

# Tudor House Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY241503
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Christine Clint
<b>Setting Address</b>	Gloucester Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 0QD
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<b>Registered person</b>	Carol-Anne Benson
<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 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?

Tudor House Montessori Nursery has been registered since 2002. It is a privately owned group under the same management as The Hickory Montessori Nursery, Lindfield Montessori Nursery and the Victorian Lodge Day Nursery. It operates from an extended house in Burgess Hill, West Sussex.

There are three playrooms on the ground floor with adjoining sleep facilities and three enclosed gardens. There are also two Montessori classrooms on the first floor. Toilets, nappy change and hand washing facilities are all easily accessible from the group rooms. The nursery opens throughout the year, from 07:30 to 18:00, closing only for one week in the summer, one week at Christmas and for all bank holidays.

There are currently 71 children, aged from five months to four years, on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Staff are experienced in supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

A team of 16 staff work with the children. There are 12 staff who hold recognised early years qualifications and a further two staff who are currently undertaking early years training. All

staff have access to additional training and are supported by the Montessori teacher. Staff combine a traditional Montessori curriculum with early years teaching methods, such as learning through play.

The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the West Sussex Montessori Forum. The nursery regularly receives support from the local early years network and staff are working towards a quality assurance accreditation. At the time of the inspection 29 children were present.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children and babies health is fully promoted throughout the nursery and staff show an excellent awareness of linking children's comfort and wellbeing with their happiness and ability to settle. Regular daily routines are included and these are implemented from a young age, giving children clear opportunities to begin to develop their independence, whilst staff readily provide support and guidance. For example, the nursery introduced systems to enable parents to send toothbrushes and now all children and babies clean their teeth regularly throughout the day. Potty training is included according to parents wishes and very successfully managed by the staff to fit with the individual needs of babies or toddlers. Nappy changing is efficiently and hygienically managed; changing units are sterilised after each use and staff wear aprons and gloves. They show a warm and caring attitude in making children comfortable and they fully hold children's attention whilst changing them to keep them occupied.

Older children are very aware of the daily routines and they know that they must wash their hands before snacks and after toileting. They show confidence in being able to ask staff for help. They are learning to manage their own clothes and shoes for regular outside activities and they are given time to practise putting on their socks and praised for achievements. The nursery routines include the removal of all shoes before entering the baby room, because children spend most of their play time on the floor. Staff are diligent in maintaining hygiene throughout the day and clean up totally before and after lunch and snack time.

Children's daily needs for sleep are clearly prioritised to maintain their health. Babies each have a cot for the day and sleep according to their needs. They have individual sleeping bags and wear nursery baby gowns, for comfort whilst they sleep. Staff check them every 10 minutes and record this on charts. Toddlers rest after lunch and staff arrange sleep mats on the floor, they settle and supervise children diligently.

Children's health is fully promoted because there are clear procedures for all medical needs and these thoroughly meet the regulations. All documentation for medical needs and accident records are fully in place in children's individual files. The first aid kit is easily available and many staff hold up-to-date certificates in first aid training. The nursery has a full policy in place to explain the routines for children who are unwell and to inform parents about attendance.

Children have nutritious food and main meals are provided by an outside company. There are menus displayed for parents and staff happily rotate the daily responsibility to manage and serve the food. Children eat their lunch in two sittings and this is mainly to offer younger children and babies their food first, because they are hungry. They all show enthusiasm and eat eagerly because they have all been outside playing in the fresh air. Snacks, breakfast and

tea time food is provided by the nursery and staff endeavour to include organic items as often as possible. Babies and toddlers sit in a circle at snack time to eat apple flavour rice cakes. They all have individual named cups and parents send all requirements for babies who need bottle feeding, including the water in measured amounts. Older children can access drinking water at any time from the fountain or water dispensers. They have ample fruit at snack time and often prepare this themselves. Each nursery room has a black board for daily information and any children who have allergies or medical needs are named to ensure that staff remember their needs.

Children have innovative opportunities for increasing their physical development in the outdoor areas. There are three separate gardens to enable children of different ages to play safely and with different equipment. Older children help to paint the large cardboard tepee, which staff have purchased. They stretch to reach the top and use different brightly coloured paint. Children also paint the fence with water and enjoy using larger brushes to make marks. They shovel sand, they balance on stones and they chase the pet rabbit who freely runs in one of the secure areas.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very safe and secure in the nursery because the premises are well organised and adapted to meet the different needs of the children attending. Children are very safely cared for in each dedicated nursery room. This is flexibly managed during the day and according to needs; children's allocated room depends on age and stage of development. Children do move around the nursery regularly and spend frequent time in the outside areas all year round; this is often available for children to choose freely during the warmer weather. Children are very effectively supervised because there is a constant high ratio of staff to children and all facilities are available. The main entrance is always secured with a chain and staff show diligence for carrying this out during the day. The access to the provider's section of the house is secure because the door handle opens in the opposite direction and this prevents children from opening it.

Play equipment and resources in each of the nursery rooms is entirely suitable and safe for the age of children attending. There is ample low level storage and all equipment and areas of play are well labelled for children to learn to identify. Babies can look at their reflection in the safe mirror, positioned at a low level. They can crawl in comfort and there is a separate section for separating mobile and non-mobile babies. They have many natural items available to experience heuristic play. As children progress through the nursery they learn that activities take place in different areas of the room, and they can easily paint and reach the low sink. Older children are learning to manage their own safety very effectively. They are accustomed to the outside stairs and manage these several times a day. They adeptly use the outdoor equipment and confidently manage all the available resources in the upstairs classrooms. This includes a wide range of Montessori learning equipment.

Children and staff regularly practise fire drills and these are well recorded; new staff are introduced to the evacuation procedures swiftly. The nursery has all fire equipment in place, including emergency lighting and these are frequently checked. There are comprehensively recorded risk assessments available and these are completed daily; any areas of concern are highlighted for action. There are thoroughly prepared procedures in place to ensure that staff know what to do if a child is lost, or not collected. Children often visit places locally or spend time in the provider's other nearby nursery. They sometimes go shopping with staff or visit the

post office. All written permission is gained and children learn about safety when walking with staff.

Children's welfare is fully maintained because all staff have in-house training in child protection and senior staff members take responsibility in each nursery room. They fully recognise that it is their duty to discuss any concerns with the provider or manager, who have a very clear knowledge of the procedures to be followed. The nursery policy includes information to show how any allegations against staff would be managed. Parents are suitably informed of the nursery's duty to respond to any concerns about children and they are asked to sign any records of injuries that children have on arrival.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy, settled and secure, because they are provided with fully individual care and children's ever changing needs are responded to throughout the day. Toddlers who have attended for several days only, show a need for affection and close contact and this is fully understood and fulfilled by staff. The smallest children have continual emerging language and express themselves through movement during their activities, they are motivated and excited because staff encourage and respond to them. Children look at their own reflections and notice movements and expressions. They learn the names of simple items and what these are used for, because staff carry out the actions of combing hair and drinking from a cup. They put socks on and take them off, they learn to stir with a spoon. Children are encouraged to understand about sharing and taking turns from a very young age. They have opportunities to learn from spending time with the older children and watching their outside activities. Their flexible care includes a gentle transition between rooms as children progress.

Slightly older children respond enthusiastically to music, especially when staff play the guitar. They alternate their movements between quietly laying on the floor and sleeping, to jumping up and wearing bouncing shoes, or jiggling shoes. Children laugh and move happily, they show great excitement. They benefit because of the high level of staff involvement, which encourages children's understanding and enthusiasm for extending their abilities. This also builds strong, positive relationships with staff and celebrates children's achievements. The nursery includes photographic home made books which show children as babies with their families and these follow them through the nursery with additional photographs as they grow. The books are used to reassure children and help them to settle when they change rooms. There is also a Montessori birthday walk celebration which links children with the sun and the earth. The small ceremony is performed in a circle and relates to the universe and the passing of time.

Children's progress in the younger rooms of the nursery is comprehensively assessed using the Birth to three matters framework. Staff show excellent skills of nurturing and extending children's learning through physical movements and freedom of expression. They record observations frequently and link this immediately to the aspects of children's development. The records are used to build on children's continual learning and to plan for future activities; they are also linked with children's further development records as they progress through the nursery.

Nursery education.

Children are learning about being kind and considerate towards each other and staff include opportunities to talk about this during stories and group times. They join in with group activities

and paint the tepee together, they take turns and learn to share equipment during the sandwich making activity. Staff use clear explanation and sometimes leave the older children to negotiate themselves. Children follow the Montessori principles of placing items back when they have finished with them. They are increasingly independent in their personal care and show real social skills at meal times. Children are very confident and seek each other for sharing imaginary ideas and they show strength in being able to play alone, especially when using the Montessori equipment.

Children fully enjoy conversations and extending their thoughts, they listen attentively to stories and read from pictures. They recognise and understand actions from the descriptions in the song book and they learn and repeat these words. They write a list of items to take on a bear hunt, they form letters well and show emergent writing. They have ample opportunities to experiment with mark making during inside and outside play. Children have many opportunities to see words which are used as labelling around the room. They are learning letter sounds and new words. Children sit happily for stories whether in a large group or for spontaneous stories, they listen fully and concentrate. Children use their imaginations spontaneously and often while playing with the small Montessori life skills equipment, they pour cups of tea and say they are going to have a party. They take on the roles of characters in a story and say or sing their lines when prompted; they wear masks to identify their role. Children sing readily and recognise songs from seeing a star shape. They move rhythmically in response to music and enjoy the guitar playing in the garden. They practise tapping out a rhythm to taped music and they learn to sing a new song and remember the words.

Children count spontaneously and frequently. They individually count the number of teddies they put inside an envelope, they talk about size when making the egg sandwiches and count the eggs as they pass them around to make sure everyone has an egg. Children purposefully select and carry out counting tasks with the Montessori equipment, emptying out all the wooden pieces and counting them in the correct sections. They use wedge shapes for mathematical learning and fit these together like a puzzle. Children readily count and identify number symbols and they can recognise and name shapes and sizes. Children have ample opportunities to increase their knowledge of the wider world. They share experiences and talk about having hens at home, they know how to crack eggs on the side of the bowl and say that they do this with Granny. They identify many creatures that live in the sea from pictures and they practise small regular routines with the Montessori equipment. Children pretend they are racing on horses and have binoculars to enable them to see the races. They use the garden extensively and have participated in planting and growing flowers. They visit the post office and the shop locally and they often go to the jointly owned nursery nearby for tea.

Children's physical development is strongly encouraged through everyday activities in the fresh air and through the finer movements needed when using the Montessori equipment. The nursery has three excellent outdoor areas which provide different environments for the children. Staff plan and provide a variety of learning opportunities and these are closely linked with the early learning goals. Children climb and jump, they manoeuvre wheeled toys, they run and balance on different surfaces. They use implements for sandwich making, they learn to stir, pour and mix, they manage very well and relish the continual opportunities.

The quality of the teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff are knowledgeable and very accomplished, in their understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and in the Montessori methods used in the nursery. They hold children's attention well and enable all children to participate fully in planned activities and they ensure that they are actively involved to encourage learning. Staff show an entirely consistent approach to enabling children to think, understand

and learn through their activities and daily routines. Children are eager and willing to respond to staff and each other and this shows that the strong caring ethos of the nursery encourages children's learning.

The planning for activities is totally based on children's individual interests because staff observe and record these. They then plan using these individual interests and often information from home as well. The children's development profiles are superbly completed to show that staff are recognising and recording their progress. The records clearly show links with parents, key workers and children's achievements. There are thorough systems to manage and plan for children's next steps. Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging for all age groups. Activities are fully matched, planned and evaluated for children's individual levels of learning. Staff provide a highly stimulating and welcoming environment.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are inspired to learn about the wider world because there are pictures and information is displayed in each nursery room. They sing French songs with enthusiasm, they learn words in Spanish and they readily celebrate festivals from other cultures. Staff are willing to learn more to enable them to understand and they have attended cultural diversity courses. The nursery shows strong support for individual children who are learning English as a second language, because they provide picture 'time lines' to help with routines. Staff also sign with hand movements and use simple words to enable children to understand and learn. Parents are greeted with a welcome sign in many languages and children have books, puzzles and dolls throughout the nursery that reflect a multi cultural society.

Children's needs are paramount in all aspects of the nursery and their individual care shows that staff support this thoroughly. They have previously cared for children with learning difficulties and have found that the Montessori equipment they use, provides very effective learning opportunities because it is so tactile. Staff have experience and are prepared to link with parents and other agencies, they understand the processes to be followed to ensure that children are supported and that effective liaison is maintained.

Children behave extremely well at all times because of staff interest and involvement in their activities and their daily routines. The attention provided in the baby room ensures that children feel nurtured and valued from the start. Children have increasing opportunities to manage themselves as they move through the nursery and staff use gentle reminders and encourage older children to negotiate to share play equipment. Children are continually praised by staff for the efforts they make. Staff are superb role models and show politeness and a caring attitude at all times. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children are entirely happy because their parents have strong links with nursery staff. The high ratio of staff to children in the nursery, enables staff or managers to be readily available to talk to parents and especially to organise individual settling routines and manage the care of babies. Parents are provided with a prospectus and a welcome pack which gives full information about the nursery. There are numerous notice boards and up-to-date information is shared. All regulatory permission from parents is in place and this is confidentially maintained. Parents have access to all policies and procedures, they are well informed and aware of the complaints process. Key worker staff provide an excellent handover to parents when they collect, this is informal and relaxed with clear information about the child's day and how happy they have been. Parents contact the

nursery at any time to check on their children and staff offer reassurance and specific details, according to the parent and child's needs.

Parents are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum, they visit the nursery and learn how the Montessori equipment is used; they attend an open evening every year. There are organised systems in place to enable parents to share information regarding children's achievements and to see the development profiles. Parents are encouraged to support and extend children's learning at home because they have activity sheets to show what children have learned at nursery and they can note their own observations or repeat the activities. The learning process has a full circle intention.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care and learning is purposefully organised and adapted to meet children's individual needs. There are clear systems in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and full details are held. The nursery has a well established operational plan and thorough policies and procedures are in place; these are shared across the four nurseries owned by the provider and reviewed regularly according to any changes. The provider and manager show a comprehensive understanding of all regulatory requirements, they have wide knowledge and experience. They organise the staff very successfully to manage the key person system for individual children. A high level of qualified staff are employed, they show strong levels of professionalism and work well together. They plan and provide a wide variety of activities and share many responsibilities. There are training opportunities for staff to update their knowledge and they are all regularly appraised; the provider and manager recognise the need to offer challenge and extra responsibilities as staff progress.

The registration certificate is in place in the entrance area and all children's attendance is meticulously timed; staff also diligently sign in and out and all visitors are timed on the premises. A record is also available in each nursery room of children present and this is altered accordingly, during the day.

The leadership and management is outstanding.

There is a very professional approach to managing the nursery and supporting staff to enable them to develop. The nursery ethos for care includes the staff, and this encouragement enables staff to negotiate and share responsibilities with each other. There are sound links with the local early years network and with other providers of care and learning in the locality. There are organised, regular staff meetings across the nursery group and within the individual nursery, this encourages a sharing of ideas and daily practice. The nursery also has a very full evaluation process in place which clearly reflects on the ongoing processes for care and learning. The provider has a very clear vision for the future and seeks up-to-date information regularly. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was asked to review the current procedures for identifying individual children's drinks. The nursery now ensures that all drinking cups, whether these belong to children or the nursery, are named. This fully protects children from any cross-contamination and maintains hygiene. The nursery also now provide water dispensers and a drinking fountain, so that children can access drinking water at any time.



The provider was also asked to ensure that curriculum plans reflect the extensive amount of daily activities provided. Plans clearly show a wide variety of activities which are now individually planned for children and an audit of all equipment used for the Foundation Stage curriculum has been completed. This ensures that children have a wide variety in their opportunities for learning.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)