

Childrens House Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 127682
Inspection date 05/07/2011
Inspector Susan Scott

Setting address Birling Village Hall, Snodland Road, Birling, West Malling,
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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*.

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Description of the setting

The Children's House Montessori Nursery operates from the village hall in the village of Birling, close to West Malling, Kent. The nursery has access to two enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery caters for children from the local area and the surrounding rural community.

It is open on Mondays to and Fridays from 9.30am until 12.30pm during school term time. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. The nursery can take 18 children aged from two to five years at each session. There are currently 26 children on roll. Of these, 22 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, though and none who speak English as an additional language attend at present. The owner/principal works with three other members of staff, who have level four Montessori qualifications and there is a student from London Montessori doing teaching practice three mornings a week. The nursery receives support from the local authority. The teaching in the nursery is strongly influenced by Montessori methods.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The uniqueness of each child is recognised by staff who provide good support for individuals, ensuring that all children make progress in their learning and development overall. Children feel very secure and confident because there are extensive systems in place to safeguard their welfare. They benefit from close working systems with a range of specialist services, well-organised activities and good staff support which take account of their individual interests and needs. Children's welfare is successfully promoted through well understood procedures and successful evaluation. The manager and staff work closely together to evaluate the provision and their capacity to keep improving is good. Children's good progress is underpinned by strong relationships with parents and carers and effective systems to involve and communicate with them.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure records are easily accessible and available for inspection by Ofsted (Documentation) 31/07/2011

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

- check that the safeguarding procedures are in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and procedures, and that all staff are able to implement them appropriately

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The owner and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding as they attend training and have established procedures for dealing with any concerns. The policy statement has not been updated recently and staff have not checked this reflects the latest information in their possession. The close working of the staff team ensures they are aware of safe practice and they are vigilant in their care of children. There are risk assessments and health and safety procedures in place to minimise identified hazards although on the day of the inspection some cleaning fluids had not been removed from the disabled/staff toilet until the inspector noticed these. However, there are daily checks and systems in place to check toys and resources and deal with any hazards, so that they do not impact on children's safety. There is easily accessible information provided for staff and parents on how to raise complaints or concerns and questionnaires used by the setting are used to address any improvements that can be made.

Children are cared for in a secure, attractive and well stimulating environment at all times. Play resources are interesting and used well to provide a range of play experiences that successfully enhance their learning. For example, the puzzles and the alphabet poster and cards are used with good staff support, enabling children to learn successfully and acquire skills they need for school. Staff adapt the play environment and resources to suit the children's individual interests and ages and stages of development. Children freely access plenty of interesting and versatile resources in the outside play areas, including bikes, butterfly nets and plants that they help to care for. There are varied resources reflecting diversity and showing different customs and cultures and staff confidently use these during everyday play. Children with additional or special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to make good progress and are supported by the attention and priority staff give to their individual needs.

The owner and staff have completed a self-evaluation and using the suggestions from parents to they identify improvements they intend to make; for example, the staff arrange events such as the family picnic and consultations to offer opportunities to parents for more contact and feedback. The continual review of provision allows staff to keep building upon the quality of the provision. For example, the recent establishment of a parent and toddler group has resulted in very successful settling in for new children at the nursery.

The partnership working with parents is outstanding. This is due to the meticulous attention paid to regular communication and cooperation with parents and carers and the nursery's willingness to work with a range of professionals to secure the highest levels of welfare possible for the children. The staff welcome a range of other professionals into the setting, including therapists and local authority advisors which supports children effectively. A good two-way flow of information

ensures staff regularly make parents aware of children's achievements and discuss any concerns they may have. Information is shared when children first begin at the nursery, and the use of frequent, shared assessments and unique stories enables continuing parental contributions. Parents benefit from frequent opportunities to access written and verbal information about their children's progress and achievements. The staff have extremely positive relationships with parents which enables them to work together to meet the needs of individual children. Parental contributions are valued and questionnaires are used and the resulting responses provide a focus for improvements. All parents spoken to at the inspection expressed their great satisfaction with the service they receive and described the strong progress their children had made due to the good efforts of staff.

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

Children settle quickly and happily into this safe environment when they first attend. They feel very secure in the setting because staff create a welcoming atmosphere and treat them with respect and consideration which promotes their feelings of trust. Staff use Montessori systems to structure support for children's learning and provide them with good access to a wide range of interesting and age/stage appropriate activities. They record observational assessments on children's progress against each area of learning. The staff construct good opportunities for children to develop their skills and understanding by identifying activities that can be used to support individuals and these are incorporated into plans and regular routines. As the group is small in number, children receive good attention and from staff know them well. Children benefit from the good staff ratio and receive sensitive and effective support to enable their progress. Plans are brief but flexible and staff take account of children's individual development and use the resources well to identify and support individuals. On day of inspection, very few of children's learning and development records were available as staff take these home to complete. This is a breach of a specific legal requirement, although the impact on the care children experience is minimal.

A strong emphasis is placed upon enabling children to develop their persona and social skills. The interesting activities and routines promote children's confidence and enable them to feel happy and secure in this welcoming environment where staff are respond positively to their needs. This makes them feel valued as staff are interested in them. Children's behaviour is very positive as they are sensitively reminded to be considerate and to share with each other if the need arises. Staff employ very positive strategies to manage children's behaviour, offering good role models so that the children's behaviour reflects the good role models of the staff who are attentive, kind but clear in their expectations.

Children develop an awareness of their own health by enjoying opportunities to discuss the foods they eat and they learn the benefits of a healthy diet. They enjoy growing plants such as carrots and beans. Children learn how to care for these so that they are able to harvest them to eat by making soup. Staff successfully support children's independence and promote opportunities for them to make their

own choices. For instance, children enjoy playing in the garden, using the sit and ride toys or they choose to play in with the smaller resources and some catch butterflies and moths in the net, building upon their understanding of the natural world. Children enjoy playing on the climbing apparatus and using balls for energetic play. This enables them to safely participate and enjoy their play while taking some risks when they climb and explore. They explore insects they find using magnifying boxes and learn how to care for living things.

Children freely select from the resources in the low units and sit at tables to engage in mark making, art and crafts, puzzles or exploration of small apparatus. This is successfully supported by the patience of the staff who provide encouragement to extend children's play and learning. For example, staff ensure that children understand how to complete puzzles properly and that they can use pencils and sensorial equipment competently. All children leave the setting with very good levels of confidence having developed skills for personal independence and self-care. The older children achieve good levels of literacy and numeracy and the local schools report that the children have made good progress. For example, older children experience writing for a purpose, and competently name their work. They enjoy the whole group times when they sing and listen to stories which they are eager to discuss with staff. They acquire a good understanding of numbers, numerals and quantity, which well supported by structured programmes of learning. Children enjoy their play and learning as staff recognise their abilities and acknowledge their achievements and extend their play by encouraging further contributions. For example, when sitting and playing a game based upon the alphabet, staff skilfully prompt and challenge children to match the letters on the poster and to identify other words beginning with the same sound.

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	2
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	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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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