

Montacute Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Carol Johnstone

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Montacute Pre-school opened in 1992 and operates from the Baptist Church Schoolrooms in the village of Montacute, Somerset. A maximum of 24 children in the early years age group may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school are registered on the Early Years Register and there are currently 52 children aged from two to under five years on roll. They are open each weekday from 9.15am to 12pm with afternoon sessions on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1pm to 3.30pm. A lunch club operates each day from 12pm to 1pm. Children have access to an outdoor, grassed pitch play area. The pre-school is run by a parent committee. There are seven staff employed, most of whom hold appropriate qualifications in childcare. They are a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receive support from the Local Authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and content in the pre-school and their welfare needs are met effectively. There are a range of varied activities on offer and the children's own interests are taken into account. However, children are not yet learning to their full potential because their progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is not being consistently monitored or planned for. There are very positive relationships with parents which helps to support the children attending.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they can increase levels of focused and meaningful interaction with the children
- use the observations being taken to more clearly assess and identify children's learning priorities and use the planning to facilitate these
- review the organisation of group times to make sure that they are appropriate and engaging for the children
- use all opportunities to promote children's independence, particularly at snack time

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected from the risk of having unsuitable staff working with them as all staff have appropriate suitability checks carried out. These include police, reference and health checks. However, although Ofsted are informed of staff changes, the relevant forms have not been completed appropriately. New staff have to undergo a three month probationary period, during which time the

manager meets with them each week to discuss their practice. All staff have appraisals every six months to look at their performance and there are weekly staff meetings. The manager and staff understand the four types of child abuse and the warning signs that may present. They know who to approach for external assistance should a concern arise, which would ensure swift and appropriate support for a child at risk of harm. The safeguarding policy is clearly written and given to all parents to help them understand the pre-school's responsibilities in this area. Regular risk assessments of the premises and all outings are carried out to identify any potential hazards for children. When staff take the children on outings, they take emergency contact numbers, a mobile phone and a first aid box to ensure their safety. All the necessary welfare details about children to keep them safe, such as any health issues or allergies, are clearly recorded and disseminated to all of the staff team. There are clear guidelines in place to exclude children who are unwell in order to protect others. Most staff have current first aid training and are able to give appropriate care in an emergency.

There are very strong relationships with parents and they are actively involved with the pre-school. Detailed information is gained from parents when children first start to help the staff get to know the children and help them settle. Details of the activities are displayed each week and there are regular newsletters. Parents are invited to have meetings with their child's key worker twice a year and the assessment files are always available to them. Parents are sent an annual questionnaire to invite their feedback and suggestions and their comments are always acted upon. The parent committee have regular meetings and there are frequent fundraising events. The manager has developed strong links with other providers who share the care of the children such as local nurseries and childminders. Visits have taken place by the staff to discuss the children and to see them in their alternative environments.

The manager is relatively new and demonstrates a genuine commitment to improving the care and education provided for the children. She has implemented many of the recommendations made at the last inspection, such as making the resources more accessible to the children and increasing the activities related to technology. For example, the pre-school now have a computer, camera and camcorder for the children to use. Resources are also now used imaginatively, particularly natural resources which are used for exploration in the nature corner. However, some of the recommendations made are still being developed, such as the systems for monitoring children's progress and the quality of the education provided. The manager always involves the staff team in decision-making, inviting them to give their suggestions and ideas for future development. Consequently, she has built a motivated, cohesive and friendly team who clearly care about the children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children have plenty of choice each day, which helps them to learn to be independent and confident. They are able to choose from painting, collage making, construction, small world play, puzzles or role-play in the home corner. There are

also many boxes of colourful resources at floor level for them to self select from. However, at snack time their independence is not promoted as staff pour their drinks for them and some do not encourage the children to independently select their fruit from the dishes. Children enjoy nature walks with the staff, where they collect leaves and fir cones and use these for painting and collage making. They excitedly talk about what they found when they return and examine it closely.

Children are starting to learn how to be healthy through good food and exercise. They have a wide variety of fruit at snack time and are also growing vegetables outside in their garden, which they monitor and measure. When they are ready to pick, the children wash and eat them or make them into soup. Parents are encouraged through regular newsletters to send healthy choices for children's lunch boxes. Children have daily exercise in the outdoor area. Equipment includes a climbing frame, trampoline, slide, tractors, bikes and balls.

Children learn about their personal hygiene through knowing that they must wash their hands after playing outside and before snack and lunch time. Recently, a health visitor brought in a special machine which showed the children the germs on their hands before and after washing. Staff use effective hygiene measures themselves, for example using plastic gloves and aprons when preparing snacks or dealing with minor accidents. They make sure that the tables used are regularly wiped down and that the toilet area is clean.

Children learn about their personal safety through being reminded how to carry scissors properly, using the golden rules of not running inside and holding mummy's hand before they leave the building. The police community safety officer visits regularly to talk to the children about road and stranger danger and children learn about fire safety through regular drills which are carefully explained by the staff so as not to frighten them.

Children are encouraged to learn about the wider world through topics and discussion. Children who have English as an additional language are supported by staff learning key words and parents being invited to come in and talk about their culture. There is a trained special needs coordinator to provide support for children with additional learning needs. She works closely with parents to obtain any external help that may be necessary. All activities are adapted so that all of the children regardless of their age or ability can be included. Staff are imaginative in also adapting activities to suit the preferences of children, for example using paint brushes and water for the outdoor area for children who do not want to sit and paint at the indoor easel.

Although children's interests are taken into account, their individual learning is not yet being consistently monitored and facilitated. Observations are taken of the children during activities, but these are not used to clearly assess where children are in each area of learning or to identify where they need to go next and how that will happen. The current planning broadly covers the areas of learning each day, but is not yet linked to children's individual learning needs. Consequently, although children are settled and enjoy the activities, learning opportunities are being missed. Some staff are not fully confident in their knowledge of the EYFS. This means in practice that interaction which would focus specifically on helping

each child progress in their learning is not consistent during all of the activities or with all of the staff.

Some of the group times are not being organised effectively. For example, before lunch, children sit and wait to go and wash their hands table by table without being occupied. Circle Time in the morning is not engaging all of the children and some of their attention wanders.

Children get on very well together and behave appropriately. They are encouraged to be kind and respectful to each other and to say please and thank you. Staff are positive role models in this. Some children are clearly making firm friendships and they cooperate well during their play, sharing their toys and negotiating, which will help them in the future.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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