

# Pippins Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY282196
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Justine Leong
<b>Setting Address</b>	Whites Farm, Bures Road, White Colne, Colchester, Essex, CO6 2QF
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<b>Registered person</b>	Scobie & Huckle T/A Pippins
<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 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?

Pippins Montessori has been open for a number of years and has been running under the current ownership since 2004. The nursery is situated in a converted barn in the rural village of White Colne, Essex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The group opens five days per week during school term time and a holiday club operates during the school holidays. Sessions are from 08:30 to 16:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 96 children from two to eight years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for early education. Pippins Montessori serves the local area and surrounding villages and towns. The setting supports children learning difficulties and/or disabilities and would support children with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and seven staff hold an International Montessori Diploma. The setting receives support from the National Day Nurseries Association, Essex Day Nursery Association and the Association Montessori International.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is extremely well promoted at this setting as practitioners follow stringent daily routines in order to maintain hygiene. Children are able to independently access suitable hand washing facilities and clear visual reminders are in place to ensure correct procedures are followed. Staff consistently remind children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating and explain why this is important. Children are able to confidently state that this will stop germs from spreading.

Children receive exceptionally high quality care if they become ill or have an accident whilst at the nursery as all staff are aware of individual health needs and all required documentation and training is in place to support this. Four members of staff hold current first aid certificates and there is an appropriately stocked first aid box and well-maintained accident book to ensure children's health is well protected in the event of a medical emergency.

Children's individual needs with reference to food and drink are exceptionally well met as they are able to select their own fruit, vegetables and drink at a time that suits them. They are developing excellent independence as they pour their own drinks of milk or water and register when they have finished their snack by placing a wooden apple with their name on it in the correct location. Staff provide exciting and dynamic opportunities for children to further develop their understanding of healthy foods as they grow their own vegetables for snack or visit the nearby orchard to pick fruit to use in cooking activities. Children bring their own packed lunches to the setting and these are appropriately stored to keep them cool.

Children thoroughly enjoy physical activity as they access the exciting, imaginative and stimulating garden. They have excellent opportunities to take risks whilst remaining safe. For instance children carefully climb low ramps, balance beams and jump off, under constant supervision by vigilant staff. Staff actively encourage children to explore their environment, such as the nearby orchard, and have recently purchased waterproof suits to ensure bad weather is not a barrier to this. Children have fantastic opportunities to develop physical skills such as coordination, movement and balance as they join in enthusiastically with yoga sessions at the setting. They also benefit from regular swimming sessions under the direction of qualified swimming teachers. Children's fine motor skills are successfully developed through the thoughtful and imaginative provision of a broad range of activities and resources. For example, children play with padlocks, turning keys and persisting when they struggle to open the lock.

The needs of younger children are superbly met by the dedicated and caring staff, who demonstrate a clear understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, enabling them to become a healthy child. The provision of a safe and stable environment, where consistent staff are familiar to children ensures their emotional well-being is extremely well promoted.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a bright, welcoming and extremely child-friendly environment. The premises have been meticulously planned to ensure children have plenty of space to move around and have access to all necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development. Staff give security very high priority and the main door is closely monitored when

children arrive and depart. There is a clear notice on the gate to remind parents and visitors to lock it and staff are vigilant and check it when all the children have arrived, helping to ensure children remain safe. Visitors are thoroughly vetted on arrival at the setting and are required to sign the visitors book.

Furniture and storage have been carefully considered to ensure they create an accessible and stimulating environment in which children can flourish. Children access an extensive range of toys and resources that are stored at suitable height for them to select safely and independently. All toys and resources are regularly cleaned and checked for signs of damage to ensure they remain safe for children to play with.

Children are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe through regular fire drills and by gentle reminders from staff such as walking indoors and sitting to work with scissors. Children are able to confidently state that holding scissors correctly whilst walking will help to prevent accidents. Comprehensive risk assessments help to ensure children are kept safe on outings. Children often go for walks whilst at the setting and staff use the opportunity to teach children valuable lessons about road safety.

Children's welfare is very well promoted as staff have a clear understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Several members of staff have undertaken training in child protection and all are aware of the setting's comprehensive child protection policy, ensuring they would know what to do if they had concerns about a child in their care.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting and are making excellent progress in all areas of development. The dedicated and knowledgeable staff know the children extremely well and offer an individual approach to ensure each child's needs are met. Activities for younger children are planned using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and provide purposeful opportunities for children to become skilful communicators. For example, staff listen attentively to children playing with bubbles and encourage them to think about what they can see and feel through effective questioning.

Children are also becoming competent learners as many activities use familiar objects, helping children make links to their own experiences and build on what they already know. Children have access to a broad range of imaginative resources such as telephones and home corner equipment and staff offer sensitive support to encourage them to explore feelings and ideas through play.

Children form warm and trusting relationships with staff due to their caring nature and consistently supportive attitudes. Staff are extremely attentive and clearly value the children's contributions, helping to develop very good self-esteem and confidence. Children are actively encouraged to be independent at the setting and, as a result are extremely self-sufficient from a very early age.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. All staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn and develop. Most staff at the setting have undertaken Montessori training and planning effectively links the Montessori philosophy with the Foundation Stage to ensure children make as much progress as possible.

Activities are tailored to individual children's stages of development and therefore provide precise opportunities for them to be challenged and to problem solve.

All staff play an active role in devising the planning; they implement long, medium and short term plans which cover all aspects of learning equally. Stimulating activities are based on children's interests to ensure they remain engaged and focused and children are often involved in the planning of structured activities helping to ensure they are fully included in their own learning. Effective teaching methods successfully promote children's independence, perseverance and ability to concentrate on a task. A flexible and child-centred approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace.

Children's progress is regularly monitored and recorded using a system which has been effectively adapted to link Montessori methods with the relevant Stepping Stones. Staff can easily identify which stepping stone children have reached and at the end of their time at the setting their developmental records are available for parents to take to their child's new school.

Children's behaviour is exemplary as the staff act as very positive role models and are consistently attentive, polite and respectful to children and other adults. The learning environment is calm and productive and effective systems are in place to ensure it remains that way. For instance, children independently ring a triangle to gain attention when they need to remind others to use 'inside voices' so it doesn't get too noisy.

Children are developing very effective communication skills. They confidently share their thoughts with staff and staff listen attentively, demonstrating that their ideas are valued. Children are also using speech to play with other children. For instance, playing together to build with wooden bricks, two children developed their ideas of what to build from a house to a spaceship. They then cooperate to finish their model, deciding together which shaped bricks to use. Children have valuable opportunities to share books with staff, either in groups in the well-stocked book corner or during individual reading sessions using a reading scheme. Children are developing a clear understanding that print carries meaning and are handling books for enjoyment. Children also have independent access to a wide range of stimulating mark making resources such as crayons, pencils, chalks and pens, and are developing very good pencil control.

Children are using language to describe space, shape and position as they play with the superb range of interesting maths resources. For example, children explore large wooden shapes using all their senses and then use clear maths language to remember and describe how each looked and felt, during a memory game with staff. Children are developing good number recognition as staff work with them to trace the shape of numbers and put them in the correct order. Daily routines such as registration are also used effectively as a valuable opportunity for children to use numbers in context, as they count how many children are present.

Children are developing a considerable understanding of the world around them as staff plan stimulating activities such as nature walks around the local environment. Children have fantastic opportunities to learn about the seasons and how things grow as they visit the nearby orchard to look at the trees or pick fruit and also visit the farm to observe the baby animals. Staff use effective questioning to support and challenge children and to encourage them to ask their own questions about how things work and why things happen.

Children have regular access to a computer where they independently use a range of programmes, helping to develop a good understanding of everyday uses of information and

communication technology. They also benefit from opportunities to play with programmable toys and listen to music on individual music players. Children are beginning to know about their cultures and beliefs and those of others as they explore and discuss a range of interesting artefacts from different cultures and use maps and globes to learn about the wider world.

Children have valuable opportunities to explore colour, shape and texture as they access creative activities such as painting, making models and cutting and sticking with tissue paper. Weekly craft sessions provide excellent opportunities for children to participate in a broad range of stimulating creative activities such as clay modelling or making mosaics. Children enthusiastically participate in dance lessons provided by a visiting dance teacher, helping them use imagination and match music to movement.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely settled and happy at this nursery. Their individual needs are superbly acknowledged by staff who spend time getting to know them and their family prior to the child commencing at the setting. For example, the nursery runs a successful open afternoon every week to allow prospective parents and their children to visit and get to know staff and routines. Clear and comprehensive information about each child's needs are shared with staff through their personal details forms and their child profile and staff use this to inform their excellent practice and ensure that they provide children with an individual approach.

Children develop a very secure sense of belonging as they identify their own space, for example, each child finds their own name plate on entering and places it in the correct location to register that they are present. Children's birthdays are acknowledged and a colourful photograph board in the entrance hall clearly shows which children will be celebrating their birthday that month. Imaginative and innovative systems are in place such as individual photograph albums for each child using photographs of family members and friends. Children can independently access these at any time and share them with staff, helping to ensure emotional needs are extremely well met.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about diversity and a range of countries and cultures as they enthusiastically celebrate a range of festivals including Chinese New Year and Divali. Staff provide a range of interesting artefacts from around the world for children to explore and to stimulate thought and discussion. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported as several staff members have undertaken relevant training and have substantial knowledge of meeting a wide range of needs. Staff are proactive in seeking support from external agencies and work willingly alongside parents to ensure that all individual needs are met and all children are fully included in the setting.

Children's care and welfare is extremely well-promoted as the staff and parents have developed a close working relationship. They share important information about the children's needs, likes and dislikes and effective ongoing verbal and written communication ensures that staff and parents are kept up to date with any significant events. There is a clear and effective complaints procedure in place which is shared with parents.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive extensive information about the educational programme at the setting as staff create individual learning plans for each child and share them with parents on a monthly basis. Parents benefit from the opportunity to contribute to plans and ongoing assessment of children's progress is regularly shared with parents. This ensures parents and carers are fully involved in their children's learning and helps them to continue the learning at home. Parents and carers also receive regular newsletters and a notice board is in place, clearly displaying important information about the setting. The setting is proactive in seeking parents' views and questionnaires are sent out twice a year to allow parents to comment on the setting and give their feedback. Parents also have valuable opportunities to learn more about Montessori methods and practice at the nursery through the provision of regular information evenings.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The nursery is exceptionally welcoming and very effectively organised to support children's care, learning and play. Children clearly benefit from being cared for by dedicated, caring and experienced practitioners who are fully committed to ensuring that all children receive the highest quality of care and education. The nursery has an excellent ratio of trained staff and a strong commitment to their ongoing professional development, ensuring that children are cared for and educated by staff with a comprehensive understanding of current childcare practice. Very good ratios throughout the setting enable staff to give individual attention to children when required.

Space and resources are effectively organised to enable children to participate in a wide range of activities at the same time, for example, children paint a picture at the easel whilst others enjoy making shortbread biscuits or share a story book with staff. Effective, informative and well maintained documents are in place to ensure the smooth running of the setting and to fully support children's individual needs.

The leadership and management is outstanding. Stringent recruitment and induction procedures ensure that children are cared for by adults who have an exceptionally good understanding of child development. Training is positively encouraged and staff feel supported, and are motivated and committed to their own personal development. Staff are fully included in all aspects of the nursery and are regularly consulted to identify areas of strength or areas for improvement.

Children benefit as the manager and deputy are enthusiastic, motivated and forward thinking. The manager undertakes regular monitoring of curriculum delivery, ensuring that the quality of nursery education is consistently high to enable children to continue to reach their maximum potential. Plans are in place that will further develop the nursery and strong links with outside agencies and professionals ensure an inclusive environment is promoted. Staff are knowledgeable and experienced and work very well with the manager to form a strong dynamic team. Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **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**

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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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)