



## Prima Montessori Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY230735
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Patricia Coccia
<b>Setting Address</b>	Elm Court, Capstone Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 3JQ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Prima Montessori Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Prima Montessori Day Nursery (Elm Court) opened in 2002 and operates from seven rooms in a purpose built building situated on the outskirts of the town of Gillingham, Kent. A maximum of 112 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00 for 52 weeks of the year, except for Christmas, New year and Bank Holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 113 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll. Of these 38 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports one child with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 staff, of whom 17, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and work directly with the children. There are four staff working towards a

qualification. Additional staff include two lunchtime supervisors, one kitchen staff member and two administration staff.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children participate in highly effective personal hygiene procedures. They wash their hands or use antibacterial wipes to clean hands after using the toilet, playing with messy play activities and before and after eating. Children are also protected throughout the nursery as staff use a range of excellent procedures for changing nappies, dealing with sick children and keeping all surfaces as germ free as possible, particularly the insides of fridges and food preparation areas. Children are extremely well protected from cross contamination.

Children are provided with an extensive range of food which is healthy and nutritious. Parents are able to select vegetarian alternatives from the daily menu displayed in the reception area. For example, vegetable risotto instead of Chilli con carne and rice. Meals are freshly cooked on the premises, daily, by a qualified cook. Other meals; breakfast, tea and snack times allow children choice about what they eat. They select from a range of hot and cold foods which include fresh fruit and prepared raw vegetables. Children learn about healthy options as they discuss food with staff at meal times and through project work.

Children enjoy an extensive range of physical play activities which help keep their bodies healthy. Large soft play equipment is available in all baby and toddler rooms. Older children are able to use the hall during inclement weather where they use parachutes, and other indoor equipment. All children, including the Out of School Club, can use the garden and sometimes are taken to the outdoor play area within a couple of minutes walk to use large static equipment and swings. Children happily stomp around the hall in time to music, and toddlers have a sense of achievement as they negotiate themselves in and out of the soft play equipment. Children thoroughly enjoy their physical play.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are received into a bright, welcoming environment. All equipment and toys are kept meticulously clean and are assessed on a monthly basis by the manager to ensure they are safe and suitable for children to use. Written records are kept. Staff carry out daily checks. Rooms are well presented and encourage the safe movement of children around them. Minimal safety equipment is necessary. Children participate fully in regular emergency evacuation drills. A variety of fire escapes around the building ensure that children evacuate the building quickly. Each drill is rigorously evaluated and when needed improvements made. Children learn about keeping themselves safe.

Children are exceptionally well protected by a range of policies and procedures regarding safeguarding children issues. Visitors to the building sign in and out, as do staff and children. Some managers have attended local authority safeguarding children training, information from

which has subsequently been cascaded to staff. All staff are fully aware of the internal procedures for safeguarding children and reporting their concerns. Children are also protected by well thought out arrival and departure procedures and are only collected by nominated persons. Children's wellbeing is rigorously promoted.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They achieve well because the staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as Birth to three matters to provide high quality care.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. The youngest children make excellent progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Early communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality adult-child interactions. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. For example, using corn flour gloop to explore textures or watching glitter swirl in water.

All children, including babies, have immediate access to toys and are able to self select from the range available stored in child friendly baskets or child height shelving systems. They are also able to choose to involve themselves in planned activities or play by themselves. The main routines for the children concern snack and meal times when they are encouraged to sit down and socialise within a larger group. It also gives staff the opportunity to prepare activities or safely move equipment around. Children's rest times are also extremely flexible. Children have choices.

### **Nursery Education.**

Teaching and learning is outstanding. Children in receipt of funded nursery education are progressing extremely well, supported by the staff team's confidence and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively as well as incorporating the Montessori teaching methods that staff use.

Children's achievement is clearly linked to the stepping stones. Staff use on-going observations well to plan the next steps for their learning. The Montessori teaching methods used, encourage children to develop at their own pace. Staff skilfully encourage children to experiment and investigate by facilitating activities rather than directing them. Skilful use of observation and assessment also means that all the children are challenged appropriately.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. They are actively involved in play and activities throughout the day. They have a high level of independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking responsibility for their personal care. The three and four-year-old children show concern for each other and enjoy the responsibility of helping younger children to explore the facilities.

Children are extremely skilful in their use of number. They can correctly identify numbers at random and show a clear awareness of size. They confidently compare numbers and use them independently to solve problems, such as deciding by a show of hands alone how many children voted for a particular story.

Children are becoming skilful communicators. Older children can spontaneously sound out and find the letters for their names. They readily select books to share with each other or with staff. They have written their own short stories and displayed them for others to look at. Children enjoy musical activities either singing, using instruments or combining the two. They are able to maintain a rhythm and play softly or loudly as required by the music. Children are able to take turns playing their instruments or moving their bodies in time to music, clapping or marching.

Children ably operate the computer, loading and completing age appropriate programmes. They learn about the wider world by participating in projects and discussion and using equipment such as electronic globes to help them identify some different countries.

Children's work is displayed around the walls. An extremely well equipped craft area allows children to discover textures and colour and allows them to explore their artistic abilities as well as creating interesting wall murals to support their project work.

Children can concentrate on activities for long periods of time. They are confident to take risks in their learning, trying new and less familiar activities without fear of failure. The staff work diligently to inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves and to develop and improve the skills they already have.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

A wide range of children from a variety of backgrounds attend the nursery. Children have the opportunity to learn about each others' differences through an excellent range of images, toys and projects which are undertaken. For example, card games include images of female fire-fighters and police officers and each room has adopted a country to study and discuss which ensures children learn about and experience different cultures. The building is disability friendly providing wide doorways and stair lift. A fully trained educational needs co-ordinator and a range of suitable procedures ensure that if a child with learning disabilities or difficulties attended their individual needs would be met. Children recognise each others' differences.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff support younger children in sharing and turn taking. They have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for the three to five year olds, which helps them negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff increase children's understanding of right and wrong. Children respond very well to gentle reminders to care for their environment, the pre-school resources and each other. Children's exceptional behaviour contributes to a calm environment. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

An excellent system, both written and verbal, for working with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being in the nursery. Parents' knowledge of their children's needs and interests is actively sought by staff on a regular basis. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing. Parents are regular fund raisers for a variety of nominated charities, the most recent being providing homes for disadvantaged families in Sri-Lanka. Children benefit greatly from continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. The parents of children receiving funded nursery education are provided with concise information about the stepping stones and the nursery's Montessori Teaching methods. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning by borrowing books to read with their children at home and to provide items for projects. Written information about how their child is progressing is made available in report form bi-annually and parents report they can see their children's development folders at any time. They can also participate in open evenings. Parents report that staff are approachable and very well informed. Children are encouraged in their learning by interested parents.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

An excellent range of staffing policies and procedures ensure that children are only looked after by persons who are suitable to do so. The provider has a rigorous and robust recruitment and vetting procedure. Staff undergo initial induction before they work with the children and regular appraisals ensure that they continue to be suitable.

The nursery's operational plan ensures that all regulatory paperwork is regularly reviewed and well maintained.

Staffing ratios are excellently maintained at all times during the day. Extra lunchtime staff help cover staff lunches. Attendance registers are completed by parents, staff and visitors and are double checked by managers. Children's records are maintained confidentially and updated on a regular basis. They are stored in filing cabinets in the office and only authorised persons and staff have access to them.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The provider has a clear vision of how she wants the nursery to operate and develop. She has some innovative plans for the future. For example, using more sensory stimuli throughout the rooms and reception areas. The provider is effective because she and her manager fosters teamwork by regularly consulting with staff on all levels and acting upon ideas suggested by them. A recent suggestion by a staff member resulted in staff rearranging rooms to make their use more versatile. She is confident that her manager and staff's professionalism and commitment to the nursery, results in smooth implementation of new procedures and policies. The provider fully evaluates any changes. The manager and senior room staff use effective procedures to monitor the planning for the Foundation Stage and to ensure it's delivery is of a high quality.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection the provider has acted upon recommendations and instigated a range of improvements. Regular risk assessments are now carried out on toys and equipment, ensuring children's safety. The provision of toys and images depicting equality of opportunity has been improved throughout the nursery allowing the children the opportunity to learn about each other's differences and staff have received in house training regarding safeguarding children issues to ensure that children's well-being is promoted.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since April 2004 Ofsted received one complaint that required the provider to take action relating to National Standard 1 - Suitable Person; National Standard 2 - Organisation and National Standard 5 - Equipment. Concerns were raised regarding the suitability of individuals working with children, the organisation of staff and the number of children being looked after at any one time and the arrangements in place for babies to sleep, particularly the number of cots.

Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to investigate the concerns and interviewed all members of staff and the provider. There was evidence that National Standard 2 was not being met and an action was raised. Ofsted received written confirmation from the provider that appropriate steps have been taken to meet this action. The provider remains qualified for registration.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)