



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 200679

DfES Number: 514316

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 19/01/2004

Inspector Name Paula Hunt

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care

Setting Name MERRYDAYS MONTESSORI NURSERY SCHOOL

Setting Address Station Road
Henley-in-Arden
Solihull
West Midlands
B95 5JP

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Helen Everley

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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

Merrydays Montessori Nursery School opened in 1958, and has been under the current management since September 2000. It operates from the Memorial Hall in the centre of Henley In Arden in Warwickshire. The group has sole use of 4 rooms, toilets, and kitchen when operational. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 24 funded 3 and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs.

The nursery opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:15 Tuesday and Thursday, and from 09.15 to 14.45 Monday, Wednesday and Friday, when children can stay for a packed lunch.

Eleven staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level two or three, four of whom have a Montessori qualification. Four staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The nursery has recently achieved accreditation by the Montessori Education UK. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Merrydays Montessori nursery provides good quality care for children. The nursery provides a warm and welcoming environment for children, where they are settled and enjoy their time. The nursery is committed to staff development and provides training opportunities for all staff. The staff work well as a team to ensure all the children receive appropriate support and their individual needs are met.

The staff give a high priority to ensuring all children are included, valued and encouraged to develop to their full potential. Staff show a generally good awareness of health and safety issues, promoting safe use of equipment and materials and actively encouraging good hygiene. However, arrangements to ensure children cannot access hot radiators are not fully effective.

Children are provided with an excellent range of activities and play opportunities. They show confidence, independence and sustained interest in the stimulating and well presented activities that effectively support their learning and developmental needs. There is a relaxed and calm atmosphere, staff work directly with the children, helping them feel settled and secure. They form caring relationships with the staff and each other and good behaviour is valued and actively encouraged. Children are provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity through a variety of mediums, which are planned and provided by the nursery.

Positive relationships have formed between staff and the parents. Displays, newsletters and folders are used effectively to provide general information about the nursery and parents are encouraged to contribute their own ideas and suggestions. Parents and staff share information on children's progress and ideas on to help support this. Parents report they are very happy with the care their children receive.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the registered person agreed to ensure all low level glass met safety standards. Safety film has been applied within the agreed timescale to all low level glass and therefore now meets safety standards.

What is being done well?

- The setting is committed to improving the standards of care and education for children. Staff are provided with good opportunities to update their own skills and knowledge of working with children.
- Staff plan and provide an interesting and well presented range of activities and first hand experiences to enable children to make choices, investigate and use their imagination in their play.
- Staff create a calm and relaxed atmosphere and use praise and explanation effectively to help children behave well and show care and concern for each other and their surroundings.
- Well maintained furniture, equipment and play materials are used effectively to provide a wide and readily accessible range of stimulating activities, including use of displays and resources reflecting diversity.
- Parents receive useful information about the nursery and its provision and are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. Children's key workers aim to keep parents informed of their child's progress, current topics and suggestions on how they can support their children's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- children's safety, in relation to the radiator in the children's bathroom being inaccessible to children.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
6	Ensure hot radiators are made safe.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Merrydays Montessori nursery serves the local and surrounding areas well. It provides a stimulating and caring environment where children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The teaching in the nursery is very good. Staff have a clear understanding of the early learning goals and how to help children learn, using methods inspired by the Montessori philosophy. The curriculum is planned to help children progress in all areas at their own pace. Staff understand each child's stage in learning because they observe them closely and record their progress daily. These records ensure that plans match the programme to children's needs, with extra support or challenge if required. There are good ratios and children receive good individual attention. Children are praised for their efforts which gives them confidence and children's concentration is very good for their age.

Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear commitment by the owner to improve the care and education for all of the children. She provides staff with clear direction and welcomes their input into every day plans. Staff work well as a team and are aware of children's individual needs. There are regular opportunities for all staff to participate in on going training.

The partnership between the nursery and the parents is very good and supports the children's learning well. Parents receive good general information about the programme and the activities through a brochure, parent's notice board, newsletters and good access to staff. The Montessori philosophy, which underpins learning in the nursery, is clearly explained to them. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through talking to staff daily, seeing the records of that progress and attending meetings to discuss children and learn about the nursery's aims. The nursery invites parents to visit the nursery to observe their child and to assist on outings.

What is being done well?

- The clear commitment by the owner to improve the care and education for all children, such as welcoming and implementing suggestions from the advisory teacher and the development and updating of staff's knowledge and skills through regular training opportunities.
- Children's ability to maintain their concentration levels when involved in an activity. This is illustrated clearly when children use and handle the good quality accessible and stimulating resources.
- Children are able to freely choose activities and resources to suit their needs.
- Children's ability to use mathematical language to describe and compare position, shape, size and quantity.

- Parents are provided with good quality information about the nursery, the educational provision provided and their children's achievements.

What needs to be improved?

- Provision for children to see written words and communicating systems such as braille and signing.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the nursery has made very good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified.

The staff have found effective ways to engage children to talk about their families, past and present events in lives through snack and lunchtimes. Children are able to chat to teachers and each other as they work and are keen to share news and experiences upon arrival, when drawing or painting and in the role-play area.

The nursery now has an inviting book area, which is freely accessible to the children and supported by staff at all times. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books supported by story sacs and puppets. Books are also placed by displays throughout the nursery to support and extend the themes.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are working very well independently and in groups. They are confident, enthusiastic and well behaved. Children have many opportunities to explore the living world around them and show care and concern for staff and children in the setting. They concentrate and are able to persist at an activity for an extended period of time. Children are forming good relationships with adults and peers and are able to take turns and share.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children listen well to stories and songs and have access to a good variety of books. They are able to handle them carefully and can predict what comes next or how the story might end. Reading skills are promoted well and children are aware that print carries meaning. Children attempt writing in a variety of ways as they make shopping lists and engage in activities such as puzzles and sand writing to increase their hand-eye-co-ordination, and begin to form recognisable letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are able to use mathematical language confidently to support their learning when describing shape, position, size and number. They can count and recognise numbers from 1-10 and more able children count and recognise numbers up to 20. Children can recognise and recreate simple patterns as they place beads on rods and use bricks and blocks to build garages big enough to take cars. Resources for mathematical development are excellent. Children can recognise and name 2d and 3d shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children show curiosity and use facial expression through exploration of materials and movement. Children explore and investigate well using varied resources to support their learning, such as globes and interactive displays. Children have excellent opportunities to make independent choices. They are able to use simple and more complex equipment such as the tape recorder and computer. The staff also address a good range of festivals to effectively promote children's understanding of cultures.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move confidently and safely and have opportunities to develop their large motor skills using balancing beams and their fine motor skills using scissors, pegs and glue sticks. Children are given many opportunities to develop their hand-eye-co-ordination through a variety of practical experiences such as putting paper together with paper clips and weaving. Children are aware of their own physical needs, such as needing a drink.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children show interest and respond in a variety of ways using all of their five senses, especially well featured in the main room, including listening to calming and relaxing background music whilst concentrating on their chosen activities. Children begin to learn about different colours and shades as they use the Montessori equipment. They are able to explore colour and texture as part of the stimulating art and craft techniques and enjoy using their imagination through music and role-play.

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: Plan more opportunities for children to see written words such as signs, notices and labelling of resources and plan opportunities for children to become aware of communicating systems such as braille and signing.

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.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.