, but limited large play equipment indoors. Children are unable to discuss healthy eating or the importance of keeping active.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have many opportunities to use their senses through activities such as smell jars and feely boxes. They explore colour, shape and texture through practical activities such as creative activities related to the topic and handling artefacts from around the world. There is limited opportunities for children to use their imagination through dance, role play or construction.

**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:*

- further extend creative opportunities to allow children to use their imagination and creativity through the use of role play situations, dance, reciting simple songs from memory and creating their own models using a variety of materials. Extend music and movement activities to encourage children to gain an understanding of the importance of healthy eating and keeping active
- ensure children have the opportunity to use large construction materials.

*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.*