

Peacock Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251780
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Inspector	Susan Smith
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Peacock Montessori Nursery opened in 1999. The nursery is situated in the village of Stuston on the Suffolk/Norfolk boarder near to Diss. It operates from purposely converted buildings next to the family farmhouse. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 and the setting offers out of school care between 15:15 and 18:00 during school term time only. All children share access to secure outdoor play areas.

The nursery serves the local and surrounding area and a maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 39 children aged from eight months to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for nursery education.

The nursery employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery reflects the Montessori ethos and methods and receives support from the Local Authority. It is currently working towards the Suffolk quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected because staff are aware of good hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infection. For example, children are reminded to wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet and usually staff explain the reason for doing this. Consequently the risk of cross-infection is minimised and children stay healthy.

Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because staff are aware of individual children's health care needs and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. In addition, most staff have a current first aid certificate and have attended food hygiene training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedure to follow to maintain the health of the children.

Children are nourished with a variety of healthy foods for snack. They choose from a range of fresh fruit and vegetables, which are often purchased by the children and staff from the local farm shop. Children benefit from meal and snack times, that are social occasions, where they sit together with staff. They are encouraged to cut fruit for themselves, this helps them to develop an understanding of healthy eating habits. Babies are given close contact by being held when bottle feeding, keeping them secure. Children's individual dietary needs are met well with good recording procedures in place to ensure all staff are fully aware of children who have special dietary requirements. Children have free access to their beakers throughout the session to ensure they are not thirsty.

Children's physical skills are promoted through regular outdoor play and walks in the community, which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy walks around the farm to visit animals or go to the farm shop. Younger children are taken out in the buggies so they can enjoy the sights and fresh air. An enclosed secure play area is available for children to use large apparatus and imaginary play. Children develop fine muscle skills as they manipulate dough, use scissors, pencils, and brushes with increasing skill. Children are able to rest or be more active according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in a secure environment, with high staff ratios ensuring that they are supervised at all times. They are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment, which is well maintained. Risks to children are minimal as good safety measures are in place, staff are aware of hazards and risk assessments are conducted. Children learn about safety by taking part in regular fire evacuation procedures, which are recorded. Sleeping babies can rest safely as they are monitored on a regular basis.

There is an excellent range of high quality toys and equipment which are well maintained. Children are able to access these independently from tables, shelves, trays and boxes situated at their height. This enables children to make many of their own choices, increases their independence and helps them to organise their own play. Toys and equipment for younger children and babies are stimulating, they provide an extensive range of sensory opportunities and experiences both indoors and out.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. They are aware of recording and reporting procedures and fully understand their responsibilities. A child protection policy is in place which all staff know how to implement if they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settle well, or are supported by staff and their carer's to do so, in the welcoming and stimulating environment. Children spend their time playing purposefully with a balanced range of toys and activities that motivate and interest them. Toys and resources are well organised to enable children to select activities, initiate their own play and follow their own interests. Children make positive relationships with staff who join in with children's play to promote their interest, for example, while playing with the dough.

Staff are aware of the differing needs of the small number of children aged under three years on roll. They have started to include 'Birth to three matters' in their children's records of progress. Staff informally adapt activities and their interactions to encourage younger children's participation. Babies have access to a range of natural materials and become engrossed in exploring the different textures and shapes within the treasure baskets. However, there is no clear planning of activities for babies and young children spend long periods of time out of their base room with the older children where activities do not always meet their needs.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning incorporates Montessori equipment and principles with the Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and they all contribute to the theme based planning. Topics are broken down and clearly linked to the Early Learning Goals in weekly plans. However, these are not broken down to link with stepping stones to ensure that children's individual needs are met. Although, adult focussed activities do include adaptation to ensure they provide sufficient challenges and suit children's individual needs, staff do not consistently focus on evaluating the intended learning outcome.

Children are motivated to learn through a range of activities which offer sufficient challenge and capture their interest. They are warmly welcomed into the colourful and child-friendly environment by caring staff. Children's behaviour is good as they work as part of a group, sharing equipment fairly. They are aware of the expectations and boundaries in place, for example walking indoors and lining up before going outside.

Children are becoming increasingly independent as they learn to manage many tasks for themselves. They select and carry equipment and put on aprons for messy play. Children play extremely well together in small groups, they regulate their play and congratulate one another on their achievements. They are making strong friendships and actively seek out others to join in with their play.

Children have good communication skills and express themselves with confidence during the sessions. They happily chat to staff as well as their peers about what they did on holiday or at home. They have good opportunities to recognise their names through named coat pegs, a registration peacock and labelled draws to put personal belongings in. Children enjoy listening and responding to books and stories at circle time and the use of props encourages their participation. They looked at books, carefully turning the pages and making up their own stories which they share with their friends.

Most children can count confidently to 10 and they take part in many planned and spontaneous activities to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, while playing with the 'Jelly Bath' enthusiastically predicting how many cups of 'Jelly' it would take to fill a larger container.

Children are keen to discover about the world around them. Planned themes develop their awareness of a range of cultures and traditions, taking part in celebrations such as Diwali, birthdays, Hanukkah and Christmas. Children have good opportunities to explore the natural world. Staff have recently developed the courtyard area to offer children first hand experiences of growing and caring for plants and they plan to hang bird feeders to the wall to provide children with opportunities to watch the birds.

Creativity and expression is developed with activities such as role play and children use their imaginations. For example, they delight in being a waitress in a café and putting play food in the microwave to cook. However, staff do not always support this type of play. Children have opportunities to handle a range of media such as jelly, paint, soil, and dough. Although, they have opportunities to paint and stick, they cannot always access a range of craft materials independently to express their creativity further.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children in this nursery are highly valued and have a good sense of belonging. The staff get to know all the children very well, supporting them and enabling them to flourish. Children develop a sense of belonging as they confidently find their own drawer to put their comforters in during the day. They learn to care for each other through sharing resources and making suggestion to each other when completing the puzzles. Children confidently express themselves and are able to tell others when they do not like something they are doing.

All children and their families receive good levels of support from the staff enabling them to make good progress. Children gain respect for themselves and others as they learn about their local community and the wider world and value and celebrate their differences and similarities.

Children enjoy celebrating important events in each other's lives and those of adults in the group, especially during birthday celebrations. Children have access to a developing range of meaningful resources to promote their understanding of diversity, including books, puzzles and dolls reflecting positive images of disability and cultural differences.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is good throughout the day. Staff provide children with good role models. They are calm, consistent, polite and reinforce good behaviour very positively.

Children benefit because the staff understand the importance of working in partnership with parents, ensuring their individual needs are met and they can make progress in their development. The staff are friendly and approachable and get to know the families well.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. Staff have built a good rapport with parents and exchange information on a daily basis regarding any issues that may have arisen, this ensures continuity of care. Detailed information about the nursery is displayed and available to the parents at all times. This includes planning to ensure they are informed about the curriculum. Parents and carers are kept up to date through

the notice boards and newsletters. Records and profiles are available at any time for parents to see and contribute to. This raises parental awareness of the Foundation Stage. However, the complaints policy does not include the requirement to maintain a log of complaints which is available to parents on request.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care, welfare and learning is promoted well as they are cared for by a committed and experienced staff team. Effective recruitment and induction procedures are in place. These ensure children are cared for by suitable staff that are appropriately vetted and that have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Most of the required documentation is in place to support the nursery's practice. Staff ratios are good ensuring children receive high levels of support and individual attention when needed. Detailed records are kept on each child to ensure staff can provide for the needs of all children. Children, staff and visitors attendance are recorded daily. Currently the staff are reviewing their deployment and the use of space available to encourage children to further use the full range of activities on offer.

The leadership and management is good. Staff show commitment to the children's achievements in their learning and development, which is demonstrated by the children's enthusiasm and involvement in their learning. Regular staff meetings take place and daily discussions ensure that information is shared and all staff have opportunities to share their own ideas. Appraisals are carried out and any training identified is supported by the manager, encouraging staff development. There is good recognition of individual staff's skills within the team, resulting in confident staff who are proactive in ensuring an inclusive environment. Staff recognise how through regular self-evaluations they can monitor the effectiveness of the provision. For example, staff evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods through peer on peer observations. The information gained through these observations are discussed and used to ensure consistency in their practice.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to increase children's opportunities to pour drinks and serve snacks for themselves at snack time. The nursery is constantly reflecting on their practice and staff from the nursery have visited other settings to look at how they organise their snack time. Children have opportunities to pour water for themselves and to serve themselves with fruit. They are encouraged to cut the fruit under staff supervision which helps children to develop their hand eye coordination. Children are given the responsibility to give out cartons of milk and plates. This helps children to develop self-esteem.

At the last inspection, to improve the nursery education, the nursery was asked to develop the resources in the role play area. The nursery offers an extensive range of good quality role play equipment such as kitchen play with a microwave oven, sink and cooker. A range of appropriate utensils and pots and pans are available to support children's play. The children also have access to blankets which they like to play imaginary games with or snuggle up together on the floor. This enables children to follow their own ideas.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'
- review and update the complaints procedure to include the requirement to maintain a log of complaints which is available to parents on request.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the evaluation of learning objectives to ensure they consistently focus on the intended learning outcome
- ensure planning links to the stepping stones and provide more opportunities for children to explore their creativity.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk