

Plympton Montessori Nursery & Kids Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117146
Inspection date	26 March 2008
Inspector	Janet Butlin
Setting Address	Plympton Montessori Nursery, Meadowfield Place, Plymouth, Devon, PL7 1XQ
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Registered person	Partnership of M Taylor & L Taylor
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Plympton Montessori Nursery opened in 1998 and operates from a prefabricated building in the grounds of Yealmpstone Farm School in Plympton, a largely residential suburb of Plymouth. There is a dedicated lawned area for outside play and a securely fenced all weather surface shared by the school. The nursery is open from 07.30 until 18.15, Monday to Friday throughout the year. The setting cares for up to 28 children aged from two to school age. In addition before and after-school care and holiday care is available for children up to 11 years. There are currently 33 children on roll in the nursery, 21 of whom are in receipt of funding. The nursery supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are no children who have English as an additional language. A staff of four support the provision, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The proprietors are qualified teachers and are Montessori trained. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of protecting themselves from infection as they wash their hands before they eat and after they use the lavatory. They use liquid soap and paper towels and this effectively protects them from the risk of cross infection. Children who become unwell or have an accident whilst at the setting receive good care as all staff are qualified in first aid and all necessary consents are in place. Effective systems are in place to record what has happened as well as the administering of any medication.

Children enjoy healthy snacks of fresh fruit and salad vegetables. They help themselves to a drink of water whenever they want one and this ensures they remain well hydrated. Children bring packed lunches from home and staff ensure that perishable contents are promptly refrigerated so that they remain fresh. Children are encouraged to progress through their lunchboxes in a healthy fashion. They are provided with plates and the savoury contents are set out first. Parents generally respond well to the nursery's encouragement to pack the lunchboxes with healthy, nutritious items.

Children enjoy the benefits of fresh air every day. They run and climb in the all weather surfaced playground, exercising their large muscles and developing a good awareness of space. In the summer they also use the nursery's own, dedicated grassed area. This has a tree to provide natural shade. Children are protected from the harmful effects of strong sunlight as they wear sun cream and hats. When they are indoors they extend their physical development by balancing along low blocks and enjoying parachute games.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a bright and welcoming setting where an inviting range of resources are set out in the two playrooms for children to access safely and easily as soon as they arrive. All resources are in very good condition. Their outside play areas are secure and equipped with suitable apparatus.

Children are kept safe in the setting as the premises, and grounds, are very secure. Children are confident in the procedure to be followed in the event of an emergency as they practise it regularly. A clear register is kept showing the times of attendance of children and adults and this means there is an accurate record of who is on the premises in the event of such an emergency. Although the setting has conducted risk assessments, not all hazards have been identified. For example, checking that the dry beans and pulses used in activities are suitable and ensuring the fire guards are large enough to cover all aspects of the heating system. Children are kept safe by rigorous staff vigilance.

Children are further protected by the staff's secure understanding of the child protection procedures. They describe confidently what they would do to ensure the safeguarding of children. The setting also has helpful, up to date guidance to refer to in the event of having a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages have a lovely time in the setting. Older children attending the before and after school clubs play alongside their younger friends and siblings. They select activities appropriate to their individual ages, for example, writing and completing puzzles and playing competitive games of skill. Young children benefit from staff's understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and this is used to help staff assess children's interests and development. Overall young children play easily and comfortably alongside their older playmates, becoming skilful communicators as they exclaim, for example, that they have the same jigsaw at home. They become competent learners as they work out how puzzle pieces fit together. However, some whole group activities, particularly story times, are not always presented in a way that engages them. The setting is organised in two rooms and children are grouped so that they do not always move freely between these units. This means that, on these occasions, they do not have a genuinely free choice to easily access all the materials.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have eager and enthusiastic dispositions to learning and are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and use elements of the Montessori method to support children's learning. They introduce children to the Montessori materials and have a thorough understanding of how these resources promote learning. Staff's knowledge of children's achievements is used to inform assessments, but the identified next steps in their learning do not always represent sufficient areas of learning, or are clearly used each session to provide as much challenge as children would respond to. Children are lively communicators and eagerly share their news, describing what they did at Easter. Some children recognise letters by name and sound and describe in the air how to form them. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to predict rhyme and explore sounds, for example in story times. The books selected for whole group story time are not always large enough for children to see clearly and the use of a commercially recorded format limits practitioner's opportunities to encourage the children to engage with the story and the sounds therein. Children develop their mathematical understanding extremely well, exploring size, shape and measure using the Montessori materials. They begin to link the concept of quantity to the numeral it represents. Children explore the features of living things, such as frogs and plants, carefully observing their growth. They develop their small muscles effectively as they master the use of scissors and manipulate pegs. Children are tuneful singers, accompanying recorded music and bursting into song during their play. They develop small world imaginative play and particularly enjoy exploring textures and colour.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and quickly settle to play. They concentrate for substantial amounts of time at their chosen tasks, for example, as they explore a computer programme. They follow agreed codes, such as putting their hands up to share their news and placing their personal toys into a box to avoid distractions. They squeal with delight as they play parachute games and show care and concern for one another as they pass toys and share snack. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children develop their understanding of cultural diversity as they play with resources and look at books depicting positive images. The setting provides resources and activities to extend children's concept of geography and the different

cultures of the world. Music also provides inspiration for discussion and exploration of diversity. Children's individual needs are known and respected. For example, the setting works closely with parents to ensure that specific religious beliefs are respected.

Children who have specific needs receive good care. The newly appointed coordinator for this area is keen to extend her understanding and experience and has a good awareness of local supporting agencies.

Children's behaviour is extremely good. They are polite, saying please and thank you at appropriate moments. They respond to staff's constant attention and effective strategies. Staff move promptly to distract and divert children and are swift to praise and reinforce positive behaviour. Children learn to care for themselves and for the environment and take great pride in using the resources carefully. They conscientiously replace materials back in their correct places.

Partnership with parents is good. Children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes and all essential consents are in place to enable the setting to provide good care. Parents hold the setting in extremely high regard and are keen to communicate their satisfaction. This is with particular regard to meeting children's individual, specific needs and working closely with their parents. Daily discussions and regular meetings keep parents well informed about their child's progress. There are also good systems in place to keep parents informed about regulatory procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised setting by staff who are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy their work. Children respond to the warm enthusiasm of staff who clearly care deeply for them. Staff are keen to extend their knowledge and undertake additional training to enhance the experiences of the children in their care. They plan and provide a range of highly worthwhile activities that help children to develop in all areas. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. All necessary documentation is in place and is securely stored. The setting uses a system of self evaluation to identify areas for improvement and have a worthy vision of expanding the services the nursery may provide.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. There are good systems of communication between staff, management and owners and this ensures the provision is effectively monitored. New ideas to improve practise are welcomed, for example the setting is aiming to develop ways of improving parental involvement. They also receive the regular support of the local authority.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the nursery was required to ensure children access healthy alternatives at snack times. Fresh fruit and healthy items are now routinely provided and this has improved children's healthcare.

At the previous nursery education inspection the nursery were requested to increase the frequency with which daily routines are evaluated in order to address any minor weaknesses in adult practice. The setting continually review and evaluate the daily routines to ensure any weaknesses are identified promptly. This has a positive impact on children's 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.

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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):

- develop risk assessments to ensure all hazards are identified and children are prevented from accessing harmful materials
- develop the organisation of the session to improve children's opportunities to move between rooms to access activities and consider the use of resources to increase all children's ability to be engaged (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- ensure the identified next steps for children clearly support their progress through all areas of learning

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