

Clevedon Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115246
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Inspector	Rachael Williams
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Registered person	Maureen Louisa Burgoyne
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 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?

Clevedon Montessori Nursery was opened by the present proprietor in 1987. It operates from the ground floor and gardens of a large semi-detached Victorian house in the seaside town of Clevedon, North Somerset. The nursery is registered for 25 children aged between two and eight years. It is open from Monday to Friday during term time, between 08:00 and 17:00. There are 45 children on the roll, of whom 35 are in receipt of early years funding. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery cares for two pet guinea pigs.

During school holidays a holiday play scheme is offered for up to 25 children aged three years and over.

The provision operates from the ground floor of the property and children's activities take place in two rooms, the hall and the conservatory. There is also a kitchen and toilet facilities. The upstairs, which is inaccessible to children, contains an office and staff facilities. The driveway at the front is used for outdoor play in the winter or in wet weather. The rear, grassed garden is used in fine weather which is fully enclosed.

The nursery proprietor is qualified as a Montessori teacher. She is supported by six experienced staff; four of which are trained to at least a level 3 early years qualification. Two members of staff are undertaking Montessori training due to be completed in July 2007. The nursery also employs a cook and an administrator.

The nursery is run according to Montessori teaching methods. It receives support from the local authority and the Montessori Education UK coordinators. The nursery is a Montessori training centre.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in a warm, friendly atmosphere where their health and well-being needs are exceedingly well met by caring and knowledgeable staff. Children learn good self-help skills and are confident to address their own personal needs. Children need little support when visiting the toilet facilities. They consistently flush the toilet and wash their hands using antibacterial soap and warm water. Children use paper towels to dry their hands to avoid the spread of infection and dispose of them appropriately. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their health and hygiene, for instance, they view their faces in the mirrors and decide whether they need to wash their faces with their personal flannel or to brush their teeth after eating. Children show good understanding of maintaining a clean environment for the pet guinea pigs and have high regard for ensuring they are well fed, watered, are out in the fresh air and have clean bedding daily.

There are stringent procedures in place to gain parental consent and guidance for administering medication and all medication and accidents are carefully recorded and confirmed by parents. All staff have current paediatric first aid certificates, therefore children may be appropriately treated should any minor accidents occur.

Children benefit from healthy snacks and lunches, such as chicken wraps and salad and English muffins with jam. Children's independence is fully encouraged at this time, for instance, children spread jam confidently using knives safely. Children are able to access water independently throughout the day. There is excellent provision for children with special dietary needs as the cook has scrupulous systems to ensure that children's needs are met. For example, a vegetarian child is offered meat substitute in his wraps to ensure that he feels fully included.

Children have regular opportunities to be outside in the garden, for instance, a group of children go out in the drizzle and collect wild flowers. Children benefit from a wide range of simulating equipment to effectively promote their physical skills. Children are exceptionally well coordinated, especially in their fine motor skills. They have excellent hand/eye coordination and manoeuvre objects, such as rubbers with a pair of tweezers with ease. Children move in a variety of ways, for instance, children pretend to be cars manoeuvring well as they run in between the cones. They are able to stop competently at the pedestrian crossing avoiding collisions well, showing good spatial awareness.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The spacious physical environment is organised exceptionally well to meet the care, learning and developmental needs of the range of children attending. Consequently, children can move safely and independently. Children are given clear direction, for instance, vigilant staff observe a child attempting to sweep the steps from the top and intervene to provide a clear explanation as to how this could pose a risk to themselves, thus children are being encouraged to develop responsibility for their own safety. Children are closely supervised and staff's excellent deployment effectively supports children's free choice. Staff implement regular, effective safety procedures, such as risk assessments to maintain children's safety with each member of staff being clear on their roles and responsibilities. There are excellent procedures in place to ensure children's security and safety, such as well understood collection arrangements.

On entering the provision children are able to select from an abundant range of high-quality toys and resources, which are safe, clean and developmentally appropriate. They are stimulating and effectively challenge children's learning. Children's independence is fully encouraged as they access activities from low-level shelving which supports their practical and life skills effectively.

Children are well protected from abuse and neglect as key staff have a thorough knowledge of how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse. There are robust procedures in place should they have any concerns about a child. Staff attend regular child protection training and are meticulous in ensuring their procedures meet the Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a rich and varied range of activities to stimulate their learning and development in all areas. A dynamic learning environment has been established with high regard for children's independence. Children are very keen and enthusiastic to learn. They are self-motivated accessing activities which interest them from the vast range of stimulating Montessori resources which help them develop exceptionally good life skills. This is very well supported by excellent deployment of knowledgeable staff to challenge children's learning. Consequently, children's language skills are significantly enhanced and they are excellent communicators.

A wide range of experiences are robustly planned to incorporate and value children's interests. Excellent caring relationships have been established to positively support children's developing needs. Staff exhibit exceptionally good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and implement it well into Montessori practices.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their development, according to their capabilities and starting points. Practitioners are very knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage curriculum and maintain good records of carefully documented observations of children's achievements to plan for future learning for individual children. Robust planning systems, for example, individual plans and project planners, ensure that children have an excellent balance of experiences to develop even progression in all areas of learning.

Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging for all children. Practitioners demonstrate an excellent understanding of how children learn and are clear about the learning intentions of activities. This high level of confidence in their knowledge is used to excellent effect when children develop activities independently. For example, when a child selects a farm set to play with, practitioners are confident to identify how children can be effectively challenged through relevant questioning, such as through sorting the animals or counting how many of each. An effective range of teaching methods are used to fully challenge children. For example, a child confidently uses tools to manipulate the playdough. She is engaged in a meaningful discussion and is able to clearly explain the process of how she is making cakes. The practitioner successfully directs the child's play and encourages her to think about selling the cakes and engaging her in the appropriate use of mathematical language.

Children confidently develop new skills as they are given one-to-one support when engaging in new tasks. They are shown how to successfully complete the task and are given clear explanations of new vocabulary. Children are then confident to imitate and investigate for themselves. Staff are excellent at praising children for these achievements. Children are exceptionally good at learning from each other as they observe others completing tasks and then feel confident to explore it independently. Consequently, learning is promoted exceptionally well. Practitioners are excellent at valuing all children and their contributions. For example, a child is praised for the lyrics she has written at home. The child is keen to share them and accesses the photocopier to make a copy for her two friends.

Well supported adult led group activities encourage children's learning and development. For example, a game of 'I Spy' is developed using familiar objects to encourage children's phonetic skills. For younger children this is done through repetition and for the older ones through recognising initial sounds. Children show excellent coordination as they mark make with a range of writing implements. Older and more able children are able to write their name confidently using recognisable letter shapes and some are progressing exceptionally well to write consonant-vowel-consonant words.

Children have excellent understanding of the concept of time. For example, when celebrating their birthdays children are encouraged to bring in photographs of previous birthdays/years so that the group can observe how they have changed to create a story of their life. They walk around the group several times in accordance with their age and blow the candle out.

Children have a good attitude to learning. They persevere with tasks, for instance, a three-year-old confidently displaces all the pieces of the jigsaw onto a mat ensuring that he can see the picture and that they are all the correct way up. He perseveres with the difficult puzzle and is given clear direction from a practitioner to support the construction of the picture. A four-year-old child becomes engrossed in his activity as he happily explores the dinosaur book confidently naming dinosaurs from the Mesozoic era.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued and respected by caring and passionate staff who are committed to ensuring that each child's needs are identified and met within the nursery. Close and caring relationships have been established and practitioners have excellent knowledge of children's backgrounds to ensure continuity in care. Children have exceptionally good self-esteem and are confident and settled. For example, children have a very good sense of belonging and trust as they are able to choose whether to display their work, file it in personal folders or to store

it in a named tray to take home at the end of the day. There are excellent systems in place to provide a flexible settling in period for children and their families, for instance, they attend for an afternoon a week during the term before they are due to commence.

All children receive excellent support in the fully inclusive setting. Children with learning difficulties are positively supported by a knowledgeable and confident team to ensure their welfare and development is fully promoted. Children are actively involved in developing their awareness of the world in which we live. For example, they have excellent knowledge of the natural world through regular walks and observations within the garden, for instance, a new fern is observed which leads to discussions about dinosaurs. There is a good range of toys, resources and images to positively reflect the diversity in our society. For instance, bilingual books have been purchased for children to explore. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children have excellent understanding of routines, boundaries and expectations. Consequently, behaviour is exemplary. Children are polite, respectful and excellent relationships have been established. All children confidently support each other to tidy away after finishing with an activity or to sweep the stairs when cut-out paper has been discarded. Clear and consistent behaviour management strategies maintain a stable environment. Children are encouraged to negotiate and resolve conflicts through use of the 'Peace' table.

Partnership with parents is outstanding which contributes significantly to children's well-being. Parents are warmly welcomed by staff who spend time getting to know them and their children. Parents demonstrate their appreciation of the staff by supporting them wholeheartedly with fundraising and sharing skills to support and enhance activities. Parents are actively involved and regularly attend parent conferences to share their child's achievements and attend workshops established by practitioners to ensure their understanding of Montessori practices, the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for by well-trained, skilful and experienced early years practitioners. Practitioners use their knowledge exceptionally well to ensure the children make excellent progress in all areas of their care and learning. Children's progress is significantly enhanced by the excellent organisation of the learning environment. Space is maximised to provide children with a wealth of experiences which enable them to move freely and safely. High staff/child ratios enable children to make decisions about their own learning and care needs within the high-quality nursery. The use of 'special responsibility teachers' ensures children are confident and settled as caring, stable relationships are established.

The well-documented operational plan is regularly updated to provide children with a stable environment in which they become independent, safe and healthy learners. Robust systems for recruitment, suitability and induction arrangements ensure children are cared for by appropriately screened adults. There are stringent policies and procedures in place to guide staff and all records are very well documented and stored securely. All records about children are shared in strict confidence with parents.

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

Leadership and management is outstanding. The principal of the nursery provides an exemplary role model for her staff. Practitioners receive clear direction and form a dedicated, highly motivated team. Practitioners are regularly appraised and all are committed to ongoing professional development. Practitioners show strong commitment to children's achievement and development, which is demonstrated by the children's enthusiasm for, and involvement in their learning. There is an excellent ethos of reflective practice throughout the nursery with practitioners making excellent evaluations of what they do in order that children continue to flourish in a well monitored nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a recommendation and a point for consideration were raised in relation to organisation and creative development. These have been successfully addressed.

The operational plan is effectively used to provide a stable environment. It is regularly updated and the principal is aware of amending the operational plan to reflect how the building will be used should she provide a play scheme.

Children are provided with a wealth of experiences to extend their imaginative role-play. They actively use the playhouse to dress up and engage in familiar household chores and routines, such as ironing and dressing the dolls for a walk. Imaginative role-play is well documented through photographic evidence relating to the stepping stones.

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 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 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