

# Absolute Angels Montessori Nursery (Coggeshall)

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	404692
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<b>Registered person</b>	Absolute Angels Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Absolute Angels Montessori Nursery opened in 2000. The nursery is situated in Coggeshall, Essex. It operates from two rooms in a converted church which also includes office, laundry, kitchen and resources room. A maximum of 38 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open from 09:00 to 14:45, Monday to Thursday and 09:00 to 12:00 on Fridays, during term time only. Holiday sessions are occasionally available from 10:00 to 15:00. All children share access to two secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 72 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 44 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the town and surrounding local area.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff and has three volunteers. All hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery reflects the Montessori ethos and methods. Most of the staff have attended relevant Montessori training. The nursery receives support from the local authority and has achieved the Investors in People award.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is enhanced as they play in a very clean and hygienic environment where good personal hygiene is actively encouraged throughout the daily routine. Consequently, children understand why it is important to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Pictures of hand washing are displayed by the sinks to remind children to wash their hands properly using the liquid soap and individual paper towels provided. Children independently help themselves to tissues when they need to wipe their noses and automatically place used tissues into the bin. Throughout the day staff follow strict cleaning routines to ensure all areas remain thoroughly clean. For example, staff routinely check and clean the tables with antibacterial spray throughout the session, and nappy changing procedures followed are very clear and systematic to maintain high hygiene standards. In addition, children change into Wellington boots for outdoor play and wear shoes when indoors to ensure children's health is enhanced even further. Younger children can sleep peacefully in the comfortable quiet area on a floor bed with bedding which is washed frequently. Staff are dedicated in following the parents' wishes regarding sleep routines and are vigilant in monitoring any sleeping children.

Effective procedures are followed by all staff to ensure children receive good care should they have an accident or become unwell. For example, detailed records are kept when medicine is administered to children and information about accidents is also recorded and shared with parents. However, not all accident forms accurately log the exact location of the injury, which may compromise children's health as accurate information is not available to feedback to parents on collection. Staff are proactive in supporting children's individual medical needs as they all hold first aid certificates and some have completed training with a health care professional to enable them to safely administer specialist medication.

Children readily help themselves to accessible drinking water throughout the day. Children confidently pour their own drinks. Healthy and nutritious snacks are prepared in the kitchen. They feature seasonal fresh fruit and a range of savoury foods. High standards are maintained during the preparation of snacks by staff who have attended food hygiene training. A rolling snack time enables children to access their snack as required and allows time for individuals to eat at their own pace. Children clearly enjoy the social snack time where staff sit and support children as they encourage their good table manners. Healthy eating is consistently promoted and parents fully support this by providing children with healthy packed lunches. The nursery have received an award for their dedication to promoting healthy eating. Children's individual dietary needs are given high regard as staff obtain detailed information from parents which is displayed prominently in the kitchen for easy reference. Children are developing their understanding of healthy eating during frequent cooking activities. They care about and work to protect their environment by recycling their packaging and food waste at lunchtime, one child confidently describes to others around the table what recycling is.

Children have lots of energy and love to play in the inviting and inspiring outdoor area. They delight in sitting listening to the wind and playing with leaves as they take in the fresh air. Children busy themselves with a range of activities that develop their physical strength and co-ordination, contributing to a healthy lifestyle. For example, they build with large wooden construction blocks and jump safely from the climbing frame. Their spatial awareness is developed as they move around freely in the large hall during a drama session or negotiate their route through the well-placed hula hoops.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and cosy environment that is extremely safe. The organisation of space is very creative with attractive and colourful displays and photographs on the walls. A superb range of stimulating resources are stored at a low level which promotes children's independence extremely well. These provide a balanced range of activities that are interactive and promote children's learning in all areas. Toys and equipment for younger children are vibrant and stimulating, these provide a wide range of sensory experiences. Daily toy checks that are clearly documented ensure that all equipment is clean and well maintained. Thorough and consistent procedures ensure that any hazards to children are effectively minimised.

The premises are extremely secure and staff manage arrival and collection times safely using careful systems to ensure children's safety. Detailed and clear operational procedures for outings and emergencies are well planned and documented. Regular fire drills that are evaluated and documented ensure that staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire. Fire prevention equipment is regularly checked and all recommendations are met. Children are kept extremely safe on regular outings with good adult to child ratios and excellent forward planning. Written consents are obtained from parents for all outings where staff are extremely careful to ensure that venues are safe and suitable.

Children are extremely well protected from harm by knowledgeable and dedicated staff who have attended child protection training. Informative and relevant information is clearly displayed in order that correct procedures are followed in the event of a concern. Children are protected well by stringent policies and caring responsible staff.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children confidently settle when they arrive as they are welcomed by genuinely enthusiastic and loving staff who are very pleased to see them. They are clearly very reassured by the familiar daily routine, as they automatically find their coat peg and place personal items in their tray then cheerfully greet their friends. Children respond well as staff consistently sing cheerful songs when it is time for lunch or to tidy up. Staff are motivated by what children say and do and are consistently introducing children to new ideas and experiences. For example, feeding the nursery pets and thinking about the rainforest during group time. Children proudly take responsibility for tasks within the daily routine, helping to develop their independence. For example, they independently help themselves to drinks at snack time and happily place items on the tray for washing when they have finished.

Staff use their extensive knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to skilfully plan activities that fully incorporate the needs of younger children. Younger children experience excellent levels of support in the form of praise for their achievements and encouragement when they communicate their ideas. An excellent settling-in policy ensures that younger children are supported to deal with separation from their parents. For example, staff respect children's attachments and parents are invited stay and enjoy the session with their child so they can discuss the routines at home, helping to settle their children. The setting offers numerous treasure baskets containing a vast range of natural resources such as pegs, wooden spatulas, large pebbles, scarves and brushes, all of which stimulate children's senses and exploratory play. Children delight in the messy activities they are offered, for example, they freely use their hands to explore play dough, and roll and squeeze, making shapes of their choice.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Extremely well-structured planning incorporates Montessori equipment and principles with the Foundation Stage stepping stones. The staff all have excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They all contribute to the theme based planning. Topics are broken down and clearly linked to stepping stones in weekly plans. Staff are very careful to cover all areas and provide a balance of activities across all areas of learning. Children are frequently observed during activities by key worker staff. These observations are added to children's records and provide individual plans for each child to ensure that gaps are identified and they continue to make excellent progress. Children's achievements are verbally shared with parents on a daily basis and through notice boards. Staff are directly involved in children's learning and work on a one to one basis with a range of children throughout the session. Children's behaviour is exemplary throughout the session. Staff are highly skilled and resourceful at spotting opportunities to maximise children's learning potential. They follow children's interest and adapt activities to incorporate the ideas of the children. Consequently children are extremely motivated to learn.

Children are becoming increasingly independent as they learn to manage many tasks for themselves. They select and carry equipment and put on aprons and Wellington boots as they choose to go outside. Children play extremely well together in small groups, they regulate their play and congratulate one another on their achievements. Cultural and traditional days are planned for children, which respect the views and beliefs of others. Children's achievements are celebrated by staff who are very enthusiastic and display children's work on the wall giving them a sense of pride. Children are making excellent progress in their early writing. The children use the practical life equipment which is geared towards life skills and encourages children to use and develop fine motor skills in order to help their early writing skills. Children competently carry trays and carefully sort small round beads using tongs and spoons. They are starting to recognise simple words, some children are introduced to the concept of singular and plural through a practical activity. An organised and accessible book corner houses a range of both factual and fiction books, this area is highly supported by the use of volunteer 'reading ladies' who enrich and encourage the use of the area.

Children are making substantial progress in their mathematical development. They enjoy using an extensive range of Montessori equipment which enables them to learn about shape, space and weight. They recognise three-dimensional shapes and name them correctly when asked by staff. Measuring jugs and water encourage children to learn about quantity and capacity. Children have many opportunities to investigate, observe and explore for themselves. A wide range of outdoors activities stimulates their interest and curiosity and enhances their development in all areas of learning. Children thoroughly enjoy washing tables with bubbly water and sponges and use a range of materials where they learn about texture and state. Play dough, sand and rice all provide real experiences using natural materials. Children's interest in the world is enhanced by activities such as recreating the globe with balloons and papier-mâché or looking at books containing information about the rainforest. Children are encouraged to notice features of the local environment as they observe growing plants, seasonal changes and hatching eggs.

Children enjoy an extensive range of planned activities that support their physical development. Children are encouraged to manage coats and shoes with staff on hand to assist as and when required. They develop very good dexterous skills as they use the Montessori equipment. Buttons, locks and bolts encourage them to use the strength in their hands. Children persevere intently with tasks such as stretching coloured bands between pegs. A range of larger-scale

apparatus, including a slide and climbing frame, enables children to develop their physical abilities. There are many opportunities for children to be creative. Children engage in imaginary play when outside, sitting on benches and in the play house. The session pace allows children the space and time to develop different imaginary roles through their play. Children enjoy the highly planned and well thought out opportunities provided through the vibrant and stimulating drama sessions, and learn about rhythm and tempo when 'walking the line', an activity requiring skill and coordination.

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

The provision is good.

The children in this setting are valued and have a good sense of belonging. Children settle well and play happily together. Parents are welcomed into the setting which enables staff to get to know families very well. Children are encouraged to discuss their home lives, this helps them feel accepted and part of the community. All children are included as staff offer the right amount of support and adapt activities well to fully promote inclusion. Children are able to make choices about how to spend their time as the session is relaxed and allows time for completing chosen activities. Small group sizes encourage children to socialise and build relationships with each other. Staff ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community, this helps children develop a positive attitude to others. They celebrate a range of festivals and traditional days throughout the year. The children are interested and motivated to find out about other cultures and beliefs. They learn through hands-on experiences such as cooking, tasting and dance. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting has a very positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The designated member of staff has training and experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This enables the nursery to meet individual needs well, complying with the required code of practice. Staff have a good understanding of how to best support children, working closely with parents and utilising support and additional resources in order to meet the needs of each child. Clear documentation underpins practice and outlines specific intentions for children. Staff work closely with other professionals to provide continuity of care and gain further insight into how to best support individual children.

Behaviour is of a consistently high standard. Children become engrossed in a wide range of purposeful and developmentally-appropriate activities. Staff use strategies such as positive reinforcement and good prompts, for example, to give indication to children that it is time to tidy up. Staff demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries, yet reasonably challenging expectations, and children are consistently well-behaved and polite. A written policy underpins practice and ensures that parents know the behavioural expectations of the nursery. Any behaviour incidents are recorded and shared with parents, to ensure a consistent line of action is taken.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is outstanding. Parents are made extremely welcome into the nursery by friendly and approachable staff. They collect their children and are clearly relaxed as they chat with staff and take children's work. Parents have excellent opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. A parents evening enables parents to share children's developmental records and discuss their child's progress. Photographs showing children enjoying activities are linked to areas of learning and consequently parents have a clear understanding of how children learn in the Foundation Stage. A personalised prospectus has been developed to provide information about the routines,

activities and curriculum. An extremely informative notice board provides relevant and up-to-date information regarding recent updates and nursery news. Parents speak extremely positively about the nursery, detailing many aspects of the excellent practice including the special friendly atmosphere, consistent mature staff and systems of communication. A clear complaints procedure is readily available should it be required. Detailed and informative written agreements provide details of children's needs in order that they can be looked after according to parents' wishes.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by genuinely dedicated and motivated staff who are well qualified and experienced in meeting children's individual needs. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are safeguarded, including a successful procedure for the induction of new staff. Staff are vigilant to ensure children are never left alone with adults who have not been suitably vetted.

Children's care, learning and play are greatly enhanced by effective organisation of all aspects of the provision. Staff have a very good knowledge of the National Standards and understand how to promote very good outcomes for children. Children experience consistently high levels of supervision and direct support as the adult: child ratios are above requirements and staff deployment is expertly managed. This ensures there are always ample staff available to cover for staff absence or emergencies. Attendance registers log sessional attendance for children and staff on a daily basis, however, at the time of inspection no system was in place to record children's and staff actual hours of arrival and departure. The principal and administrator work effectively with the staff to continually review policies and procedures in the detailed operational plan, ensuring that children are offered consistent care. Children benefit from ongoing improvement at the setting. All staff are involved in completing the self-evaluation process and they are skilful in identifying new ways to build on their existing very good practice.

The leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. Staff work together as a highly motivated and cohesive team as they share a commitment to offering the best possible experiences to children and their families. The Foundation Stage curriculum is expertly delivered as all staff are involved in contributing to weekly reflection and planning meetings. As a result, children benefit from activities which embrace their interests and they experience consistency in the teaching they receive. Children benefit significantly as staff strive for outstanding practice, constantly monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. Annual staff appraisals provide valuable opportunities for all staff to reflect on their individual strengths and to identify their individual training needs, which are prioritised.

Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

### **Care**

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the nursery was required to: review and update procedures for completing registers, taking children on outings and the policies for National Standards 7: Health and 13: Child Protection. All procedures have been updated to reflect current practice regarding registers and outings, however some changes are still required to ensure registers reflect actual hours of children's and staff attendance, which have been raised as a recommendation at this inspection. Other policies for health and child protection

are fully reflective of all requirements within the National Standards and are reviewed regularly and updated if necessary. These policies and procedures ensure children's health and safety is promoted through the underpinning practice demonstrated by all staff.

## Nursery Education

At the last inspection, to improve the nursery education, the nursery was required to: consider and implement a system to use as a formal evaluation of the quality of nursery education being provided. Regular staff meetings, appraisals and activity evaluation provide opportunities for all staff to become involved in evaluating the quality of the nursery education. The nursery is committed to providing extremely high quality education based on the children's interests and individual needs, therefore children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals.

### Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 outstanding.

### 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 all accident forms consistently and accurately log the exact location of the injury
- ensure an accurate record is maintained of children's and staff actual hours of attendance on a daily basis.

#### 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)