

Willow Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY319777
Inspection date	26/06/2009
Inspector	Janet Fairhurst
Setting address	Ryton Community Centre, Ryton Village, Ryton, Tyne and Wear, NE40 3QP
Telephone number	0191 4131929
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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).

Description of the setting

Willow Montessori Nursery opened in 2006 and operates from three rooms within a community centre in Ryton, in the west of Gateshead. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a fully enclosed and secure outdoor play area.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 41 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 68 children on roll. The nursery employs 12 members of staff, of who 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy of education and receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Staff work closely together with parents so they clearly know the individual needs of each child. Children's right to choose, make decisions and voice their thoughts and opinions is supported well so that they are fully included and develop a strong sense of belonging and self-esteem. Effective policies and procedures ensure the safety and welfare of the children attending the nursery. All required records are maintained, although some lack specific details. There are good systems for self-evaluation in place, which enables staff to improve the quality of care they provide; this results in good continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve the systems of registration to clearly show children's actual hours of attendance
- develop written risk assessments further by including all specific outings undertaken
- continue to develop links with other practitioners providing Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in order that all relevant information is shared and to ensure continuity in children's care, learning and development.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for and safeguarded by suitably qualified and vetted staff who are attentive and caring. Strong enthusiastic leadership from the manager with regular discussion ensures that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together. Effective safeguarding procedures are in place to protect children from possible abuse and the appropriate recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure they are cared for by suitable people. All required paperwork is in place, however, daily registers do not include children's hours of

attendance, so that they can be safely accounted for at all times.

All necessary procedures and policies are in place so that the setting is managed efficiently and safely to meet the needs of all children. Staff members are well deployed to enable children to move freely, play independently and use all areas of learning imaginatively. Staff ensure that children play and explore in an environment that has been thoroughly risk assessed. However, although staff follow appropriate measures to ensure children's safety during specific outings these risk assessments are not recorded. The nursery's partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents receive detailed information when the placement begins and they are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. Displays on the notice board enable parents to have access to information such as policies and procedures and written and photographic evidence of some of the activities the children have taken part in. There are also a number of useful opportunities for parents to share relevant information with staff to enable them to meet their individual needs. For example, daily diaries for babies, the wipe board and more formal parents meetings where they have opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their child's key worker.

There are clear links with the local school to ensure that there is a smooth transition between the settings and so information is transferred about each child's needs. However, systems for sharing information with other settings attended by the children are not yet fully established to enable everyone to work together efficiently in promoting children's welfare, learning and development. Effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision, which clearly identify strengths and targets for further improvements.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, which is incorporated into the Montessori learning. Planning and assessment of children's learning is well organised as staff show a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A stimulating environment is provided which enables children to freely select their own resources, which include a range of natural and sensory materials. Children lead and direct their own play, make choices and grow in confidence. They become independent from a young age as they choose from a wide range of Montessori resources. Staff know the children very well and the relationships with individual children are very good. As a result, the activities and experiences provided are well matched to children's needs and interests.

Children happily participate in a range of activities that help them to become curious learners. They are helped to make sense of what they see, hear, smell and touch. For example, as they look at books, squeeze play dough, and explore sand and water. Children are developing self-esteem and are very proud of their achievements, such as paintings and drawings. They involve themselves in many problem-solving activities as they count and sort objects, name colours and shapes and fit puzzles together. Staff interact with children in a way that develops their language by asking open-ended questions. Outdoor play is a central feature of the

nursery day and children make the most of the facilities to play out in the fresh air, learn new skills and enjoy investigating and exploring their surroundings.

Staff use appropriate opportunities to help children extend their experiences such as going for a walk to the local nature reserve and planting varieties of produce in the garden, such as potatoes, strawberries and herbs. Children's freedom to play outdoors reflects in their good physical control as they access the wide range of outdoor activities offered that build on and extend their balance, coordination and spatial awareness. Children use their imaginations well. Following on from their own observations of workmen repairing the road they enthusiastically dig in the soil working collaboratively to make a pathway using the spades, wheelbarrow and sweeping brushes.

Children name letters and can put them together to form familiar words, such as their own name. They develop a very good understanding of mathematical concepts as they learn to count, recognise shapes, explore size and volume through a wide range of activities both indoors and outdoors. Children learn about the wider world as they celebrate some festivals from their own culture and that of others, make trips out into the community and welcome visitors to the setting. Opportunities for them to explore the wider world are very good, for example, the current topic is the rainforest. From this the children learn about the habitat of animals and whether they live in the undergrowth or in trees. They talk about the variety of animals and many children recognise and can name unusual creatures that live there. Staff are very sensitive to babies' early attempts at communication holding them close, ensuring they have plenty of eye contact whilst chatting and responding to them with praise and repetition. All children show a love of books. Children become increasingly confident communicators, becoming aware of text as they share books and listen to stories, which then prompts discussion and the introduction of new words, such as title, author and illustrator.

The development of children's social skills and independence is a particular strength in the setting. They are provided with a mix of activities that reflect the Montessori educational approach such as life skills, music and movement, pre-reading and writing, sensory play and number skills. Children's fine motor skills are encouraged through activities, such as pouring, transferring, threading, buttoning and zipping, which lead onto skills such as pre-writing. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they practise fire safety drills and learn to handle equipment safely because staff guide them diligently. Staff have completed relevant first aid training which enables them to provide appropriate care for children in the event of a minor accident. Children's behaviour is very good because they clearly understand what is acceptable. Their good health is successfully promoted in all areas. They competently wash and dry their hands at appropriate times and enjoy a range of healthy snacks. Lunchtimes are very enjoyable, sociable occasions where children sit with staff at small tables and engage in lively conversation.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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