

# Coolham Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY313759  
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**Inspector** Christine Clint

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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 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).

## Description of the setting

Coolham Montessori Nursery School registered in 2005. The nursery is situated in the local village hall and provides early years care and education for children from the surrounding villages. Children use the entrance area and the main hall, they have free-flow access to daily outdoor play provision. Children attend for a variety of sessions during school term times and these are available for 38 weeks of the year. Operational times are 08.45 to 14.45 on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday; 08.45 to 12.00 on Tuesday and Friday. There are eight staff employed at the setting and five staff work with children on a daily basis. All staff hold early years or Montessori qualifications.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register for 26 children. There are currently 35 children aged from two years on roll and 25 children are in funded educational places. At the time of the inspection 20 children in the early years age group were present. The nursery has close links with the local community and early years support networks. All staff follow the Montessori philosophy and incorporate this into the curriculum for all children.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The overall quality of the provision is good. The provider and staff show a very strong knowledge and understanding of children's individual development. They offer continual daily care and learning which is often child-led and based on their sound awareness of children's needs; children are fully supported and nurtured at all times. The provider has a clear understanding of the regulations and has begun to implement many changes to improve the provision. She shows total commitment and dedication to her role in managing and evaluating the daily practice.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop children's learning journals and include parents in establishing children's next steps in learning
- develop systems to maintain links with other carers to ensure that children's developmental progress is supported

## The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare and safety is fully prioritised at all times because there is a high ratio of staff to children during daily sessions. All regulatory requirements are followed and clear systems are in place for managing accidents, incidents or medication. Staff understand the importance of obtaining parental permission and recording all details. For example, all allergy information for children or staff is

clearly displayed in the kitchen, with individual photographs. The provider is compiling a folder of information about children's illnesses for parents to consult at any time and clear notices are displayed when illness occurs. Staff have attended training in child protection, they are very aware of safeguarding and full procedures are available for parents. Fire drills take place regularly to ensure that all children are included and these are recorded. The provider has also included a list to prompt staff when managing less practised areas of safety. For example, to check the first aid and emergency outdoor kit, to remember how the fire exit doors open and to update emergency contact details. Staff use internal phones to continually contact each other during free-flow play, they carry out instant head counts and ask for support when needed. There are comprehensive records to show how safety is managed when a child is not collected by their parents; all information is noted and signed, staff and parents use passwords when necessary.

The provider has completed a thorough self-evaluation of the setting and has approached all areas of care and learning with honesty and a dedicated attitude. There are many examples of how new systems are being introduced since the early years regulations have been in place. Staff appraisals have begun and the provider is compiling a chart of all staff training. Several staff are continuing to attend courses and the provider is studying for a degree in early years. The planning for children's play and learning now enables opportunities for child-led activities to be followed and the pre-school includes free flow, indoor and outdoor play. Systems for assessing children's learning and development have also changed to reflect the new regulations. Staff are clearly aware of their key person role and their sound knowledge of child development is apparent in the succinct observations recorded to support children's progress.

The partnership with parents is highly valued and soundly managed. Parents are very happy with the provision and the enthusiasm their children show in attending. They appreciate the dedicated care and attention that staff show. There are daily opportunities for parents to share information verbally with staff and they are fully informed about the early years regulations. Parents provide initial information about children's levels of development and they have some opportunities to see the pre-school records of children's assessment, although they do not fully contribute to these. The provider has piloted a system of parents assessing children's learning at home, although this is not in place for all children. There are close links with local schools to support children's transfer but no established links are in place with other provisions where children regularly attend.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are learning to take responsibility to understand and manage their own personal care, this is clearly linked with the Montessori ethos of the nursery. They know where to find tissues to wipe their nose and automatically put these in the bin afterwards. They use the toilets independently and wash their hands, there are pictures with text displayed to remind them. Children enjoy making their own decisions about indoor or outdoor play, they know they must wear hats in the sun and they can choose to drink water whenever they need to. All children are reminded to wash their hands after outdoor play. Children relish the opportunity to

choose outdoor time on the play park apparatus, they swing and slide with enthusiasm. They often have walks in the fields close to the hall. There are daily opportunities for children to make decisions about when they will have snack time and this is offered throughout the session to enable smaller children to recognise when they are hungry and thirsty. Occasionally all children sit together to celebrate a birthday, they socialise well and have cakes after healthy snack food. Staff encourage children to manage to pour their own milk or water.

Children continually make choices and play freely throughout the session, staff know that noise levels naturally rise and they believe this should be a balanced part of playing. Children also respond spontaneously when the bell sounds and they know that they must listen. Children have positive praise for walking well, for helping and for listening. They understand how to use the sand timer and ask staff for this, when they are negotiating sharing and taking turns. They are learning about feelings and recognise the finger puppets that staff use to depict different moods; children know these well and also know that they can use the lavender bags for squeezing if they feel cross. Children learn to ask politely when they want to speak to staff, especially if staff are already talking; they are encouraged to place their hand on the staff member's shoulder, to give a sign. Sign language is included frequently during welcome songs, when singing Happy Birthday and to say please and thank you. Children learn to knock on the kitchen door instead of entering when they request a specific item of Montessori equipment.

Children learn about managing their own safety during their play because they have the opportunity to use real tools; they practise hammering, sawing and sanding wood, whilst being well supervised. There are pictures displayed to show children how to carry a small chair safely and how to walk when carrying scissors. Older children know what happens when a fire drill is carried out, they instinctively explain, 'we must stand against the wall and go outside in a line'.

Children come together and eagerly take part in the birthday activity. They learn to say the seasons in sequence whilst the birthday child carries a globe of the world around the seated circle of children. They repeat this to depict each year of the child's life until reaching her age and then they sing to celebrate. Children's free role play takes place in several areas of the hall. They use their imagination to create family situations and pretend to be animals, they role play and take turns to be a patient in hospital and children confidently explain what happened when they went to hospital themselves. Staff are skilful and show a high level of awareness in monitoring children's free play, they allow this to naturally take place and encourage concentration or re-grouping if play becomes less meaningful.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

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

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
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?	1

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