

# Montagu Square Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221620
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Caroline Wright / Heidi Falconer
<b>Setting Address</b>	Montagu Square, Eynesbury, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2TL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 475522
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<b>Registered person</b>	Montagu Square Day Nursery
<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 inadequate – notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Montagu Square Day Nursery opened in 1998 and operates from a converted public house building. It is situated in a residential area in the centre of Eynesbury near to St. Neots in Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 51 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Of these, 15

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery offers support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 10 staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is inadequate.

Children's ongoing health is not adequately promoted. Although some children wash their hands before eating and after using the lavatory, others do not have access to soap to enable them to wash their hands properly and they do not have toilet paper to use when they need to. In addition, children eat food which has been placed directly on the table cloth or high chair tray, without being provided with a plate, after staff have sprayed them with chemical cleaners. This puts children at risk of cross infection and the ingestion of chemical cleaners has the potential to seriously affect children's health.

The kitchen area is not adequately clean and procedures for storing soiled laundry are not suitably hygienic. Although staff wear gloves and aprons for changing nappies, some children have their nappies changed on the floor in their play room despite the close proximity of a more suitable toilet area. This further impacts on nursery hygiene and affects younger children's self-esteem. First aid certificates are not available to confirm that enough staff are qualified to provide appropriate treatment if children have an accident in the setting. This further compromises children's health in the event of an accident or emergency.

However, children have satisfactory opportunities to learn about healthy eating and to take part in exercise. They eat a satisfactory snack mid-morning and afternoon and are provided with a substantial lunch, with fresh vegetables each day. They run around and ride bicycles in their own outdoor play area, so that they learn the importance of regular fresh air and develop new physical skills. However, some of the younger children do not have the opportunity to drink milk because staff in their rooms do not offer it to them on a daily basis.

If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of the nursery, suitable procedures are in place to make sure that satisfactory care is given. Staff receive training in first aid so that they can give appropriate care in the event of an emergency. However, nursery procedures for recording accidents, storing medication and obtaining parents signature to acknowledge where medicines have been administered are not followed consistently. This has the potential to affect children's health in the future.

Older children are beginning to recognise the importance of keeping healthy. When staff ask them 'why is milk good for us?' They reply 'because it makes us big and strong' and 'it makes our teeth strong'. Their physical development is promoted well and as a result they are learning to move with control and coordination. They show a good awareness of space as they ride scooters and bikes, avoiding obstacles and collisions with others. Children travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment. For example, they jump from milk crates in the garden and balance around large tractor tyres. At the local park older children have opportunities to use more challenging climbing equipment to further develop their skills. Smaller equipment such as threading reels, scissors and play dough cutters promote children's fine motor skills and aids hand to eye coordination.

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

The provision is inadequate.

The risk assessment procedures for maintaining children's overall safety are inadequate. Despite ongoing reminders in the daily message book from the baby room leader, some staff fail to

keep the alternative fire escape in the baby sleep room clear of obstructions. Electrical sockets, which are not in use, are left without covers; low-level glass windows in the upstairs of the premises are not safe and the upstairs landing has large, heavy items that could easily be knocked over by children as they walk up and down the stairs. In addition, minimum space requirements set out in National Standard 4 (physical environment), are not met during certain times of the day. This compromises children's safety.

However, the outside play area is secure and stair gates prevent children from accessing the kitchen or upstairs without supervision. Systems for monitoring children's attendance and the times they arrive and leave the setting are secure. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a sound understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Regular training in child protection is provided for all staff and a designated person ensures that any concerns are dealt with effectively so that children's best interests are maintained. A wide range of written policies and appropriate procedures are in place, including regular 'fire drills' to help children know what to do in the case of an emergency evacuation of the premises. Children use suitable resources, which are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are checked regularly by the nursery staff to ensure they are in good condition and are safe.

Children move around the playrooms under the supervision of the nursery staff. They learn how to keep themselves safe when using scissors or sitting on chairs, helped by the gentle reminders from staff. Adults organise visits from the Fire and Police services to help children to learn to keep themselves safe outside of the setting. Staff further support children's learning about safety when they provide 'emergency role play' activities and road safety play to extend children's knowledge in play situations.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy at the nursery and enjoy their play. Babies freely access the varied equipment and resources that staff set out for them. They enjoy interesting activities such as painting on the mat using their hands and their feet to make marks on paper. They play alongside each other happily, exploring dolls or bubbles with the sensitive support of their key workers. Toddlers enjoy playing with small world cars on the 'road' mat, putting them into the garage and telling their own stories. Staff provide construction toys to help children to develop fine manipulative skills and dough or 'goop' play to encourage children to explore textures and interesting materials. They use a satisfactory range of tools, such as glue sticks and pastry cutters. They enjoy using shaving foam to make marks on the table with their hands and draw pictures outside on the tyres with chalks.

Adults working with the under three's use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities for the younger children. However, staff sometimes provide children with pre-cut shapes and templates for art and craft activities, such as making Easter cards. This limits children's ability to express their own ideas and develop new skills, such as cutting with scissors or early writing skills. There is no key worker system in the baby room and as a result observations of children's progress are infrequent and not used to inform planning of future activities. Staff working with toddlers do not use children's assessment records to plan the next steps or to provide activities that build on what children enjoy and do well. This affects progress.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children take part in a planned programme of interesting activities both in and out of doors, which cover all areas of learning. Although planning shows clear learning objectives, the stepping stones are not used effectively to plan activities to challenge and extend children's learning. Staff make observations of children's progress and record these in assessment portfolios. However, not all of the stepping stones are used so the portfolios fail to accurately show children's achievements and limit staff's ability to plan the next steps in their learning.

Staff make good use of planned activities to support children's learning. They interact well with the children and each other, giving clear explanations and using effective questioning techniques to encourage children to think for themselves and to make predictions. For example, as children play with an abacus staff ask them to count the beads that they have separated; they then ask children to estimate 'how many' they will have if they add the beads together. This helps children to begin to relate addition to combining two groups of objects. The staff are beginning to respond to children's interests and ensure that the learning environment is suited to their needs. For example, after observing that the children were using the book area for role play, the staff changed the room around to accommodate this. After the first morning the staff consulted the children about the change and listened to their opinions. This helps children to feel valued.

Children are developing a wide vocabulary, exploring the meaning of new or less familiar words in conversations with staff. For example, as they play in the 'Goldilocks' role play area, staff pick up on their interest in the different sized bowls and introduce words such as 'gigantic'. Children later use this word when talking about an atlas in the book area, saying 'that's a 'gigantic book'. Children demonstrate that they understand that books also carry information as they reply 'that's a map book; you have them so you know where to go'. Children are introduced to patterns of words that rhyme. For example, as staff read rhyming books to the children they explain that words such as 'rub' and 'dub' sound similar to each other.

Children enjoy playing imaginatively and their role play is full of interesting and inventive scenarios. For example, they put blankets over their heads and announce 'I'm a monster.' Others use the chairs to make cars and remind each other 'you should have worn your seat belt' when they fall off the chair. Children enjoy creative play. As they mix shaving foam and paint together they are asked by staff to describe how it feels. They describe it as being 'gooey' and 'cold'. However, at times craft activities are over prescriptive and staff are over concerned with what the finished article will look like. This limits children's ability to use art as a means to express and communicate their ideas and thoughts.

Children have opportunities to find out about features of their environment and about the community in which they live. For example, they go on seasonal walks where they are encouraged to draw pictures of the changes they can see. Children know about and use everyday technology, information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning. For example, they use headphones with the computer and learn to programme the settings' Bumble Bee 'Beebot' to move around a floor map.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show a good sense of belonging as they greet key workers and each other upon arrival. Adults encourage children to work together co-operatively during group activities, providing

careful explanations, which young children can understand, to help children know what is expected of them and respect each other's needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are becoming confident, independent learners who generally behave well. They are engaged in their play as they access interesting activities and assume responsibility for their personal care. For example, they independently wash their hands after painting and messy play activities. The staff are currently considering different ways in which they can store resources to allow children greater opportunities to select more equipment and to choose activities for themselves. Children are learning about diversity in the wider world around them through discussions about festivals, celebrating traditions and tasting food from different countries. For example, as part of the Chinese New Year celebration they tasted foods such as spring rolls, prawn toast and noodles.

Suitable systems are in place to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also to help children with English as an additional language to communicate effectively by building on what they already know. In addition, staff help children to develop a sense of belonging by displaying photographs of children in the nursery and encouraging children to take part in circle times where they develop an understanding of each others family culture and traditions.

However, the organisation of the day does not fully support children's sustained thinking or enable them to pursue their own interests. Children pack away activities to fit in with the daily routine and then wait for long periods of time without purposeful activity to be served meals or for an adult led activity to begin. Some large group activities, such as snack time, do not offer enough interest or challenge for some of the children: this affects learning. In addition, some of the children in the nursery do not have a key worker to support them when they first start in the setting so that they can build a firm relationship with a consistent adult in the absence of their parent or carer.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents know their child's key worker and share information with them about their children's needs. Parents are made aware that they can access their child's assessments at any time and once a year these records are shared with them at a parents evening. During these evenings, parents are able to take part in some of the activities that their children do at the setting. This allows staff to demonstrate how activities support young children's learning. Currently the setting are updating the information that they give to parents about the day-to-day organisation of the nursery, the nursery education curriculum and how it is implemented. This will enable parents to be more involved in their children's learning both at the nursery and at home. Parents of funded children are also able to borrow story books to share with their children at home so that they are actively involved in supporting children's early reading skills.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

The inadequate organisation means that children's health and safety are not effectively promoted. Although the all of child care staff are well qualified and suitably experienced, there is no effective system to monitor practice or to ensure that written policies and procedures meet current requirements or that they are implemented consistently and as a result, National Standards are not met. In addition, documents and records relating to First Aid training are not available to confirm that staff are suitably qualified to administer first aid to children. This further compromises children's health and safety in the event of an accident.

However, recent changes to the management team have identified areas for improvement and the self-evaluation process undertaken by the team has resulted in some changes to procedures. The new manager has a sound knowledge and understanding of the National Standards and ensures that Ofsted are informed of changes to the staff team and adults are checked to make sure they are suitable to work with children. A suitable induction procedure has been developed to help new members of staff and students to know what is expected of them and to help them safeguard children effectively if they have concerns for their welfare. Staff attend essential training to enable them to develop their practice further. All of the legally required documents are in place and many are under review.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The staff who work with the funded children have a sound understanding of how children learn and work well together. However, older and more able children lack challenge as the setting stones are not being used fully to inform planning and assessments, and creative activities at times limit children's ability to express their own ideas. Some of the weaknesses in the provision for nursery education have been identified through the evolving systems to monitor the quality of the nursery education and evaluate its impact.

The leadership and management of early education is inadequate. The management committee do not ensure that the person leading the provision for early education has sufficient knowledge of how children learn to enable her to plan and deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum effectively. The organisation of the session has a negative impact upon children's behaviour and this hinders learning. Regular visits and advice from the local authority teacher mentor fail to improve practice in the setting. Recommendations and actions from previous inspections have not been completed. This compromises children's ability to make satisfactory progress in their learning.

However, the lack of a systematic procedure for monitoring of teaching and learning means that weaknesses in the organisation of the session and procedures for planning and assessing children's progress have not been identified. This impacts on children's progress.

Overall, children's needs are not met.

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

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to ensure that documentation is easily accessible for inspection at any time. Although most essential documents and records are now easily accessed for inspection, first aid certificates are not available and procedures for ensuring that records are adequately maintained to support children's health and safety are ineffective. As a result, a notice to improve the way essential documents and records are maintained will be sent to the nursery following this inspection.

At the last nursery education inspection there were no significant weaknesses but the setting was given the following point for consideration: further develop children's imagination by giving more encouragement to contribute their ideas in adult-led craft activities and provide more frequent opportunities for them to participate in child-initiated role play.

Since the last inspection staff have increased children's ability to participate in child-initiated role play. A role play area is now accessible to the children each day and the theme of the area is changed to reflect the current topic. For example, it is currently stocked with an assortment of different sized bowls, spoons, bears and boxes of porridge to represent the story of 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. Children have daily opportunities to take part in free painting and drawing

activities. However, some adult-planned creative activities are still over prescriptive and this limits children's ability to express their own ideas and thoughts.

### **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 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- make sure cleaning routines throughout the nursery promote children's ongoing good health (this includes making appropriate arrangements for soiled laundry and cleaning the kitchen)
- provide children with access to appropriate resources in the bathrooms and at snack time to maintain their good health and to enable them to learn good personal hygiene routines for the future
- update the complaints procedure to reflect current requirements and make sure that nursery policies in relation to maintaining of documents and records for accidents, procedures for administration and storage of medication and for recording parents' permission for emergency medical treatment or advice are followed, to promote children's health and safety at all times
- make sure that nappy changing procedures for toddlers promote children's good health and hygiene
- make sure that children's play space is maintained according to minimum standards as set out in National Standard 4 at all times
- improve the risk assessment procedure to effectively identify potential hazards to children's safety with particular regard to electrical sockets, low-level glass windows at child-height in the upstairs playrooms and hazards at the top of the stair-case.
- provide evidence to show that enough staff are trained in first aid to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time



These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

### **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 the use of assessments to monitor children's progress: use key worker observations of what children enjoy and can do well to provide activities which offer appropriate challenge to all children (also applies to care)
- continue to improve the system for planning and assessment, making effective use of the all of the stepping stones to identify children's next steps and plan activities which build on existing knowledge and skills to extend their learning
- review the organisation of daily routines and large group activities so that they promote sustained thinking and opportunities for children to become independent, pursue their own interests and make choices are maximised (also applies to care)
- continue to improve systems for monitoring the overall quality of the provision and evaluating its impact, especially in relation to the progress of more able children (also applies to care).

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