



The New Montessori Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY330146
Inspection date	27 September 2006
Inspector	Jill Steer
Setting Address	Methodist Church, Tarring Road, WORTHING, West Sussex, BN11 4ET
Telephone number	01903 535412
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Registered person	The New Montessori Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

The New Montessori Pre-school is run by a committee. It was first registered in 1999 and moved to its current premises in 2006 at the Methodist Church in Worthing, West Sussex. A maximum of 52 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 08.00 to 17.00 during term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 41 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local community and may attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and four staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene practices through everyday routines and activities. The organisation of resources into specific areas encourages children to learn personal care and practical life skills. For example, they learn the correct way to wash their hands, particularly after using the toilet and before eating, and how to sneeze or cough into a handkerchief to reduce the spread of germs. Children are familiar with resources such as mops, brooms and dusters, which are stored to allow them independent access to clear up any spills, which they manage skilfully. A clear sickness policy is shared with parents so they know when to keep their children at home, which protects other's from infectious illness. Children are suitably cared for in the event of minor accidents as most staff have appropriate first aid qualifications.

Meal times are sociable occasions as some staff take the opportunity to sit with the children and talk about the food in their packed lunch boxes. They discuss for example, how the children will have lots of energy during the afternoon if they have eaten all their lunch. Children are encouraged to become independent through the use of a rolling snack system. This enables children to help themselves to a drink of water whenever they are thirsty, and they take a plate and cup to sit at the table when they feel ready for a snack. Staff provide them with a healthy choice of fresh or dried fruits, and plain biscuits which they prepare hygienically wearing gloves. Children sit together and chat as they drink, looking at the posters displayed highlighting a selection of nutritional foods. Once finished, children know the routine and automatically scrape any scraps into the slop bucket, and wash their own plate and cup, putting them on the rack to dry. All of which helps them learn real life skills and independence. However, children are not encouraged to wash either their hands or faces after eating, resulting in them playing, and going home unclean.

Children develop a very positive attitude to leading a healthy lifestyle, which includes physical exercise as they participate in a wide range of daily activities. Outdoors they gain control of their bodies as they negotiate the climbing frame, pedal the bicycles and scoot the scooters. Whilst indoors, they quickly become competent at balancing as they move across the classroom walking the taped line, or balancing along the beam. Because these are always in place, children make use of them almost without realising, and they nonchalantly cruise the length of the balance beam making their way to the next activity.

Resources and sequential activities help children become skilful at handling tools safely and with increasing control. For example they observe staff unscrewing lids from various jars and replace them, and then copy the movements for themselves, twisting their hands to screw the lids. They practice using scissors gradually, first learning how to handle them correctly and safely, progressing to snipping and cutting until they are able to cut shapes easily from a variety of materials.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, safe and secure environment. Risk of accidental injury is minimised as staff monitor safety arrangements regularly and take steps to reduce hazards. For instance, they complete regular risk assessments and take part in regular fire practises. There are clear and efficient systems in place which ensure the safe arrival and collection of children. Only the Principal may open the main door to callers which enables her to monitor all visitors to the premises and keep the children safe.

The children play in a well organised, spacious environment which is bright and welcoming. The staff have carefully arranged the room so that children have ample space to move around safely, and into specific areas in accordance with the Montessori philosophy. For example there are areas for maths, care of self, grace and courtesy, language, history, geography, care of the environment, and the book corner where children can relax and enjoy reading. The arrangement of the room does not alter, so children feel secure and gain confidence in their familiar surroundings. Children play with good quality resources which have been carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for them. They begin to develop an awareness of keeping themselves and each other safe, for instance notices remind them 'do not run or you may fall and hurt yourself or someone else', and always pushing their chair back under the table when they move away. This prevents anyone tripping and stops the pathways becoming obstructed.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as half of the staff have attended child protection training and have a good understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have any concerns about a child in their care. However, parents are not advised of the pre-school's responsibility regarding child abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled within the pre-school setting. They benefit from stable relationships with the consistent staff members who look after them. They arrive confidently and quickly settle as they make independent choices in their play. For example one child chooses to sit and concentrate alone for some time, transferring the numbers from a clock puzzle to the corresponding digits on a clock picture. They are keen to learn and encouraged to try out new skills, which fosters their emotional wellbeing and helps them achieve. Younger children learn from a range of activities that are stimulating and well balanced. They delight in choosing hands on activities, such as dressing the dolls and modelling with the dough. This captures their interest and provides many opportunities to explore and experiment, effectively supporting the children's progress across all areas of learning.

Comprehensive planning covers all areas of learning and ensures children benefit from a broad range of activities and experiences. The planning ensures all children are included in each activity, managing tasks at their own pace and level of ability, guided by very supportive staff. However, the planning for children under three years old is based on the Foundation Stage curriculum which is not appropriate for two year-old children's level of ability. This prevents

accurate assessments being made of their progress and therefore staff cannot accurately guide the children's individual development and progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and support children's progress through the stepping stones. They plan and provide a wide range of meaningful topics and experiences to include children of all abilities, and which cover all areas of learning. The planning incorporates the Montessori teaching methods which aims to help children develop themselves through their natural curiosity. Children enjoy getting fully involved in themed activities which are well planned and presented, with positive learning intentions and which arouse their natural curiosity. For example looking at the hungry caterpillar story as they work on Life cycles, and discuss how their body and teeth change as they grow older, comparing themselves to older siblings. Staff are well deployed to support and guide children's learning, as they move freely around occupying themselves in the various areas of the room. High staff ratios ensure children are very well supported at all times as staff can observe when they may need help and can provide the necessary guidance.

Children have warm and friendly relationships with both staff and each other, which gives them the confidence to ask questions in order to develop their thinking. They are confident speakers, and learn the etiquette of conversation as they are asked to listen while someone else is speaking before it is their turn. Activities at circle time introduce children to phonics as they identify their name card from the sound of the first letter, and study the name to learn the shape, ready for when they begin to write it. Children are encouraged to see to their personal needs such as washing their hands, getting an apron and helping themselves to tissues. Children enjoy books, choosing favourites to look at and sharing them with staff and friends. They express themselves through mark making, copying staff as they begin to write their own name using symbols on their art work. Children enjoy being creative. They choose to paint and draw, using a variety of tools and colours, and make the dough themselves when they ask for modelling.

Children learn about early mathematics in familiar contexts as they are integrated into daily routines. They learn to clap their hands to count out the number of the day's date, compare and match numbers in games and mathematical resources, and after comparing the sizes of blocks, they stand up to compare the size of each other. Children develop an understanding of volume and capacity, pouring sand or water from one container to another, seeing how many spoonfuls it takes. Children show an interest in the world around them as they examine the planets in the solar system, learning that we live on earth which is made up of land and water. They look at the names of the oceans and the different countries which form the land and local maps are available which show where they live.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A very friendly atmosphere welcomes children and their families to the pre-school. Partnership with parents is extremely good. Parents share some information about their children which helps staff meet their individual needs. Many parents are active members of the management committee and often spend time in the pre-school supporting the staff by contributing to

topics and activities. The staff keep parents well informed about their children's progress and development through newsletters, daily discussions and viewing the children's individual records. All of which provide parents with details of forthcoming events and the Foundation Stage activities.

Children behave very well, they share and take turns, playing together harmoniously. Staff are calm and consistent, reinforcing and praising children's good behaviour, encouraging their feelings of self-worth. Children become aware of their own and other cultures through the range of planned activities. Resources represent diversity and encourage children to have a positive view of the wider world. However, few activities are provided to teach children about the many interesting aspects of their local community, helping them learn a sense of place.

Learning to recognise and value their own needs and those of other's, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children with additional needs are welcomed into the inclusive environment and staff provide appropriate levels of additional support as necessary, including working with outside agencies as required. Systems are in place to ensure children are fully supported and their needs met through co-operation between staff, parents and outside agencies.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel comfortable and are at ease in the well-organised environment. All children receive good support from a consistent staff team who enjoy their company and know them well, helping them feel secure and confident. There are effective recruitment and induction procedures in place, which ensure only suitably experienced and qualified staff look after the children. The required policies and procedures are in place to support children's welfare. However, some policies and procedures lack sufficient detail to fully comply with the requirements of the National Standards for full day care, the pre-school have the incorrect set of National Standards, and the children's and staff attendance is not correctly recorded to clearly indicate the times they are present.

Leadership and Management is good. Management have a high regard for the staff team who work well as an established team, and clear communication allows them to provide a well-balanced programme of activities. Individual staff training needs are identified, and staff attend various courses which provide them with a wide range of expertise and knowledge, demonstrating their commitment to providing good quality care and teaching. Management and staff evaluate the service provided and there is a strong commitment to create a rich learning environment for children. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the Montessori teaching methods, which used together enables them to plan a well-balanced range of activities in an organised and ordered environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- update all policies, procedures and documentation in line with the latest requirements as set out in the national standards for full day care
- improve planning and assessment of younger children's learning based on the Birth to three matters framework to ensure it is suitable for their individual stage of development

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):

- improve systems for assessing what children can do to provide a starting point for planning the next steps in children's learning and to ensure they make steady progress through the stepping stones
- further develop opportunities for children to learn about where they live and the local community

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