

Saltwell Park Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Janet Fairhurst

Setting address The Den, Westfield Terrace, GATESHEAD, Tyne and Wear,
NE8 4LD

Telephone number 0191 477 1097

Email

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*.

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Description of the setting

The Saltwell Park Montessori is one of three provisions run by a private company. It opened in 2007 and operates from one main playroom in a former scout hut in Gateshead. The nursery is open each week day from 8am until 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 28 children may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 59 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Children come from a wide catchment area. The provision supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are 14 members of staff all of whom hold early years qualifications, two members of staff hold Early Years Professional Status. The provision offers a combination of Montessori and traditional methods of teaching.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very much welcomed and valued at the nursery and become totally involved in their play, responding readily to the friendly, reassuring approach given by staff. The nursery is committed to ensuring every child feels safe and secure which provides a firm basis for children to make good progress in their learning and development. Children's continuity in care is effectively maintained as staff form highly positive partnerships with parents and this, results in children feeling very settled and secure within the nursery, knowing their needs will be met. Evaluation systems are well established and used well to ensure that they sustain and build upon it's already existing high standards.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- implement the proposed plans to improve the assessment system which will allow children's next steps to be recorded and their progress to be clearly tracked.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted as staff are extremely confident and highly secure in their knowledge of safeguarding issues. Robust recruitment policies and procedures are in place, which include clear induction of new staff and ongoing staff appraisals. Rigorous risk assessment is in place and staff make daily checks on all areas before they are used by children, this ensures all potential hazards are minimised. A dedicated and enthusiastic staff team work together well to ensure all

children's individual needs and routines are met. Effective staff deployment and excellent staffing levels ensures very good levels of support for children's welfare and development. The staff team is well-trained as there is a strong focus on continued professional development, to drive future improvements.

A good range of Montessori and traditional toys, materials and resources are provided to meet the varying needs of the children attending. Most of them are made totally accessible to the children. Children know and follow clear routines and, although, staff ensure flexibility throughout the day occasionally their play can be interrupted by the need to tidy away toys or activities in preparation for snack time.

Superb partnerships are developed with parents and carers and information obtained from them is used exceptionally well by staff to get to know about children and plan for future learning opportunities. The flexible settling-in procedures are tailored to the individual needs of children and families which helps children feel secure during the transition from home to nursery. Children's progress and development is successfully shared through daily informal chats, sharing individual learning records and parents' evenings. For the older children a 'home to nursery book' has recently been introduced to widen the opportunities and to encourage parents to become more involved in their child's learning. This has been hugely successfully as the response from parents has been immense and significantly enhances partnership working. Staff intend to extend this and is looking at introducing a similar system for the younger children. 'Sweetcorn the travelling Ted' is a teddy bear and notebook which children eagerly take home and gives parents the opportunity to share children's adventures and activities from home. Parents speak very highly about the nursery and stated that the key strength is the overwhelming welcoming atmosphere and communication systems that keep them exceptionally well-informed. Good partnership with other professionals enables the nursery to nurture and support those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure measurable gains in their learning. This combined with the nursery's pro-active approach of offering reciprocal visits to staff from the local schools helps to support all children to make a smooth transition to school.

Staff are guided by a strong management team who have a clear vision for the setting. Reflecting regularly on their practice they demonstrate their commitment to providing very good levels of care and learning to help each child make achievements at their level of development. The nursery actively seek parents' views via annual questionnaires and through twice yearly parents evening, where any comments and ideas are valued to help improve the provision, as evidenced by the recent changes to the time in which lunch is served. Recommendations arising from the last inspection have been successfully addressed, thereby, continually improving the outcomes for children.

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

Staff are warm and caring and provide a nurturing environment where children and babies are confident very happy, settled and content. Staff has a secure understanding of their key children's abilities and interests which mean children achieve well. Planning is flexible, based firmly on the interests and ideas of the children. Staff make observations of children at play to re-affirm their individual interests and to establish their level of development. On the whole, they use this with great success to plan for children's continued learning and development across all areas of learning. The current developmental summary which is completed on a monthly basis makes clear links to the areas of learning and the learning outcomes, however, it does not show children next steps. Staff have identified this and described the plans that are in place to introduce a system to show this and also to help track children more effectively.

Children are developing a very good awareness of multicultural Britain as they celebrate various festivals, such as, Diwali and Chinese New Year. A good range of activities, toys and resources help children to appreciate difference, for example, dressing up clothes, dolls and puzzles. Children's learning is further enriched by staff as they teach children to count and sing songs in Spanish. In addition, children enjoy a range of visits and visitors planned to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world and the community they live in. For example, professions, such as, the doctor, dentist and policeman visit to talk about their roles and how they can help people. Children enjoy their visits to an adventure playground, the local flower shop and the local art gallery all of which help to develop their sense of community. Children enjoy dressing up and acting out the roles, such as, that of a princess. They are confident talkers and use a very good range of vocabulary and descriptive language to express their thoughts and feelings, for example, during shaving foam play they describe how the foam feels 'soft' and 'smells like peaches'. Babies learn that their voice and actions have effect on others, for example, as they respond to staff attention when they babble, gurgle or reach out with their hands when they want a little reassurance. All children enjoy stories and listen attentively. More able children recall narratives or predict what might happen next, whilst younger children listen and enjoy looking at the illustrations. Children freely access a range of mark making materials during their play which successfully develops their emergent writing and mark making skills. Children's understanding of mathematical concepts is fostered well. They learn about number, counting, size and simple problem solving through the range of Montessori materials, such as, the easy to hold grading sets. Staff make use of spontaneous opportunities to skilfully reinforce children's learning, such as, counting how many children are seated around the table. Children are caring for living things as they plant pea pods, cherry tomatoes and lettuce and learn about lifecycles, as they watch and wait for the chicks to emerge from their eggs. Information technology is used well to promote children's learning. Older children spell out familiar words using the key board helped as staff encourage them to sound out the letters.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They clearly know what is expected of them and

are very kind and caring to all their friends, which helps them to feel a strong sense of belonging. They are very polite to each other, reflecting the way they are treated by the staff. They are full of confidence and self-esteem as they proudly show their drawings, writing and art work to visitors and this is extended by staff's constant praise and encouragement. Children develop a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe whilst on the premises. Because children are so confident in daily routines, they know they must not run indoors or throw toys and they automatically put out their hands to help other children as they use the steps to go outdoors. This shows a mature responsibility and actively contributes to the safety of themselves and others. Planned activities are used to develop children's understanding further. For example, they learn how to cross the road safely when they go for local walks and they enjoyed a visit from a police officer, who talked to them about 'stranger danger'. In addition, a clear fire evacuation procedure has been identified and it is practised regularly by staff and children. This ensures everyone knows what to do in an emergency. Staff utilise the outdoor space and local venues exceptionally well to ensure children have the best opportunities to develop and enhance their physical skills. Children thoroughly enjoy a wide variety of nutritious, healthy snacks provided by the nursery. This combined with the effectiveness of the setting healthy eating policy which is embraced by all parents ensures children are provided with packed lunches that are well balanced 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?	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	1
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	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	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	2

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