

Claygate Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Joanna Scott

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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

Claygate Montessori School opened in 1993 and has been under new ownership since October 2009. It operates from the small hall in Claygate Village Hall in Claygate, Surrey. Sometimes they use a larger hall for physical play, such as football. The group have shared use of the toilet and kitchen facilities. Staff accompany children when using areas of the premises which are not in sole use by the group. A maximum of 18 children aged between two and five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 21 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, although there are no older children attending currently. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school is open each weekday from 9am to 12:45pm term time only. All children bring a packed lunch. They have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from the local community. The pre-school has procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs five members of staff and an administrator. Three staff work together as the core team. The owner/manager holds an appropriate Montessori qualification and the deputy has a level three early years qualification. The third is training for level four Montessori qualification. The pre-school generally operate with four staff present, with the fourth member being unqualified. Two staff hold a current first aid certificate.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and inquisitive and enjoy their time at the setting. They are very well supported by attentive staff who ensure that each child's welfare and learning needs are met. Records show that children make good progress in their learning and development. The setting have recently completed their first self-evaluation which has begun a process to drive continuous development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that children's next steps are included in developmental records, and continue to provide opportunities for parents to share these
- continue to develop the outdoor area, for example by using a variety of labels to enhance outdoor learning
- extend further the opportunities for building partnerships with others delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to children in the setting, with specific regard to childminders.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The small and enthusiastic staff team are strongly led and have an active say in the operational issues of the pre-school. There are a clear set of written policy and procedure documents which have been reviewed in the last few months, and reflect the operation of the setting. Where key roles such as the person responsible for child protection or behaviour management change, staff are supported during the transition until training is attended, and the necessary skills and knowledge are in place. All staff have completed the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' training, and demonstrate a good understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a concern. Risk assessments are detailed and regularly reviewed, and all adults demonstrate a good understanding of minimising risks. For example, there are robust procedures for supervising entry and departure, for keeping the premises secure, and for accompanying children when using other areas of the building where the group do not have sole use. Effective systems for recruitment are established, and all adults working with the children have completed Criminal Record Bureau checks. The owner has prepared systems for annual staff appraisals.

Management have a positive approach to development. The setting have recently completed a thorough self-evaluation, which has made a strong start to the cycle of achieving continuous development. They seek staff and parental feedback, and children's views in relation to the learning environment. Support from their early years partnership is also used as a way to reflect on practice, and identify areas to build on. For example, the setting have improved the outdoor play area by replacing fencing and providing areas of shade and rain suits so that every child can use the garden irrespective of the weather. However, the very good use of labelling in the indoor learning environment is not reflected outside, to benefit children fully. The inside area is well prepared on a daily basis. Motivated staff create a welcoming and stimulating internal environment by displaying children's creative achievements, photos, maps and posters. There is good use of low level storage for displaying a wide range of stimulating resources which include many which raise children's understanding of the wider world, and promote diversity.

Staff key work the children effectively, and demonstrate a good level of understanding of each of the children's needs. Daily observations are used to influence planning so that the individual learning for each child is focused on, and promoted. Development records are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage and Montessori. They show that children make progress across each of the areas of learning. However, they do not identify children's next steps. These are considered informally, and discussed with parents at consultations, however, are not a focus on a more regular basis to best support learning together.

Parental feedback is very positive, they say they value the welcoming and caring environment, and the range of choice children have in terms of resources and activities. They feel that children are supported well by caring staff, particularly during settling in. They value the effective sharing of information between home and the pre-school, specifically in relation to supporting children who have English

as an additional language. The setting has links with the local schools that children move onto, which helps transition. There are some informal systems to share information with others delivering the Early Years to aid supporting learning together, although these are not fully utilised.

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

The children are confident and friendly. Staff create a warm and enabling environment for children to enjoy. Careful storage of a wide range of resources, many of which are Montessori, and all of which are in good condition means that children can make independent choices about what they would like to do. Staff actively seek the children's views about the environment, asking them to use happy and sad cards to show if they like the way each area is set out. This is used as part of the setting's evaluation. Good use of photographs and labelling inside helps each child learn about the routine of the morning, how to wash their hands and blow their noses to protect their good health and restrict the spread of germs. It is also used to illustrate where resources are stored which aids children to find what they want and return it when they have finished.

Children understand what happens next during the progression of the morning, which runs smoothly and efficiently. The atmosphere is busy from the moment the children arrive as they happily engage in learning through play, and they take an active role in the session. Staff are attentive, they move with the children supporting them and extending their learning and enjoyment. For example, a member of staff notices that a child is busy mark making and drawing. At the point the child begins to write their name she joins them with some sand paper letters. They chat happily about the other children's names, and the practitioner encourages the child to link letters and sounds. The child enjoys writing the letters onto their picture. This is effectively moving their learning on, through an activity of their choice.

There are lots of opportunities for children to learn about rhythm and rhyme through singing, music and dancing. Children enjoy the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in front of their peers and there is much praise of achievement from staff, which promotes self-esteem and extends enjoyment. There is a strong ethos of caring. Children are quick to check their friends are alright if they see them struggling with something, or pass tissues if they notice others need them. Children behave very well and understand the pre-school rules and staff expectations.

The children learn to think about safety through story telling and role play. Staff involve children in acting out a story about fire safety using wooden blocks to make the building and fire engines. Later children dress as fire fighters and use foam sticks as hoses as they ride their tricycles as fire engines up and down outside. They understand how to behave to keep themselves safe, such as walking inside, and carrying scissors with care. Children are very interested in the natural world and environment. At the moment they are learning about worms and recycling. Children are supported in becoming independent, and gaining skills for

the future. For example, all children benefit from staying for lunch, and enjoy this social time where children and adults sit together and talk and listen. It helps prepare those who are soon to move onto school. This is also used as an opportunity for staff to seek children's views and incorporate them into planning. For example, one child's talk about volcanoes leads to much interest and a decision to build a volcano model. Children thoroughly enjoy their time at pre-school.

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	2

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	2
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	2
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

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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	2

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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