

# Little Peoples Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY271645
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Cox
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Pauls Hall, Magdalen Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 4LN
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<b>Registered person</b>	Little Peoples Montessori 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Peoples Montessori Nursery is a privately registered group. It opened in September 2003 and operates from a converted church hall. It is situated in the suburbs of Norwich. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure outside play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from two to under school age on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, with several travelling, to attend the nursery. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and are trained in the Montessori approach. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy an attractive range of well balanced meals which are cooked on the premises using high quality fresh produce. Staff have a clear understanding of allergies, and dietary needs, and these are catered for accordingly. Children grow vegetables in the garden, and they are included in meals, and sometimes the children help with the preparation of tea. They help themselves to fruit for a snack or a drink of water as they wish. As a result, they are learning about healthy eating and how to meet their own needs in a range of positive ways.

Staff ensure information is obtained from parents about children's medical conditions and they take training to make sure they are able to respond appropriately to particular needs. Parents are consulted, if children become unwell during the session, so they may decide on the best action to take to give them sensitive support. If children have an accident, treatment is given promptly as staff are trained in first aid and a first aid box is readily available. A record of accidents is signed by parents so they are aware of what has happened to their children and they can take any further action needed to promote their care and welfare. However, although parents are told of the administration of medicines during the day they do not sign the record. As a result, there is a potential risk to children of parents misunderstanding what has been given. Children are learning how to manage their personal hygiene competently and little ones are sensitively supported as they acquire the required skills.

Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle by playing frequently in the fresh air and taking part in a range of activities which help them learn how their bodies work. They put on their coats and boots in cold weather and sun cream is used in the summer so they may play appropriately in a range of weathers. Children run, climb on the train and boat, ride wheeled toys, use small equipment and play a range of games. They dig in the garden and plant and tend the vegetables, use the hose pipe to water in dry weather and play with sand and water. When children are tired they understand they may find a mattress and blanket and rest or sleep according to their individual needs. Staff respect their decision to rest and make sure they are safe and comfortable.

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

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome and are eager to attend as the premises have been converted with children in mind and present as a bright and attractive, child centred environment. Staff are well-organised to enable them to work with the children and parents on arrival and the room is set out for children so they quickly engage in play. Posters and displays of work help children with their learning and they proudly show their work which is on the wall. Care has been taken in the choice of furniture which is all designed sensitively to promote children's independence. As a result, children confidently make their own choices and organise their play effectively choosing and replacing resources independently. Much Montessori equipment is used to help the children learn according to the ethos of the nursery and other resources are sensitively used in addition to these.

Children's safety is generally very well promoted. Staff conduct risk assessments and take appropriate action to maintain safety. The premises are secure and staff check, through the window, who is at the door to ensure only appropriate persons gain entry for the safety of all. Outside areas are fenced, with gates secured, to make sure children cannot leave without

supervision and people cannot have unauthorised access. Children easily manage the steps to the rear garden with little ones using the appropriately placed hand rail for support as needed. A gate to the kitchen enables children to talk to the chef, and see what is happening, but they do not have unsupervised access for their safety. Older children independently use the toilets and children who have an accident are sensitively changed to promote their self-esteem and welfare.

Children are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They all take care as they set out activities and know that tidying them up is part of their play and helps to keep them safe. This also helps them respect and value their resources. Children explain that they should not run inside, as they may have an accident, and show a poster made by a child to demonstrate this to all. Meeting the local fire brigade and road safety officer helps them understand about safety and pictures they have drawn are reminders for them. Fire drills are practised, and recorded, but they are not often enough to cover all children attending. The route to the rear of the building does not have appropriate lighting to ensure safe evacuation in the dark. Consequently, procedures are not fully effective to ensure the safety of children at all times.

All staff have a very good understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. A policy is in place to guide them appropriately and it is available to parents so they understand the group's responsibilities regarding the safety of their children. As a result, the welfare of children is safeguarded.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and arrive happy and eager to greet the staff and their friends. Warm relationships are displayed as news is exchanged and children join with others to play. They are sensitively supported by staff who show a love of working with them and understand how they learn in a variety of ways. Children spend most of their time engaged in activities, they choose for themselves, which promote their independence and self-esteem extremely well. Staff are adept at following children's interests and use these very effectively to develop learning opportunities as they arise. For example, a little child who wishes to play with a particular item is asked to go and find it. Staff watch as the child looks along the shelves, finds what is wanted and brings it back to the staff. Praise is given; the child is proud of the achievement and then works happily with the staff on the activity. Children showing an interest in magnets find the appropriate basket with resources, explore what the magnets will 'attract' and then thrill to using them around the room as staff watch and give positive encouragement. This is further developed as they look at a book together and then the children marvel at the effect the magnet, used under the table, has on items on the top. Children are eager to tell others what they have discovered.

Children thrive as they understand the staff are interested in and value what they say and do. Praise and encouragement is freely given and staff show consideration in many ways. For example, asking a child working on an activity if, when she has finished, she would like to come and paint her model at the craft table. The child says she would but understands she may finish what she is doing, pack it away and then go to paint. This enables children to complete one task to their satisfaction before moving to others which encourages them to take part in a range of activities happily. Outside play is considered important and children often have several opportunities to play in the fresh air each day. Staff plan focussed activities to support the

children's learning and development using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters' for the younger children.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals due to the way staff focus on the children as individuals, assess their stage of learning and help them take the next steps with sensitive support. The staff team clearly understands what they expect the children to learn and use Montessori principles sensitively in many ways to help them achieve this. They focus on children's interests and use these as starting points to develop learning opportunities which they adapt to the children's particular stage of development. Spontaneous observations are supported by longer observations so the key worker builds up a secure understanding of each child and how to give appropriate help. Children are happy and secure in their relationship with the staff. They listen to and follow instructions, chatter freely, pattern their behaviour on the positive role models of the staff and ask for help when they need it. As a result, children are confident and well motivated to learn. Staff ensure there is a good balance of activities for the children on the premises.

Children are confident and manage their personal needs well. They select resources, know how to use them appropriately and take responsibility for tidying up as a matter of course. Older children manage their own clothing and personal hygiene and recognise when they need a snack or a drink of water. Children are making friends and many greet each other enthusiastically as they arrive, then join together to play. They work happily with the staff often asking them to join in activities or sitting closely to enjoy a story or cuddle. Children chatter happily using language well to communicate their ideas and feelings. This is because staff take time to listen to them and ask good questions to help them think and organise their thoughts effectively. Children practice early reading and writing skills as they trace letters with their fingers, recognise letters on the wall, their name on their name card and peg and sound out some familiar letters as they see them in their play. They enjoy books for group stories, to read with staff or to find out information to support activities they select.

Children are learning a range of early mathematical skills. They count often in their free play and use the Montessori equipment to sort, group, consider size shape, weight and number. Sharing an orange with a member of staff encourages counting of the segments, how many there will be if they add more and how many will be left as they eat them. Consequently an enjoyable exercise to consolidate learning is used from a spontaneous event. Children enjoy playing outside in all weathers; they plant, tend and harvest a range of vegetables which are eaten in the nursery and understand that the 'scarecrow' they made will help to keep the birds and cats away from their plants. They are inquisitive and enjoy finding out about the inspector's computer, have a go, and look at the battery meter to work out if there is enough power or if it needs charging. Many children enjoy using the digital camera, and do so confidently, taking pictures of their friends at play and staff print these off to show parents and add to the children's files. Children learn about the wider world as they complete puzzles, look at flags, use the globes and find out how people live in other countries. They learn about festivals such as Divali, meet people from the local community, for example, the local vicar and are enraptured by an African story teller.

Children practise a range of large physical skills from climbing a small tree to negotiating obstacle courses and playing parachute games. Small muscle control is developing as they use an extensive range of small equipment such as tongs to move conkers, keys to lock and unlock padlocks, model clay, build and construct. Children's creative development is promoted as they

become engrossed in a range of craft activities. For example, they work together to make a large pumpkin and caldron then make individual bats and carefully colour pumpkin pictures in preparation for Halloween. They decorate their pictures by sprinkling glitter, recycling the excess for future use, adding sparkly shapes and taking pride in what they are doing. Yoga, ballet, and music sessions help the children exercise and express themselves in a variety of ways.

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

The provision is good.

Children are respected and valued as individuals. This is because staff take time to get to know them well and work effectively with parents to ascertain particular needs. Consideration is given to children learning English as an additional language to help them integrate and get on well with the other children and staff, as they learn the required language skills. Children's cultures are valued and activities encouraged promoting further understanding for all. Learning French is an enjoyable experience and helps all children understand how people communicate in a different language. Children take part in some fundraising activities to help support those less fortunate than themselves and meeting the local vicar and Buddhists extends their knowledge and understanding.

Although there are no children attending at present with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, staff show a clear understanding of how to integrate and include all children appropriately. They value the partnership with parents who are included in all decisions to support children and to help them make good progress according to their individual abilities. Involvement of other professionals is welcomed and staff are aware of how to adapt activities and manage the premises appropriately for children with special needs.

Children are learning to manage their own behaviour effectively due to the positive role models of the staff and the way they consistently implement the behaviour management policy. Children share, take turns, are considerate of others and are courteous as a matter of course. For example, when working at the craft table a child asks 'please may I have the silver after you?' A friend replies, 'yes, of course' and it is handed over receiving a polite 'thank you'. Staff give gentle reminders if behaviour is not as expected to help children understand whilst promoting their self-esteem. Consequently, children behave very well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents receive information about the nursery and are invited to visit to find out how it can meet the needs of their children. All children and families are supported on an individual basis and the procedure for settling is considered accordingly to ensure all are happy and confident. Staff and parents chat each day to make sure they are up to date to meet the needs of the children. Parents express their pleasure with the nursery in discussion and through a range of letters and cards that staff hold on file. Although there have not been any complaints, a system has been established to deal appropriately with any that may be received to promote the care and welfare of the children.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are relaxed, happy and chat freely to staff each day. They state they feel well informed about what their children are doing through these conversations, their children showing them the work they have done and chatting about nursery experiences. They are confident their children are making good progress, enjoying their time in nursery and having a balanced education. Few have seen or contributed to their children's assessment file on a regular basis and valuable information, showing how the Montessori

philosophy meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage, is not shared with parents. As a result, systems are not secure in fully developing the partnership in learning with parents to support all children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's safety is promoted as there are good procedures in place to appoint appropriate staff to work in the nursery. Suitability checks are undertaken and, until these are complete, staff do not work unsupervised in order to protect children. All the staff are trained and experienced in working with children and Montessori principles; they show a real pleasure in their work and are committed to training to develop and use their skills to benefit the children and families attending. Children benefit from good organisation; staff are ready to greet them and help meet their needs on arrival. The premises are set up ready for the children and maintained appropriately during the day so children play, rest and spend time in the garden to meet their needs. Staff have a clear understanding of keeping children safe and well, however, the administration of medicines record needs improving as do the evacuation procedures.

Good procedures are in place to gather and maintain information regarding children's health and welfare. Records are readily accessible and confidential as required. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. The proprietors share the management responsibilities and do this very effectively. They are both trained and experienced Montessori teachers and use their skills sensitively to enhance the education of the children. Care has been taken to link their work to the early learning goals and staff are well supported as they become familiar with this procedure. Observations, and the next steps in children's learning, are currently monitored and the recording is clear in the children's files. However, they are not effectively shared with parents. There is a commitment to staff training to make sure all keep up to date to further the children's education. A caring and sensitive approach enables staff to work effectively to meet the needs of the children and help all make very good progress.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was asked to: maintain a record of fire drills; make the operational plan available to parents and update the child protection policy. The provider now has a record of fire drills showing the action taken to help maintain safety. However, this is not fully effective and so is raised further in this report. The operational plan is readily available as required and the child protection policy now contains the information required to ensure children may be protected appropriately.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### 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 the administration of medicines record by ensuring parents sign the record to acknowledge the entry
- improve fire safety by ensuring all emergency exit routes are safe to use in the dark and all children are familiar with the evacuation procedure.

#### 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):

- provide more information for parents to help them understand what their children are learning and how to help them with this.

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)