



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY222657

DfES Number: 521403

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/03/2004
Inspector Name Chris Gregson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Wivenhoe Montessori Childrens House
Setting Address The Pavilion
King George V Playing Fields
Wivenhoe Colchester
Essex
CO7 9QA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name First Steps Montessori Ltd 4304559

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name First Steps Montessori Ltd
Address The Coach House
Gunn Lane, Moorside
Colchester
Essex
CO1 2TJ

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

Wivenhoe Montessori Children's House opened in 1997. It operates from one room in a converted sports pavilion with an attached enclosed garden in Wivenhoe. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 40 children from 2 to under 5 yearson roll. This includes 26 funded three-year-olds and 6 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:45 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 09:00 to 15:30 on Tuesday and Thursday.

There are eight part time staff working with the children. Over half the staff have recognised early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. There is one member of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

The nursery works in accordance with Montessori principles which are the foundation for this group's philosophy.

How good is the Day Care?

Wivenhoe Montessori Children's House provides good care for children.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the very smooth running of the nursery and ensure that effective use is made of staff, space and resources. Staff are highly qualified. The premises are clean, bright and attractive and there are many colourful displays in the hallway and classrooms. Children have excellent independent access to a wide range of toys and Montessori resources on the low wooden shelves. Outside there is an enclosed garden with an area for wheeled toys

as well as a grassed area for physical games.

Safety is a high priority. Equipment is checked and risk assessments carried out. Staff are aware of health, good hygiene and first aid to ensure children are cared for safely. Good links are maintained with the local health visitor. Child protection procedures are explained to parents and understood by staff to ensure children are protected. Children who need extra help are fully supported and staff work closely with families and professionals to provide for the children's specific needs. Children freely access their own snacks during the session and have the option to stay for a packed lunch.

There is an effective system to ensure all staff observe and record children's progress. Staff provide an excellent range of Montessori equipment and well-planned, stimulating activities. They have a good understanding of behaviour management, and children respond well. Staff are very good role models and demonstrate respect to all.

Partnership with parents is very good. Information for parents is very comprehensive and of a high standard. Parent's views are welcome and valued.

What has improved since the last inspection?

N/A

What is being done well?

- Children are provided with an excellent range of activities that promote positive images and introduce opportunities for them to develop an understanding and acceptance of their own and different cultures.
- Staff talk and listen to the children and help them to settle quickly into the daily routine. Children are supported by staff who enable them to become confident and secure in their environment.
- Documentation is of very high quality and ensures that staff and parents are informed of the ethos and practice of the nursery.
- Partnership with parents is very good. Management and staff value parents' opinions and views. Parents are confident in the staff and know that they can always share their children's progress or any relevant information for their care and development.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

Management and staff help children to fully develop their confidence and independence by providing a warm and secure environment. Staff are friendly and approachable and are positive and respectful of all backgrounds and abilities. They value what each child has to offer and give frequent reassurance, encouragement and praise.

What needs to be improved?

- the special needs statement, to reflect the excellent practice in the group.

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
10	Review and update the special educational needs statement in line with recent legislation and advice.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at Withenhoe Montessori Children's House is of high quality. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. The nursery offers a curriculum based on the Montessori method of teaching. Children receive excellent instruction and guidance in the use of special materials and equipment. They are actively involved in making their own choices within the planned environment based on real life activities. Children work individually, in small groups or in a whole group, and staff constantly encourage children to observe and explore. Behaviour is very good and children are reminded of right and wrong by very positive, supportive staff.

Staff observe children and, although using a Montessori based assessment system to record children's progress, they ensure that all areas of learning are covered. The owner has produced an excellent document to demonstrate how this is linked to the stepping stones for the Foundation Stage. Staff clearly identify the children's next steps and regularly share assessment records with parents. They use information from parents to help with the planning of their children's activities.

The leadership and management of the nursery is very good. Appraisals are an integral part of staff development and there is a strong commitment to raising standards through training. There are many ideas for future development and a strong ethos for the nursery to constantly strive to improve and provide a very high standard and solid foundation of early education.

Partnership with parents is very good. The ethos of the nursery is that the parent's role is fundamental and parents are encouraged to come into the classroom and share their culture, knowledge and skills.

What is being done well?

- Children are very confident and independent. Staff enable them to develop their learning skills and desire to explore and learn, encouraging them to become lifelong independent learners.
- Staff skilfully use a variety of different methods, activities and outings to reinforce learning in all areas of the curriculum using Montessori methods and resources, supplemented where appropriate, by imaginative play as seen in the very well resourced post office.
- Children's behaviour is very good. Staff act as positive role models. They build children's self esteem through the ethos of respect, support and gentle encouragement.
- Staff work very well together, supporting each other and the children, as a

balanced multi-skilled team.

- Children with specific needs are respected and supported to enable them to fully develop their potential.

What needs to be improved?

- regular opportunities for children to use the computers, to enable them to develop their ICT skills.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up to address the point for consideration identified at the previous inspection.

The children can now see and care for African snails as classroom pets. These create interest and excitement for the children.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are very confident, excited and eager to learn. They effectively chose their individual activities or work together in a whole group. Very good relationships are formed with their peers, staff and other adults. Good manners and respect are evident. They take turns and share through playing games, such as the mirroring activity and singing the 'welcome song'. Children confidently talk about their families and welcome visitors into their group.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are excellent communicators and can take turns to listen and talk. They learn letter sounds through activities such as the moveable alphabet. Children know how to use books and listen intently at story time. They see an excellent range of the written word and can write their names on their work. Children develop good hand eye co-ordination and fine motor skills through various practical life activities and the frames.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently count to ten and beyond through practical activities such as the spindle box and action songs. They recognise numerals through sandpaper number activities and know the number of their house. They add and take away through various practical activities such as making sandwiches and using finger puppets while singing a number song. Children compare size, length, depth and shapes through using cylinders and rods.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore a variety of materials through interesting activities and experiments. They confidently join, build and use a range of tools, materials and recycled boxes. They competently push buttons on keyboards, telephones and use the mouse to move through programmes. Children talk about past events, such as a visit to the local sorting office, going for walks in the park and drawing their own village map. They celebrate festivals and other cultures through visitors and topic work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children confidently and safely move around the classroom. They enthusiastically run, jump, ride wheeled toys, hop, climb up and slide down and move under and over the outdoor play equipment. Inside action songs involve stretching, balancing and catching skills. Children show awareness of space as they move around the room, make a circle or line up to come inside. They competently use a range of equipment and small tools to shape malleable materials such as clay in craft activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children learn colours and textures through collage work and using a variety of materials and paints. They develop their creativity and use imagination through excellent opportunities that staff provide in role-play, junk modelling, action songs, painting and music. They enthusiastically play musical instruments and listen to instruments played by adults. Children explore their senses through the sensorial materials enabling them to touch, feel, smell and taste.

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:
- develop the programme for technology using the newly acquired suite of computers to further enhance the already good provision.

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.