



# Montessori Pre-School Nursery/Holiday Club

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY338852
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Marie McDonnell
<b>Setting Address</b>	Montessori Pre School, Blue Peter House, 127-129 Green Lane, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS5 7AD
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<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 good. 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?

Montessori Pre-School Nursery and Holiday Club is owned by a private provider and has been registered since September 2006. It operates from a large converted house in the Acklam area of Middlesbrough. Children are cared for in four rooms on the ground floor of the building and share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The provision is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00, for 51 weeks of the year, closing for a week at Christmas time.

Up to 66 children under eight years may be cared for at any one time. There are currently 100 children on roll aged from four months to four years. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early education. Some children aged over five years also attend the nursery during school holidays. Children come from a wide catchment area, as many of their parents travel to work. There are currently no children with learning difficulties, disabilities or who speak English as an additional language attending the setting.

The nursery employs 16 members of staff to work directly with the children, three of whom work on a part time basis. Of these, 10 staff members have appropriate childcare qualifications, including a French teacher, at Level 3 or above and other staff members have Level 2 qualifications and are working towards Level 3. However, there are currently no members of staff with a qualification in Montessori teaching methods. Two additional members of staff are also employed to carry out domestic and cooking duties on a daily basis.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow good health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, at snack and meal times and during nappy changing routines. Children learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine and older children understand the importance of simple, good health and hygiene practices and know that they wash their hands to 'clean the germs off'. Appropriate accident and illness procedures are in place to protect children's overall health, including the recording of medication administered and any accidents.

Children are very well nourished. They receive a wide range of fruit to choose from at snack times in the morning and the afternoon, and also receive varied and nutritious two course meals. Children have their health and dietary needs met as staff work well with parents to obtain written information about individual requirements and family preferences. Drinking water is readily available in each room. Children learn about healthy living during discussions with staff about why fruit and vegetables are good for them.

Children have good opportunities to enjoy physical activity. They enjoy playing outdoors on a regular basis and also participate in action rhymes and dancing activities indoors when singing French songs and rhymes. They rest and sleep according to their needs and individual routines, which staff are well aware of, particularly in the baby room.

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

The provision is good.

Good steps have been taken to ensure that children are cared for in a safe environment. For example, the premises and outdoor play area are kept secure, risk assessments have been conducted, fire procedures are displayed and fire drills are practised. Safety checklists are conducted by staff on a daily basis, such as checking radiators and checking the safety and cleanliness of toys, tables, toilets and floors. Outings procedures are in place to ensure that children are kept safe when on visits and they are well supervised when playing in the outdoor area.

The environment is warm and welcoming for the children with resources readily available. Children have easy access to a suitable range of toys, equipment and furniture, staff ensure that resources are safe and suitable for children's use with regular checking routines. Children learn to keep themselves safe when involved in fire drills and when staff offer appropriate explanations of why they should not run around indoors.

Children are well protected because staff understand their role in relation to child protection issues and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the different areas of abuse and of possible signs.

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

The provision is good.

Children are involved in a good range of activities that cover all areas of development. For example, children aged over two years participate in French lessons twice a week, which they thoroughly enjoy. These lessons help to promote their language and listening skills and their understanding of the wider world. Outdoor play promotes physical development and motor skills. Children have many opportunities to choose activities independently and participate in small scale tasks individually, for example, puzzles, shape sorters, pouring and scooping. Staff have a developing understanding of 'Birth to three matters'. Some members of staff are currently receiving training in this area and the framework is appropriately implemented.

Children develop confidence and self esteem well when being praised and encouraged by staff for their efforts. For example, when eating lunch, when tidying away and when participating in different activities. Children show interest in what they do and enjoy the resources and activities available. They have good opportunities to be independent and use their initiative, for example, when deciding what to play with, when putting on their own coats to play outdoors and when helping themselves to a drink of water. Children are encouraged to answer appropriate questions from staff to aid their learning and understanding, for example, about different colours, shapes and questions around the current theme of 'Africa'.

Children have good opportunities to learn about wider society and begin to appreciate their own culture and the cultural traditions of others. They acquire new skills and knowledge when learning to sing nursery rhymes in French. They also learn a lot about Africa, such as the different fruit that grows there and the animals which live there. They have participated in a food tasting activity, tasting different things that grow in Africa, such as coffee, mangos, pineapples and chocolate, as they know that cocoa grows there and is needed to make chocolate. Children respond to challenge and concentrate well when involved in activities of their choosing, such as scooping small pasta shells from one container to another with a spoon and when playing with plasticine and painting.

### **Nursery Education.**

Overall children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. They show good independence in selecting and carrying out activities and persist for extended periods at activities of their choosing. They separate from the main carer with confidence and demonstrate a sense of belonging, for example, they know where their own coat peg and storage draw are. Children talk freely about their home and community at circle times and express needs and feelings in appropriate ways. They often show willingness to tackle problems and enjoy self chosen activities. However, there are limited planned opportunities for children to play cooperatively together. Children listen to favourite nursery rhymes, stories and songs, some of which are in French. They respond well to instructions, such as 'line up, wash your hands and put your coats on'. They listen to stories with increasing attention and recall, and can handle

books well. Some children talk activities through, explaining what they are doing when carefully transferring pasta from one container to another with a spoon. They enjoy rhyming and rhythmic activities and can distinguish one sound from another. Some children can link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. Some children form recognisable letters, such as those of their name and attempt to write these independently on their art work. Most children can say the number after any number up to nine and some can count reliably beyond 10. Some children can recognise numerals from one to 10. They show a lot of interest in shape and space and show an awareness of shape in the environment.

Children sort objects well by size and enjoy many resources of different shapes and sizes. They show an interest in information and communication technology and know how to operate simple equipment and can complete a simple program. They learn about a sense of place when learning about differences between countries and continents. Children respond to music and rhythm by means of gesture and movement, for example, they sway happily from side to side when singing French action rhymes and songs. Children show good awareness of their own needs with regard to eating and hygiene. They operate equipment by means of pushing and pulling movements when playing with outdoor toys. Children engage in many activities requiring hand-eye coordination and perform these well, such as when using the varied shape sorters. Children differentiate colours well. They show interest in what they see, feel and touch, for example, when examining different objects to see if they are magnetic or not. Also when exploring food items as part of a tasting activity they use their senses to smell, touch, see and taste the different foods. Children make simple comparisons between objects such as if they are magnetic or not and if items are made of the same substance, such as metal or plastic. However, there are limited opportunities for children to use their imagination in play.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff members have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and most areas within the curriculum are appropriately implemented. Methods of teaching meet the needs and interests of all children and children are allowed lots of independence in deciding what they want to play with. The learning environment and programme of activities is appropriately planned to provide a suitable range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. However, there are limited opportunities for children to play cooperatively or to use their imagination in play, as many of the resources and activities available promote solitary play and have a specific outcome for the children to achieve. The learning environment reflects the community the children come from and the wider world. For example, a large map of the world is displayed and a globe. Resources which reflect wider society are also available, such as dolls, books, dressing up clothes and finger puppets. Methods of teaching, expectations and questions, challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can. For example, staff ask questions about the colours and shapes of different objects. Activities are planned with the whole group of pre-school children in mind, however, they are adapted for individual children if necessary, for example, if some children are more or less able. Staff use time and resources appropriately to enable the children to make as much progress as they can. For example, the daily routine allows for them to be busy and occupied most of the time, with rest periods and flexibility also incorporated into the daily routine. Some assessment records give a clear picture of children's progress but many are not dated. There is no evidence that information gained from assessments is used to help move children onto the next stage in their learning.

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

The provision is good.

Equal opportunities is well promoted as all children are included and involved. Their individual needs are being met, for example, staff caring for babies are well aware of individual sleeping and eating routines and ensure that these are adhered to. Appropriate procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Children enjoy being in the nursery and enjoy the activities available. They are settled and happy and make positive relationships with adults and peers. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are well behaved and behaviour is appropriately managed by staff who demonstrate a good understanding of the setting's procedure.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive good quality information about the provision, however, they do not receive relevant information about the Foundation Stage of learning and about the educational programme within the setting. They receive written information about the Montessori philosophy and teaching programme. Parents are kept informed of their child's development and progress through regular discussions with staff and through written reports. Three parents interviewed at the time of the inspection expressed very positive comments about the provision and about the 'friendly and approachable' staff in particular.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are sufficiently rigorous and robust enough to ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff with relevant experience, knowledge and skills. All staff employed at the nursery have a relevant childcare qualification and staff now have good access to ongoing training and development courses. Several members of staff have a first aid certificate and there is always someone on duty with a relevant first aid qualification.

Staff have high regard for the well-being of all children and children receive good adult care and attention. However, although adult to child ratios are maintained throughout the day, staff are not deployed effectively for a short time in the middle of the day. For example, one member of staff is responsible for supervising a large number of children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

All records and documentation required for the safe and efficient management of the provision is available and up to date. However, some procedure documents are in the process of being extended to ensure they include all relevant information, such as the procedures for an uncollected child and the medication record. Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution and staff interviewed have a good understanding of the procedures of the setting.

The leadership and management of provision and the nursery education is satisfactory and contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. The provision is well managed and appropriately monitored. The manager has an action plan of improvements in place, mainly

in relation to the premises and equipment, some of which have already been addressed. The nursery manager motivates staff and children, builds committed teams and acts as a good role model. A record of regular staff meetings is available and includes brief details of what has been covered, for example, activity planning and assessments. There is a suitable induction procedure available for new staff members which includes access to the policies and procedures of the setting. The manager and staff monitor and evaluate the curriculum satisfactorily to identify strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they evaluate some activities and assess children's progress and development. The setting works well with the local authority and receives good support in the provision of the Foundation Stage of learning and the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

### **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.

## **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 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):

- ensure that information gained from observations and assessments of children is used effectively to plan the next stage in their play, learning and development (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that staff are deployed effectively over the lunch time period to ensure the safety, welfare and development of the children.

#### **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):

- ensure that children have more opportunities to play cooperatively and use their imagination in play
- ensure that parents receive good quality information about the Foundation Stage of learning and the educational programme within the setting.

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)