

The Village Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 507891
Inspection date 24/03/2011
Inspector Melissa Cox

Setting address Cock Lane, Bradfield, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 6HW

Telephone number 0118 9744643 (school)

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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).

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

The Village Montessori Nursery School opened in 1992 and is independently owned. It is situated in the rural village of Bradfield Southend between Newbury and Reading and operates from a purpose built building. The nursery school is open during term-time only, from 9.00am until 3.30pm on Monday to Thursday and Friday 9.00am - 12.15pm. Children attend a variety of sessions. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. There are 55 children on roll, from two years to under five years. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of early education for three- and four-year-olds. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs ten members of teaching staff of whom five are qualified to degree level and all hold either relevant early years or recognised Montessori qualifications. In addition, one member of staff holds Early years professional status. The nursery is accredited by Montessori Education UK and receives support from the Local Authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are offered an excellent range of experiences which capture their imagination and support their learning highly effectively, ensuring that they make excellent progress towards the early learning goals, given their age, ability and starting points. The nursery is wholly inclusive and each child is valued and respected. Staff are well qualified and totally committed to ensuring that the unique needs of each child are clearly identified and met. Partnerships with parents are of high quality, and the setting works successfully with other agencies. The nursery has an excellent capacity to maintain continuous improvement as staff are highly motivated and committed to using reflective practice and effective self-evaluation to drive their 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:

- supporting children's early literacy skills further by using a consistent approach to the teaching of letter sounds.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Excellent safeguarding practice and the rigorous routines and procedures are carried out that protect children from harm. Employment procedures are robust and ensure all staff working with children are suitable to do so, with appropriate measures taken to ensure ongoing staff suitability. Staff have an excellent awareness of issues that may give rise to concerns regarding abuse or neglect, and they have a very good understanding of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures for the protection of children. All staff undertake safeguarding training, which ensures they are very confident in implementing the setting's own procedures in order to protect children in their care. The range of comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures and other relevant documentation is reviewed as part of the nursery's overall evaluation process to ensure children's safety, welfare and health are rigorously maintained and given high priority. All aspects of the setting are scrutinised thoroughly in order to identify and address any potential hazards. Being safe and enabling children to take positive levels of risk is managed very well by staff. This enables children to be confident in using tools and equipment and to be informed about safe practices and protecting themselves.

High quality resources, effective staff deployment and key-worker system ensure that children are well supervised and supported at all times. Children experience an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, for example, staff plan very well to ensure that children develop a thorough understanding of the natural world and the rural environment in which they live as children access the newly developed forest school garden. The layout of the rooms provides children with a vibrant, stimulating environment where toys and play materials are arranged to plan, support individual enjoyment and strongly encourage independence. The setting is led by an energetic, highly-motivated and extremely enthusiastic management team who embrace the process of self-evaluation and demonstrate a dynamic approach towards continuous improvement. All those involved in the setting are passionate about the service they provide, sharing a clear vision of what they want to achieve, embedding ambition and driving improvement. Practitioners work highly efficiently as a team, are well qualified and regularly attend training in order to develop their knowledge and expertise, enhancing further the outstanding provision. There is a strong culture of reflective practice within the setting, and all staff are actively involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the provision. Self-evaluation is extremely good, and is well focused on identifying improvements that will maintain high quality outcomes for children in all areas. The expertise and views of parents are highly valued and sought by staff. As a result, parents feel they do have a voice and play a vital role in their children's care and development, that their views are important. Staff use their discussions and observations of children, and verbal and written feedback from parents, to ensure plans for the future respect their views.

The nursery successfully builds and supports extensive partnerships with parents. They gather daily information through verbal exchanges and use questionnaires to allow parents to share their opinions and ideas. The nursery have clear systems in

place for gathering information about children's learning from their starting points and children's learning journeys and achievements are formally shared with parents at regular meetings with staff. Clear and effective systems are used to build complete pictures of each child which actively support staff to meet children's diverse learning and welfare needs. Children with special educational needs and disabilities are supported most comprehensively by extremely knowledgeable staff who liaise closely with other professionals, helping children reach their potential. The excellent approach taken by the nursery to offer a consistent and inclusive environment promotes positive communication with other agencies and parents to enhance children's abilities to reach their potential. There is a strong relationship with the local schools and transitional arrangements are very well organised.

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

Children make consistently excellent progress towards the early learning goals, relative to their starting points, because staff make very effective use of their observations of children in planning activities that is built firmly upon pupils earlier learning, ensuring progressive challenge and breadth. Children's preferred learning styles are identified and staff ensure that resources are organised very well to support these. For example, children demonstrate high levels of confidence in using tools and have excellent opportunities to practise these skills in different contexts. Processes of monitoring children's progress in learning are extremely effective in recognising their individual achievements, and identifying the next steps in each child's learning and development plan. The nursery is based on Montessori philosophy and the staff team have seamlessly combined this with the Early Years Foundation Stage ensuring that children's individual needs are exceptionally well met. The nursery has developed systems that successfully and effectively allow staff to support children to be completely free to explore, experiment, discover and travel along their unique learning journeys.

Children are eager and enthusiastic learners who show they feel safe by their strong capacity for independent learning. They are very confident communicators who are keen to share their thoughts and ideas with others. For example, they compare the shape and weight of a selection of natural resources in a display or demonstrate determination as they solve a complex threading activity, sharing the experience with others. They are developing extremely good skills for the future and excellent use is made of everyday technology to enhance children's awareness of the wider world. Children practise and consolidate their language skills as staff sit with them providing discrete support and direction. They are making excellent progress in literacy, confidently recognising and linking sounds to letters and making excellent use of these skills in their homework books. Staff are developing their support in this area to ensure that sounds are correctly modelled to ensure the smooth transition to school. Number skills and problem solving are managed very effectively through the children's daily activities. They count, make connections, sort objects, sequence and use weights and measure. Children gain confidence from consistent, familiar adults who praise their attempts and achievements as they gain pencil control or recognise and name numbers. Children

are engrossed as they build with construction sets or join in with stories brought to life as they are read by animated staff.

Adults invite children in small groups to consider what they know, so helping the consolidation of information and encouraging each child in turn to speak. Children have a rapidly growing knowledge of how things work and the skills they will need in the future. Children learn about the wider world as they make bird feeders and proudly hang them in the garden for the birds. They explore early science and know that magnets repel and attract and construct simple electrical circuits during their small group activities. Children understand how to keep themselves safe and demonstrate a strong sense of self-reliance. They build strong and secure relationships with adults they know well. Children support and care for each other, they sit sociably together and chat to each other and adults who sit with them during lunch. They make a positive contribution to the running of the nursery by clearing away the resources they have used when they have finished an activity or laying the table for their peers at snack time. The consistent boundaries and the routines in place provide all the children with knowledge of acceptable behaviour and as a result their behaviour is exemplary.

Children's understanding of diversity, difference and similarities is reinforced by the full integration of all children in every activity and the celebration of a range of annual festivals and special events, including birthdays. They learn to respect and value their own culture, as well as those of other children they know, establishing a positive foundation for future relationships.

The flexible daily routine provides children with an abundance of free play time which allows them space to explore, experiment and discover in the secure environment. Being outside throughout the year involves the children in the changing seasons and what that means to the plants and animals. This includes children engaging fully in physical activities, providing children with daily exercise and fresh air. The varied opportunities for the children to use the wide range of equipment and resources fully promotes their physical play and skills and is excellent in developing their confidence and independence. Children's health is well promoted and there are clear sickness procedures that are shared with parents, combined with extremely good health and hygiene practice from staff, protect children from the risk of illness and cross infection. The setting promotes a healthy eating policy and ensures children are offered a good selection of fresh fruit at snack time. Parents support this by providing packed lunches for their children that are wholesome and nutritious.

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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
--	---

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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

