

Cherry Tree Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY395931
Inspection date 20/11/2009
Inspector Marilyn Joy

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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*.

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.

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Description of the setting

Cherry Tree Montessori Nursery was first established in 1990; it was taken over by the current owner in 2009. It operates from premises in Ashley Heath, near Ringwood, and there is an enclosed outdoor area available. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 8am until 6pm, all year round. The nursery serves children from the local community and they attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 25 children on role including three and four-year-olds who receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are five members of staff who work with the children either full or part-time. There are three with early years qualifications and one who is working towards a relevant qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery offers a nurturing and supportive environment where children's welfare, learning and development are supported well. A strong emphasis is given to promoting children's independence and helping them to make choices and direct their activities. Staff and management have a clear commitment towards providing good quality care, although systems of self-evaluation are not effectively established which reduces the setting's capacity to improve. Effective and consistent arrangements ensure children's health and safety at all times.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure minimum qualification requirements are met at all times (Suitable people). 09/12/2009

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

- develop self-evaluation systems that reflect on all aspects of the provision and staff deployment, gather feedback from parents and children and ensure priorities for improvement are identified
- develop a consistent approach towards monitoring children's achievements, tracking their progress against the expectations of the early learning goals and planning their next steps for learning and involving parents in this process
- increase resources for children to explore ICT and capitalise on opportunities to fully extend their learning during group activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Key staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues and procedures for safeguarding children's welfare. Robust recruitment and employment ensures staff are suitably vetted and qualified for their role. However, there are some occasions when the nursery does not meet the minimum qualification requirements which is a breach of the regulations. At these times deployment of staff is not always effective, however, as it only occurs occasionally to cover staff absence and a high staff ratio is maintained, it does not have a detrimental impact on children's care and learning. All the required documentation is in place and well-maintained. Effective risk assessments ensure the premises are safe and secure. Staff have a secure understanding of their role to keep children safe and consistently promote good hygiene routines. Children benefit from the good role models staff present.

There is an appropriate range of Montessori and traditional resources to support children's learning and development in each area. Many are easily accessible from low level storage units so that children can develop their independence and help themselves. Additional resources are stored upstairs and children choose which ones they would like brought down to play with. However, as these are not visible or freely available it does reduce the choice for children if they are not confident to speak out. There are few resources to encourage children's ICT skills. Children have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors and have a balance of child-led and adult-led activities. Staff and management evaluate activities and some areas of daily practice. However, they are not thorough in assessing all areas of the nursery which means they do not always recognise for themselves areas they can develop further. There is a strong commitment within the nursery to improve practice and outcomes for children and when identified measures are put in place to secure improvement.

Good systems are in place to liaise with portage, speech therapy and the local authority to support the individual needs of children. The nursery values and welcomes all children and takes steps to adapt activities to meet their individual needs. Staff are particularly effective in helping children to behave well and understand what is expected of them. Arrangements for liaising with other settings children attend are currently being developed.

Partnerships with parents are satisfactory. Parents have access to a wide range of information regarding the daily operation of the nursery and are kept up-to-date through regular newsletters and ongoing discussions. Parents are welcomed into the nursery and are able to view their child's records at any time. Parents are happy with the care provided and comment on how much their children enjoy attending. However, they comment that they would like more information about their child's progress and the activities they are involved in. Some information is displayed about the theme for the week and included in newsletters, although not sufficient if parents want to follow up at home. Lunch times are a social occasion in the nursery and parents are provided with guidance on healthy lunch boxes as part of encouraging a healthy lifestyle within the nursery.

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

Children are happy and settled in the nursery. They are enthusiastic in their play and keen to try different activities. They eagerly join in with parachute games which effectively introduce positional language and counting in a practical way. They are enthralled with exploring the texture and feel of foam spread all over the table and then the contrast with hard pasta when it is added. Children become engrossed with spreading it around, making patterns with their fingers and watching as it squeezes through their fingers. They are familiar with a range of songs and actions and remember to be silent when they mime the actions during a round of head, shoulders, knees and toes. Some opportunities are missed to fully extend children's learning when staff are not fully prepared for larger group activities, for example, when more children than expected join in with cooking and not all staff are involved in supporting children. Likewise, some opportunities are missed during shape games to reinforce names of shapes and which is the biggest.

The nursery subscribes to the Montessori ethos and trained staff introduce children to the full range of sequential activities in areas such as practical life, mathematical, sensorial and cultural. Staff frequently work one-to-one with children to support children to make good progress. Children become familiar with what is expected of them as they work cooperatively together and independently when they select activity trays for themselves and concentrate on completing the tasks. Sometimes they like to do this together and sit side-by-side. They pour water from one container into another or transfer beans between dishes and then swap trays. Children are helpful and tidy up after themselves and when they forget they are sensitively reminded. Hand-eye coordination is particularly well-supported. The garden provides good opportunities for children to explore larger equipment, investigate the natural environment and find out about living things. Children enthusiastically congregate in the digging area and develop their own adventure, balancing big stones on their spades to move them out of the way, and digging for treasure. Others prefer quiet play with the dolls house on the raised platform area.

Weekly planning and daily routines ensure children experience a broad range of activities which promote their learning in all areas. Key persons work closely with individual children and ensure their records are kept up-to-date. However, the nursery is currently operating two systems to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals and their achievements with Montessori tasks. There is some linking between the two systems but little cohesion. Documentation does not clearly track children's progress towards the early learning goals or reflect their next steps for learning, although staff are confident about children's abilities and are fully aware of their stage of development.

Children's good health is supported well through effective support and guidance from staff. A café style snack time is offered and most children are familiar with having to wash their hands beforehand and wash-up their plates and cups. Children who find complying with daily routines and rules difficult receive extra assistance to help them understand the importance of washing their hands and

behaving well. Staff have a good knowledge of children's individual health and dietary needs and ensure all foods and cooking activities comply with their requirements. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they play and learn through consistent guidance from staff.

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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
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	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met