

Childrens Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

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21/03/2011

Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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 Children's Montessori Nursery School is privately owned and registered in 1995. It operates from a dedicated building in the village of Gamlingay on the border of Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas and has strong links with the local primary school. The nursery is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery opens each weekday, during school term time, from 9am until 3pm, with various sessions and extended times, if required. A holiday club is offered during the school holidays, with the exception of the Christmas holidays, from 8am until 4pm.

Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions, with a maximum of 30 children attending the nursery at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage age group. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds and is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of child care staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 2 or above, including the manager of the setting who has Early Years Professional Status as well as a Qualified Teacher Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff create a warm and welcoming environment at the nursery. They have a good knowledge of each child's interests and needs, ensuring that every child feels included. Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage covers most of the areas of learning and children have good access to a range of resources that enable children to take part in experiences that promote good progress overall. Partnerships with parents, carers and others are good and therefore, continuity of care is promoted. Self-evaluation procedures are in place and management are able to demonstrate their strengths and areas for improvement, enabling them to make changes that will improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- request written parental permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 21/04/2011
- carry out a risk assessment for each type of outing 21/04/2011

that children take part in and review before embarking on each specific outing (safeguarding and promoting children's welfare).

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

- develop the educational programme for children's physical development, with particular reference to outside play and children's creative development, with particular reference to imaginative play
- provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks
- practise emergency evacuation drills and record details in a fire log book
- update the safeguarding and complaints policies to ensure that they are in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is generally sound as the setting demonstrates awareness for protecting children in their care. Most staff have attended additional safeguarding training and are aware of the signs of abuse. However, the written safeguarding policy and the complaints policy are not updated in line with current guidance. This means that parents are not made aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a child being at risk or a concern or complaint being raised. Therefore, children's safety is potentially affected. Staff carry out regular checks of the areas, used by children, to ensure that areas are safe and risks are therefore minimised. However, risk assessments are not completed for each outing that children taken part in and therefore, their safety is potentially affected. Management carry out stringent checks, for example, when taking on new staff, to ensure that staff members are suitable to work with children.

Children gain a suitable understanding of safety issues though ongoing explanations from staff and they are able to follow the expected Montessori code of behaviour and learn why this is important. However, children do not practise the setting's emergency evacuation procedure and this potentially could affect their safety. The established team are supported by the manager in attending further training and continue to improve their practice through regular appraisals and meetings. This helps to promote an environment where both staff and children develop positive attitudes to learning. Resources are used well to promote children's learning and development and children have good opportunities to make choices about their play as their learning is facilitated by purposeful activities that are spontaneously chosen by the child, as well as being adult-led and supported when appropriate.

All staff have a good understanding of anti-discriminatory practice, enabling them to review their policies and ensure that the service they provide is inclusive to all children and their families. They work closely with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and needs and consider this information when they are planning activities and play opportunities. For example,

children of all stages are planned for individually. Parents receive thorough information about their child's progress and activities, through newsletters, daily talks with staff and regular parent and staff consultation sessions. However, some parents state that they would like more regular information regarding the progress that their children are making. The setting also works well with others to ensure the continuity of children's care and promotion of their development. For example, they work closely with the local primary school, offering regular visits before the children start to help build their confidence and ensure that children are prepared for this transition. The setting's self-evaluation includes a formal written document and takes into consideration parental and child views and this enables staff to provide a service which is responsive to the needs of all children and parents.

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

Children make good progress in most areas of learning because staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and where this links into the Montessori ethos. They implement clear procedures for assessing children and utilise this information to inform activity planning, ensuring that children are offered individual activities that promote their development. The effective use of the key person system means that staff know the children well and can therefore provide appropriate support whenever needed. Children are encouraged to explore and develop their own play, through self-chosen activities and this appropriately extends children's knowledge and understanding. For example, children use a toy x-ray machine. They learn about the body's muscles and bones and show genuine interest in what the body's skeleton looks like under their skin. Planning is organised to effectively incorporate children's next steps and therefore, activities are tailored to meet the individual needs of the children attending.

Children feel valued and their play is enhanced as they have good opportunities for making independent choices and creating their own games. An example of this is where one child chooses some number cards to play with. She asks some friends if they want to play her game and they happily agree. The child then explains that they need to take it in turns, wear a blindfold and turn over a card, guessing what number is on it. The children do exactly this and as the third child takes their turn the child who made up the game tells them proudly 'you are all very good at this game'. Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning extended because staff join in with their play. For example, as children take part in their one to one work lessons they are encouraged by staff, who genuinely enjoy the interaction with the children. They naturally question children on the different things they are working on. For example, during some maths activities children are asked 'which is the shortest block' and 'how many can you count and if I take two away?'

Children have many opportunities to learn about the uses of information and communication technology, therefore, gaining valuable skills for the future. For example, they use a computer, mouse and keyboard independently, with ease and have many other resources to choose from, including digital cameras. They have opportunities for learning about life cycles as they take part in growing activities. However, opportunities for children to develop their physical development, whilst

playing outside, are limited because they are only offered a short time in the garden each day. Children's emotional development is promoted. They are settled and have built secure relationships with staff and each other. Children develop a good understanding of appropriate behaviour because they are offered clear explanations by staff and are encouraged to follow the expected code of behaviour. They learn about sharing, cooperation and negotiation as they work out turn-taking and help with tasks such as tidying up.

Children are developing a good understanding of diversity as they participate in a range of activities and play experiences to support this. For example, children learn about birthdays and festivals and staff ensure that the environment is inclusive for all children. Children enjoy taking part in role play activities, such as when they go to the 'hairdressers 'or take their babies for a walk in their push chairs. However, children have limited opportunities for this area of learning as they are only offered short periods of time with role play resources. Children's understanding of the relevance of healthy eating is not effectively promoted. For example, although they have fresh drinking water available, which they can help themselves to, they are not offered healthy balanced snacks. Children eat toast and/or biscuits most days and therefore, opportunities for them to eat fresh fruit are limited. Children are encouraged to follow hygiene routines which promote their health. However, parental permission is not obtained for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical treatment or permission. This potentially affects children's well-being.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met