



Montacute Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143123
Inspection date	05 October 2006
Inspector	Bridget Copson
Setting Address	Baptist School Rooms, South Street, MONTACUTE, Somerset, TA15 6XD
Telephone number	01935 822022
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Registered person	Montacute Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Montacute Pre-school opened in 1992 and operates from the Baptist Church Schoolrooms in the village of Montacute, Somerset. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09:15 to 12:00, during term time only, with additional rising five sessions on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 13:00 to 15:30. A lunch club is also run every day. Children have access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 51 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education.

The pre-school is run by a parent committee. There are five staff members employed, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is supported by the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and physical fitness is promoted well through a good range of activities and play equipment. Activities are suitable for all ages and are used both indoors and in the garden to ensure children experience exercise daily, to promote their physical development. Children learn about healthy eating habits through enjoying a nutritious choice of snacks at break times. For example, they choose from a platter of chopped ham, cheese and different fresh fruits with drinks of water, milk or juice. Children bring packed lunches, according to parents wishes, and are encouraged to eat the healthy options first. They have access to water throughout the sessions to ensure they do not get thirsty.

Children are cared for within a clean and hygienic environment where staff have good systems in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, keeping toys and equipment clean, disinfecting table tops, hand washing routines, wearing disposable gloves for nappy changing and storing foods hygienically. In addition, children who are sick or infectious are excluded according to policy. Children learn about managing good personal hygiene appropriately through washing their own hands after visiting the toilet and before snack times and using disposable hand towels to dry them. However, they do not use the sinks for hand washing before break times, instead they use a communal bowl in the hall. This does not support children in learning good hand washing routines.

Children's health, medical and dietary needs are met efficiently by staff who keep written records of the care required and appropriate consent forms. They provide parents with written details of any accidents, incidents, existing injuries and medication given, for them to sign, for consistency of care. Two staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and the group keeps a first aid kit to support them in caring for children appropriately in the event of an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within a warm and welcoming environment which is organised to meet their needs throughout the day. Children are kept safe and secure by staff in all areas of the provision through the good measures in place to protect them. For example, keeping external doors locked, using radiator grills, keeping wires secured, restricting access to the kitchen, using door stops and ensuring garden boundaries are secure. Outings are only organised when additional support is available to maintain high ratios, due to road safety issues within the village. Children learn about safety through practical activities, such as, managing steps in the garden, practising the fire drill regularly and learning to use the large scale physical play equipment safely. Staff carry out visual checks daily and annual risk assessments to ensure good standards of safety are maintained.

Children access a range of play provision which is well-maintained and suitable for their stage of development. Staff ensure small-piece toys are stored out of reach and only used with older children under close supervision. As a result, children play freely and safely.

Children are protected well by staff who have effective systems in place to safe guard their welfare in all areas of the provision. For example, keeping details of adults authorised to collect children, records of all accidents, incidents and existing injuries, details of visitors and children's daily attendance. In addition, staff have a suitable understanding of child protection issues and procedures to support them in safeguarding children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Younger children enjoy a suitable range of activities and play provision to promote all areas of their learning and development. However, their development is not planned within an appropriate framework to ensure realistic challenges are given in all areas of their development. Instead, they enjoy the same activities as those in receipt of nursery education funding, with a focus on developing their social skills, self-confidence and well-being within the group.

Children are happy and generally settling in well. They are learning about routines, such as tidying up when they hear the appropriate music and learning related songs for announcing lunch time and home time. Children are developing confidence and independence through choosing, learning self-care skills and helping actively, such as at break time. They communicate appropriately through discussion, story times and talking about what they are doing in play. Children are learning to listen when appropriate, with some still needing support to do so at whole group activities. Children use their imaginations well in role play, with small world activities and in creative play.

Younger children's progress is promoted by staff and key workers who interact in their play to support and extend challenges as they feel necessary. However, they do not have a system of monitoring children's progress to ensure all children are encouraged to develop to their full potential in all areas.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children's learning and development is promoted appropriately in most areas. This is supported by staff who have a suitable knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Children's learning is planned using different activities which are linked to the six areas of learning throughout each week. However, plans are not sufficient to ensure all aspects of children's learning are promoted well. This especially applies to independent use of books, access to information, communication and technology (ICT) resources, access to tools and more opportunities for children to extend their own creativity.

Staff interact with interest in children's activities, asking questions and encouraging them to make decisions to promote their confidence and communication skills. For example, discussing weather and contributing to stories. Children's progress is monitored and assessed appropriately by key workers who record observation and achievements in each child's development file for all areas of learning. However, not all assessments are completed regularly and do not always show what the child has achieved or how they have made progress. Also, they do not include

any next steps to ensure all children are encouraged to develop to their full potential in all areas.

Children explore new activities with excitement and focus well on their favourite activities. They are developing relationships with staff from whom they welcome support and whom some children seek out to hug spontaneously. They are making early friendships with peers who they seek out to play and sit with. Children are developing some independence through choosing for themselves, learning to wash hands, taking some responsibility and learning to manage their lunch boxes in preparation for school. Children generally sit and listen well to those talking or telling a story when they have support from staff at whole group times. However, this becomes less effective when support is reduced. Children enjoy listening to rhyming songs and stories, such as 'Ants In My Pants' and join in familiar stories such as 'Dirty Bertie' at group times. However, children rarely visit the book area to access books independently. More developed children are learning to recognise and sound key letters in their name.

Children are developing an understanding of numbers. For example, they count aloud those present at group times and count spontaneously in their play. More developed children can also say correctly which number comes next in sequence. Children are developing an understanding of shape and size through using good quality resources suitable for all stages of development and which encourages them to solve simple mathematical problems. They use the correct descriptive language in their play to describe size and position, such as grouping animals which are 'small' and 'bigger' and moving 'up' and 'down' in action rhymes. Children use the computer, on which they complete simple programmes. However, they do not have independent access to any additional resources on a day to day basis to promote their understanding of ICT. They learn about time and place through discussing aspects of home life in role play and group discussion times. They also use their garden to explore changes throughout the year and to discuss weather and are visited by different members of the local community. For example, the reception teacher, fire brigade, policeman, nurse and ambulance team.

Children use a good range of physical play equipment both indoors and in the garden, such as a climbing frame, slides, rockers, bikes, scooters, push-along toys, stilts, tunnels and large foam blocks. They move with control and co-ordination and are able to change direction and stop quickly, when necessary, to avoid collision. They show their enjoyment of such activities through lots of laughter and excitement. Children use some tools with different materials, according to what is set out for them. For example, strings to thread, sticks with glue, brushes with paint, cups, jugs and funnels with rice or rollers and cutters with dough. They do not have independent access to any other resources to develop their fine motor skills and to support them in using tools safely. Children explore different media and materials, such as, modelling with dough and combining cookery ingredients. They enjoy singing and join in songs with excitement, learning the words and actions. They use their imaginations with creative activities, constructional play and role play. However, due to the lack of tools and some prescriptive adult led creative activities, children are not always encouraged to extend their own creative development and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for equally and fairly in most areas of the provision and staff have systems in place to ensure children's individual needs are met appropriately. For example, keeping records of care, discussion with staff and key workers and using checklists to ensure children are all included in adult led activities. However, not all children's learning and development is promoted and monitored effectively. The pre-school has a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) in place. She liaises with parents and external professionals to meet any additional needs for those in their care. Children learn about diversity through exploring their own local environment as well as the beliefs and cultures of some other people. They also play with resources which reflect positive images of diversity.

Children behave generally well and are learning what is expected of them through reminders throughout the day. Younger children alert staff for support if others behave inappropriately. Most staff manage children's behaviour consistently through calm discussion and offering close support. However, this is not always effective at busy group times when staff deployment results in less support. Children are cared for within a positive environment where they are developing a sound sense of belonging. For example, they are getting familiar with routines, where to find things, expectations and see a reflection of themselves within the hall. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are cared for consistently and according to parents' wishes in most areas of the provision. To support this, parents complete admission and consent forms and are introduced to their child's key worker. They receive a welcome booklet, with their child's name printed on the cover. This details staff and committee members, daily routines, setting information and a list of policies and procedures available, although some of this information is out of date. Parents are kept suitably informed through daily discussion with staff and termly newsletters. They also see details of staff and 'what we did today' notices on a small display in the entrance. However, parents are not provided with independent access to updated policies and procedures of the setting and the complaints procedure does not contain all the newly required information. In addition, they do not receive regular information on planned activities. This does not promote consistency of care and ensure children are cared for according to parents wishes in all areas.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory.

Parents are provided with some opportunities to get involved in their child's learning. For example, they are provided with newsletters each term informing them of any forthcoming topics and events and are invited to parents' evenings twice a year to discuss their child's progress. However, parents are not invited to contribute any information regarding their child's stage of development on admission to aid staff in early assessments.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by an established team of staff, all of whom hold an appropriate early years child care qualification. However, not all staff regularly attend training opportunities to

update their knowledge and skills and support them in meeting children's needs. For example, developing a knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to support them in promoting younger children's learning and development. The setting has suitable employment and vetting procedures in place to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children and staff induction and appraisals ensure they continue to be suitable.

Children are cared for within a suitably organised premises which is set out with different areas of play. Staff work with enthusiasm and energy to provide children with fun and active sessions. They are deployed effectively throughout most of the session to ensure children are safe and supported. However, during some whole group activities their interaction is reduced when some staff prepare fresh activities. As a result some children become distracted and disruptive and others do not benefit fully from the activity, such as at story time, registration and break.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children's records and related information is kept secure off the premises to maintain confidentiality. However, the recording system for accidents and existing injuries does not ensure all information is kept confidential. Staff records are not kept on the premises. This is a regulation which is applied to ensure all staff details are easily accessible at all times. In addition, some other documentation is also not accessible, such as staff appraisals and risk assessments to support staff in monitoring the quality of care. Policies and procedures have not been updated since 2003 and 2004. As a result staff and parents are not informed of the setting's practices, new regulations and changes.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

The pre-school has some systems in place to monitor the quality of nursery education and its strengths and weaknesses, such as, staff meetings and staff appraisals. However, there are no evaluations completed for activities or planning. As a result, not all aspects of nursery education are monitored effectively, especially planned activities, children's assessments, staff deployment and parental involvement.

The pre-school shows some commitment to improvement. For example, staff meet with the Local Authority to discuss practice and individual children. They have also established liaison with the village school which most children attend and arrange meetings and visits during the summer term. This supports children in their transition into school.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting agreed to improve the organisation and storage of equipment and resources, and to maintain the play space at an appropriate temperature. Also, to include details of Ofsted in the complaints procedure.

The setting has re-organised the structure of the room to provide children with defined areas of play. However, children do not have access to some resources independently to extend their own learning. Staff regulate the heating to maintain an appropriate temperature within the hall to promote children's comfort and health. The complaints procedure has been updated to

include Ofsted contact details. However, the procedure has not been updated again to include all the required information in the event of a parent raising a concern.

At the last education inspection the setting agreed to address two points for consideration. They agreed to review the positioning of the book corner to extend the use of books by the children and to extend the use of naturally occurring tasks to develop problem solving skills in mathematics.

The setting has re-positioned the book corner, however, children do not regularly access the area to make good use of books. Children regularly use their mathematical skills to complete simple problems, such as completing jigsaws and mathematical puzzles.

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.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 learning opportunities for younger children, for example, through implementing the Birth to three matters framework and implement a system of monitoring their progress effectively
- provide parents with more accessible information of planned activities and updated information regarding the setting's policies and procedures
- ensure all records relating to staff are kept on the premises and all other records are easily accessible

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 planned activities to ensure all areas of children's learning are promoted well, especially use of books independently, access to more ICT resources and tools and promoting their creative development
- improve the system of monitoring children's progress to ensure all children are encouraged to develop to their full potential in all areas
- improve systems of monitoring the quality of nursery education and care, especially planned activities, children's assessments, staff deployment and parental involvement (also applies to care).

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk