

The Colourwheel Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY373962
Inspection date	11/11/2008
Inspector	Sarah Williams
Setting address	The Colourwheel Montessori Nursery, Denton Crescent, Black Notley, BRAINTREE, Essex, CM77 8ZZ
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

The Colourwheel Montessori Nursery is privately run. It opened in 2000 and operates from a converted hospital building. The current registration, on the Early Years Register, runs from 2008. It is situated in Black Notley, Essex. A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open from 08.00 to 18.00. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is all on one level and the garden area is accessed by two steps.

There are currently 74 children aged from two years to under eight years on roll. All of these are in the early years age range. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs nine staff. Seven of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Colourwheel Nursery provides very effectively for children in the Early Years age range. The setting strongly recognises the uniqueness of each child and meets their developmental needs in partnership with parents and carers, ensuring they make very good progress. Children are safe and secure: their welfare needs are well met. All children are fully supported and outside professional intervention is sought where appropriate. The setting and practitioners are very reflective and forward looking: they continuously evaluate their practice, and seek out ways to act on identified areas for improvement, ensuring that children benefit from changes.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- continue the development of the outside area, to present planned and purposeful activities across all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, to challenge children and excite their curiosity as they explore the equipment and environment (learning and development)
- review the groupings of children at circle time to ensure every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience (welfare: organisation).

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted by the high standard of record-keeping and documentation. Policies and procedures clearly set out the ethos, how the provision operates and what safeguards are in place to ensure children's safe well-being. Staff are managed efficiently to ensure their continuing suitability to be in

contact with children: roles and responsibilities are shared among all staff, bringing a sense of ownership and belonging which contributes to their dedicated approach to their work with the children.

The layout of the premises requires careful staff deployment to ensure all areas, indoors as well as outside, are staffed to keep children well-supervised at all times: this is very effectively managed by rotas and staff's vigilance. Safety and security are given good consideration and children have freedom to explore and use all areas of the setting with hazards minimised. Additionally, staff gently remind children about moving sensibly and whilst thinking about their own and others' safety.

The practitioners are all highly dedicated to providing a good and continually improving standard of care and education to all the children. They are all well qualified, most have sound knowledge of the Montessori approach as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. Training needs are identified and staff are encouraged to pursue qualifications and to improve their skills by attending courses whenever possible. Information from courses attended, as well as at the local cluster groups, is cascaded so that all staff follow a common approach to ensure continuity and consistency for the children. Plans for future development are clear and well thought out, for example, increasing the value of outside play with additional resources and activities.

The manager and staff highly value every child as a unique individual. A very strong feature of the care is the knowledge of each child's stage of development and what they need to do next to make progress. They share this knowledge with parents and others with an interest in the children's development, ensuring that all support services are utilised to benefit the children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make very good progress in their learning and development because the setting is extremely child-centred and conducive to their growing independence and development. The Montessori approach includes a large proportion of self-selected activity for the children. This is promoted by having all resources accessible and presented to allow them to choose what they want to do, and which friends they wish to work alongside. Staff are on hand to guide and assist but remain unobtrusive, allowing children to solve the problems they encounter by thinking about what they can do for themselves. For example, when getting dressed to go into the garden, children are encouraged to find the things they need and put them on as far as they are able. Children demonstrate very high levels of independence, even the youngest follow routines such as washing and drying their hands, using cutlery and serving themselves at snack time, with very little adult help required. Sometimes, the grouping of children at the end of the morning session is less successful in promoting their attentiveness or participation as they can be distracted by other events and noise from elsewhere.

Staff plan activities to help the children make individual progress, recording their achievements by meticulous observations which are carefully evaluated to see what

the child needs to do next. These in turn contribute to a report which is prepared termly for parents, keeping them well informed about their child's progress and milestones. Children with additional needs, or who have English as an additional language are identified and well supported both within the nursery and by calling upon external professional help, such as speech therapy, when necessary. Care for children with complex needs is extremely well thought out and sensitive, ensuring they have access to all the activities and have as much fun and enjoyment as other children. The involvement of parents and carers is highly valued and their views are sought and acted upon where this will benefit children.

Children make very good progress across the areas of learning, especially in their personal and social development. They build very positive attitudes to learning, by enthusiastically engaging with the equipment and resources which they use imaginatively and experimentally. For example, children use the scales to weigh different items, watching what happens and learning about balance. They explore a sturdy tree in the garden, taking turns to pilot the helicopter it suggests to their imaginations. Children are seen to be co-operative, both towards one another and in helping to look after the setting by clearing up and tidying away when they have finished with something.

Children's language and vocabulary is developed as they interact with staff and one another. All the adults speak very respectfully to the children, explaining clearly and carefully what is required of them, and encouraging politeness and good manners in return. Children learn to link sounds and letters, beginning simple word building when they show readiness and interest. They are able to borrow books to take home and share with parents and siblings, giving them a sense of responsibility to care for the books as well as fun when listening to the story.

Major festivals, both traditional and world wide, are celebrated with food, music and artwork throughout the year. Participating in a Christmas production is an annual event, enjoyed by parents and carers who make up the audience. Children gain confidence as they sing a favourite song to their friends at circle time. Music sessions introduce rhythm and pace, and children like doing the brain gym exercises which keep them in touch with their bodies and sharpen responses.

Children learn about their local environment as they go on supervised walks to nearby open spaces. They have specimens from nature displayed on an interactive display table to help them understand the seasons and passage of time. Technology is used effectively, such as the digital camera which records activities, models and displays; many of these photographs are included in the children's profiles.

Children are aided in keeping themselves safe and healthy. They know that they must wear protective clothing when it is wet or cold outside. Most children have some time out of doors each day, though this is optional and they can stay inside if they wish to. During fine weather the doors are open, allowing free flow play between the outdoor and indoor environment. They understand the need to wash their hands after messy play or using the toilet. They take and use a tissue when needed. Children have a snack of milk, water and fruit or vegetables each day. They serve themselves, skilfully pouring a drink and enjoying a sociable time sitting with a couple of friends at the snack table. Mealtimes are also relaxed and enjoyable.

Children are given freshly prepared meals using wholesome ingredients. Largely, they serve themselves and can eat as much as they wish as second helpings are always available.

Children enjoy their time at nursery, building warm and friendly relationships with one another as well as the adults around them. They are confident and articulate, able to express their needs and feelings and ask questions. They are able to direct their own learning, experimenting and solving problems as they use the resources and interact with their surroundings.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints requiring since registration.

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.