

The Collegiate Montessori Nursery LTD

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY358276
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Inspector	Geneen Yvonne Hulse-Brown
Setting Address	6 Brincliffe Crescent, SHEFFIELD, S11 9AW
Telephone number	01142 580035
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Registered person	Collegiate Montessori Nursery LTD
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?

Collegiate Montessori Nursery School is a private nursery which opened in 1980 and was re-registered with new owners in 2007. It is accommodated in a single storey building in the grounds of a large Victorian property in the Brincliffe area of Sheffield. The nursery offers childcare to children from the local and wider community and outside the city boundaries.

There are five classrooms, a self-contained baby unit, large indoor playroom and dedicated Montessori area, plus toilets, kitchen/staff room, office, reception area and storage space. The nursery has a secure outdoor play area including an outdoor classroom, with access to the extensive grounds for supervised walks and outdoor activities.

A maximum of 94 children aged three months to eight years may attend the nursery at any one time; of these, not more than 24 may be under two years. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, for 49 weeks of the year, from 08.00 to 18.00 and children attend for a variety of sessions. There is a holiday club which operates for the same hours and sessions during school holidays. There are currently 186 children on roll; of these, 81 receive funding for early education. The

setting offers care to children with learning difficulties and disabilities and to children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 29 staff to work with the children on a full and part time basis; 24 staff hold a recognised early years qualification and five are working towards level three qualifications. They also employ three ancillary and support staff. The nursery employs three specialist staff for additional activities. The nursery school receives support from the local authority community teacher, the Pathways to Quality team, the Early Years Inclusion team and the National Day Nurseries Association.

Collegiate Montessori Nursery School has achieved Sheffield Quality Assurance status and is currently being reaccredited under the Pathways to Quality Scheme. The nursery school follows the Montessori teaching philosophy.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enthusiastically undertake a wide and varied range of activities that contributes to their good health. Daily indoor and outdoor activities effectively help them develop their physical skills. Children of all ages enjoy music and singing sessions as they express themselves with increasing confidence. They actively explore well planned outdoor areas in all weathers as they seek out mini-beasts. Children competently pedal bicycles, climb on frames, balance as they walk across stepping stones and play ball games. They enjoy daily access to the large indoor hall for physical activities. Children enjoy ballet and tennis classes, where they extend their physical skills as well as learning to listen and follow simple instructions. The nursery has started to develop the outdoor space to provide the children with additional opportunities to explore and extend the curriculum. These plans are still in the early stages and it is not yet clear how all children will make choices to freely access these areas. Babies and younger children enjoy planned outdoor time within the routines of their day. Children confidently manipulate small tools, such as scissors, pencils, glue spreaders and paintbrushes, to successfully develop their fine motor skills.

Staff provide numerous opportunities for children to talk about being healthy through the use of projects, displays and planned topics, which in turn ensures they develop a good awareness of a healthy diet. Children enjoy tasting different fruits at snack time and discussing which they like best. They enjoy social snack times in small groups, where they chatter together. However, children do not routinely have opportunities to choose when to have snack or prepare their own within the routines of the day. Older children are starting to take turns to spread butter on toast, help cut up fruit and have opportunities to pour their own drinks at snack time. They help themselves to drinks when they are thirsty. Children sit together with their friends to enjoy nutritious meals provided by the nursery or to eat their own packed lunches as they socialise with each other. Staff are very aware of children's individual dietary needs and plan snacks and food tasting accordingly. Older children are very aware of their own needs, for example talking about their likes and dislikes. Babies and young children's individual needs are well catered for, as staff follow home routines with care and accurate records are given to parents to show children's daily routines.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and stimulating environment, where effective methods ensure they develop good personal hygiene practices, such as hand washing before snack, after

messy play and when baking. Picture prompts in the bathroom remind them to wash their hands and they demonstrate a good understanding of personal care. They ask for tissues as needed and talk about germs when blowing their nose. Well planned activities provide the children with many opportunities to develop their understanding of the importance of good practice and offer them space to explore this in their play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all potential risks are minimised. Children understand to take care when climbing and not to run indoors, as staff sensitively remind them of good practice. They learn how to cut fruit using sharp knives with care, as staff effectively explain that an adult needs to help them. Children learn to keep themselves safe through regular topics and discussions that builds on their knowledge. They make their way safely around the setting both indoors and out with increasing confidence, extending their independence. Well experienced staff are effective in ensuring that the premises are secure by monitoring all visitors to the setting, with accurate records and checks in place to record all visitors.

Children make independent and informed choices of activities from an excellent range of easily accessible quality resources, requesting anything they cannot see to enhance their play. Low-level shelving enables them to self-select additional resources. Children actively plan their own time through the use of stimulating activities where they explore, experiment and progress their ideas. The well organised Montessori area provides children with numerous opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning on a one-to-one basis. Creative use of all available space provides safe, secure and well planned areas that allow children a place to be quiet, use their creativity, extend their imagination and develop their play. Children have fun undertaking meaningful experiences that motivate and challenge them. The self-contained baby unit offers young children a sensory and stimulating environment. Picket fencing divides the area to offer a safe and fun place for mobile and non-mobile children to mix together and play alongside each other. A well planned outdoor area provides the babies with opportunities to explore in the fresh air and watch the older children play.

Very effective systems are in place to support good practice. Staff attend regular training sessions both in-house and externally for first aid and child protection to ensure they are aware of new practices and procedures. The established and well experienced staff team demonstrate an excellent knowledge of child protection procedures and how to keep children safe. They demonstrate a very good understanding of their role in protecting children and use information effectively to promote the children's well-being. Well organised procedures are regularly reviewed to record concerns and ensure parents continue to be supported.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make good progress in all areas of development, this is due to knowledgeable staff planning activities and experiences that maintain children's interest and motivation. Effective use of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework ensures good quality care and education. Children are very confident, demonstrating high levels of curiosity of everything and everyone around them. They are well settled, secure

and happy as they establish excellent relationships with staff and children alike. Children enthusiastically enjoy an extensive range of stimulating and meaningful activities.

Children actively make choices about their play as they select resources to undertake tasks from the wide and stimulating range available. They successfully plan their own time as they demonstrate their independence. Children keenly seek out friends to play and decide together on extra resources to extend their games. Children enjoy their time in the dedicated Montessori area, where they work through activities with the consistent support of staff who sensitively guide them on to the next step. They receive lots of encouragement and support to think for themselves to try out new skills, as they undertake tasks using Montessori equipment.

Staff are consistent in their response to the children's individual needs, adapting activities to follow their ideas and suggestions, for example, when they are on a bug hunt outdoors they watch the butterflies flutter between the trees. Children receive high levels of encouragement from staff, who effectively use observations and their knowledge of the children to build on what they can do, in order to extend activities at the child's own pace and level of understanding.

Babies and young children are cared for in a warm, secure and sensory environment where their individual needs are responded to effectively. They extend their curiosity and interest as they explore their surroundings with increasing confidence. Young children enjoy tactile experiences, such as painting, sticking and squeezing play dough, as they giggle and laugh together. They have fun rustling shredded paper and rubbing different materials on their skin to feel the textures. Babies and young children listen to stories and explore surprise bags with interest, waiting to see what is coming next. On occasion, group sessions with babies and younger children can be a little too long for them to sit and share activities. Sensitive staff offer cuddles and reassurance to help children settle into a new environment and provide support to them when they are wary of visitors.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff's good knowledge of the Foundation Stage ensures that children progress well in all areas of development. Children are very curious, interested and motivated to learn. Well planned, spontaneous activities and experiences continually challenge and extend them. Children enthusiastically use their imagination as they look for crabs as they sail their boat, and serve ice creams from their shop. They demonstrate high levels of concentration using tools and materials, such as wooden bricks and interlocking blocks, to construct simple and complex models. Children work cooperatively together to make a large ice cream, solving simple problems as they find glue and sticky tape to cover the balloons with tissue paper. They negotiate what flavour they are making as staff provide all required resources.

Children build and design, extending their imagination and their natural creativity using a wide variety of craft materials and resources, such as paint and clay as they make mini-beasts. They are starting to recognise print and use a variety of mediums to record marks on paper, tracing their names and letters, and older children confidently spell out their name and write from memory. Children are very confident speakers who listen intently to each other when playing, and in groups as they reflect on what they have done at nursery and at home. They recall visiting the zoo on holiday and what animals they have seen, as they eagerly share news with each other. Staff show keen interest in what the children have to say, offering support and suggestions to enhance their experiences and extend their learning. Children listen intently to stories and predict the outcomes, echoing well-known response lines together.

Children are very confident and engage well with each other. They confidently welcome visitors, asking what they are doing and why they are at nursery. Children eagerly tell visitors about what they are making, share news and excitedly ask if we have seen their teacher's new baby at nursery, stating how tiny he is. The children negotiate roles in games, deciding who will be the shopkeeper. They take turns, share and play cooperatively together as well as alone, as they enthusiastically progress their ideas. Behaviour is very good and reflects the staff's high expectations.

Children learn how to manage their own behaviour, showing high levels of respect for each other. They enjoy learning about the lives of others through topics, planned activities, outings and visitors to the nursery. Number and problem solving activities form part of all daily activities and children enjoy counting and sorting as part of daily routines, singing and ring games. Children confidently make patterns and sequences using beads, Montessori equipment and colouring in patterns in books. They use mathematical language in context.

Children enjoy baking as they weigh the flour and sugar, break eggs and mix them together in small bowls to make cakes. They take turns to stir the mixture, make the icing and assemble the cake. Staff ensure that all children have role in making the finished product. Children care for mini-beasts as they care for the snails and cut up carrots to feed them. They excitedly chatter about the snails' favourite food being cucumber, pointing out and counting the babies in the tank, as staff sensitively show the children how to take care of them. Children demonstrate a keen interest in technology and enjoy numerous opportunities to extend their understanding and build on what they know.

Accurate observation systems are in place that effectively monitor children's progress and are an effective aid to planning and progressing the children's learning. Children undertake a good balance of focused and freely chosen activities, as staff successfully guide them and incorporate changes to follow the children's ideas and suggestions. Assessment records follow the children through the nursery, building on existing skills to take them to the next stage and providing new challenges. The staff are starting to look at how to incorporate the Early Years Foundation Stage into their planning and assessment systems. Well-planned routines provide children with access to many choices and challenges that allow them to focus on independent learning. Staff use their broad knowledge of the early learning goals to plan a well-organised curriculum that includes all areas of learning. Effective open-ended questioning extends children's language, develops their thinking and values what they have to say. Children use group times to reflect, share their achievements and plan what to do next. Attractive and well-presented displays of the children's work successfully contribute to promoting their self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children establish strong and respectful relationships with staff and each other, showing very good self-esteem, to confidently ask questions and actively make choices. Sensitive staff value children's individuality. Children receive consistent praise and encouragement for achievement and for trying out new skills. They listen to each other at group time and respond well to questions. Staff reinforce good behaviour, as they remind children to share toys and take turns, and children in turn mimic staff by saying 'we always share toys with our friends'. Children are well respected and in turn learn to respect each other. They remind staff to show their parents a model they have made and animatedly wave goodbye to friends as they leave nursery.

Well planned, meaningful activities and resources build on the children's awareness of similarities and differences, which in turn increases their understanding of the wider world. Children enthusiastically recall outings and events as they see photographs of themselves around the nursery. They excitedly enjoy exploring outdoors as they broaden their understanding of their environment. They have fun discovering mini-beasts hiding under leaves and count the number of insects they have found. Walks around the nursery grounds enhance children's outdoor play experiences. The nursery is in the process of developing an outdoor classroom and sensory garden to provide additional experiences and activities. Wide varieties of photographs reinforce and remind the children of what they have done at nursery and what they saw on their outings.

Staff and children eagerly share experiences with each other as part of planned and spontaneous activities. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcomed into the provision and very effective systems are in place with other agencies to ensure the children are cared for according to their individual needs. Outside professionals come to the nursery to work with the staff to support children's learning and plan programmes to further their development. All staff are familiar with Makaton and basic sign language, and pictures are displayed in playrooms as a reminder for staff and children.

Children's behaviour is very good and reflects the staff's high expectations. Children understand clear and consistent boundaries, demonstrating high levels of respect for each other. They share, negotiate and take turns when playing games and using equipment, for example, when waiting their turn to bake or make a model. Children listen with interest to what each other has to say and are confident to add their opinions. Staff provide good role models of behaviour, showing care and consideration for others, which in turn helps children learn good practice.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff consistently ensure parents are kept well informed about what their children are doing at nursery. Parents receive daily diary sheets for babies charting their personal routines, such as meals and sleep patterns. Very good recording and assessment systems chart the children's progress through the nursery and information from parents adds to the picture. Activity plans and daily routines clearly displayed in all playrooms allow parents to see what is happening on a day-to-day basis. Parents receive high quality information about the setting and in turn share their knowledge of their children. Parents confidently approach staff and demonstrate a high-level of satisfaction with the setting, stating that all staff are well informed and professional in their approach. The nursery has started to display information for parents about how children learn using pictorial images of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery are good. Effective organisation of the educational provision promotes children's care and learning. Very knowledgeable staff demonstrate a consistent understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they successfully meet children's individual needs. The established and experienced staff team work well together to follow effective procedures that continually monitor and evaluate the provision. The skilled senior management team use the Pathways to Quality self-assessment to review practice. They effectively support a highly committed team of staff to review practice and adopt new procedures. They demonstrate a high commitment to personal training and group development to consolidate practices and further enhance the provision.

All staff hold a recognised early years qualification, with ongoing access to in-house and external training to continue to develop the service offered. Staff share their understanding and knowledge with each other to ensure all staff benefit from and build on good practice. The senior staff and room leaders meet together on a regular basis to ensure a consistent approach to the experiences for all children throughout the nursery. An extensive range of policies and procedures are in place to support the setting and offer an effective service. Regular reviews of all policies ensure they meet changes to legislation and support the development of the setting. The staff team use numerous opportunities to meet together, share information and consolidate their working practices. Appraisals effectively identify the training and development needs of individual staff and the nursery. The nursery manager has implemented a scheme for all staff to raise issues, concerns and compliments in a confidential forum that will aid in the evaluation of the setting. Effectively used observations and assessments monitor children's progress, based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, the Foundation Stage and the Montessori teaching philosophy. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 complaint 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):

- continue to develop outdoor curriculum (also applies to nursery education)
- consider reviewing routines and the use of group times for younger children.

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):

- consider how children's snacks and meal times can be organised to further promote independence and choices.

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