

Townsend Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY402614
Inspection date	27/04/2010
Inspector	Janet Armstrong

Setting address	Sure Start Centre, Jewell Road, Townsend, Bournemouth, BH8 0LT
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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

Townsend Montessori was registered in December 2009 and is part of a chain of settings owned by Shepherd Montessori Schools Limited. The nursery operates from the Sure Start Centre in Townsend, Bournemouth, Dorset. The setting is privately owned, run as a non-profit organisation, providing care for up to 32 children from age two to under eight years. They are open Monday to Friday, term time only. Currently sessions run each morning from 9.15am to 12.15pm, with three afternoon sessions on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1pm to 4pm.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 37 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The nursery is in receipt of the government funding for early education. They cater for children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. The setting has links with other early years settings in the area.

The premises can be accessed via a ramp and the accommodation is set out on the same level. It offers use of a main classroom, an outdoor classroom, toilets, a kitchen and a store room. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery employs a qualified manager who holds NVQ Level 3 in childcare and education. She is supported by six members of staff, five of whom hold a recognised childcare qualification and one who is working towards one.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are very secure, happy and confident with extremely high levels of independence. This is due to the well planned and laid out environment, both indoors and outside, and the highly effective staff who are skilled at supporting and extending the children in their play. This means that children are making excellent progress in their learning. The setting has formed highly successful partnerships with parents, the children's centre and other professionals to ensure that the children and their families are effectively supported. The setting shows a very strong and successful commitment to evaluating their practices to enable positive changes and continuous improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing the self-evaluation systems that build on the setting's strengths to ensure the excellent standards are maintained.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is highly prioritised without compromising their learning experiences. Staff have a secure knowledge of child protection issues and the correct procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child in their care. They work closely with the parents and other professionals to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded at all times. Management follows robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure that the staff they employ are suitable to work with children. Daily monitoring of the environment, toys and equipment and regular risk assessments means that a safe place is provided for children to freely explore as they play under high levels of positive supervision and interaction.

A dynamic, stimulating and highly resourceful learning environment is provided, both indoors and outside that offers children rich and varied experiences in their play. A wide range of resources and materials, Montessori equipment, and play provision are accessible to the children that enables them to seek out their own learning based on their own ideas and interests. The environment is child-orientated, bright, colourful and interesting, which means that children make very good use of all areas. Especially the outdoor classroom and garden, where their creativity and imaginations are highly tuned as they explore, take safe risks and use the resources to develop their play. High levels of staff ratios means that children are safe, secure and challenged as they play due to the highly effective and skilled staff.

Children have an excellent introduction to the world in which they live as they learn to show respect and concern for their environment and those around them. They are surrounded by positive role models and are clear about the expectations to get along with others, show good manners and be kind. This means that children are well behaved and considerate as they share, take turns, plant, water, weed and tend the vegetable and herb gardens, and wash and clear up after them. For example, they wash up their plate and cup after snack ready for the next person and wash and clean up after their messy painting and creative activities. The setting works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that they are fully aware of the individual needs of the families they are catering and offering a service to. They encourage parents to share their skills, family traditions and cultures with the children, for example, through cooking activities, such as making houmous. This helps the children to recognise and accept that the world and local community that they live in is diverse.

Written policies, procedures, records and documentation are used very well to inform staff and parents and ensure that each child's individual needs are met to a high standard. Parents' needs and wishes are discussed fully with them to ensure that their child is positively and highly supported and making the best possible progress based on their interests and staff's and parents' observations. Parents' views are regularly sought to ensure that they are happy and the setting is meeting their needs. A monthly newsletter informs them about the Montessori learning method, activities and ideas for them to follow. Informal training sessions

about Montessori, what children learn through their play and other childcare issues, such as behaviour management, helps to ensure parents are well informed and understand some of the practices followed when caring for their children. The setting works positively with other settings and professionals involved in the children's lives to ensure a consistent and cohesive approach that is effective.

Leadership and management is highly effective, committed and reflective in ensuring that a high quality service is offered that meets the needs of its staff, children and parents. It achieves this through ensuring that staff have the skills and knowledge to do their job well through attending regular training, meetings to share their ideas and concerns, and updating their qualifications. This means that staff feel highly motivated, valued and committed. The setting also seeks the views from parents and its staff to help identify areas for improvement. The completed self-evaluation form gives some indication of some of the setting's strengths and areas for development.

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

Highly effective planning and assessment means that staff are able to observe, monitor and track children's learning through the Montessori curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage to identify next steps in their learning and share this with parents. Staff use their secure knowledge of each child to ensure they are supported and their learning is challenged and extended as they explore and initiate their own learning experiences. Children thrive under the expert supervision and interaction from staff, who know when to step back and allow the children to take risks, problem solve and make choices as well as get involved and make suggestions for new ideas.

Children are industrious, absorbed and fully involved in their play as they make independent choices about where they want to play and what they want to do. They show extremely high self-esteem and self-sufficiency as they go about their activities and routines.

Children have highly tuned imaginations and use the resources available to them to extend and develop their play. For example, a small group of three and four-year-olds use some wooden blocks and bricks to make a car in the garden. They drive to the 'hospital', shops and home and 'wear a hoop for a helmet'. The activity moves on and the structure is changed into a house and they paint and decorate it using brushes and pots of water. A three and four-year-old work together to make 'mud pies' using 'sand, water and mud' to make it 'stiff, gooey and soaked in!'.

Children show very good problem solving skills as they play. Outdoors, a small group of children make a low bridge using a long plank of wood, some shorter pieces and blocks of wood they find in the shed. They test out the structure carefully and identify that it is not safe in the middle and use the blocks to support the bridge. They learn about their own safety and risks that are safe to take through their play and support from staff. A three-year-old practises on the stilts and considers using them on the bridge. They put one foot and stilt on the bridge

to test it out before realising that it is not safe to do so. Others set up a simple obstacle course on the bridge that means they must walk carefully over the items to reach the other side.

Children learn about number use, counting and measuring in the planned activities in small groups. In cooking, children help to measure the correct amount of flour and sugar to make their cakes. Using the Montessori Short Bead Stair, a three-year-old shows a sense of pride as they correctly recreate the design and identify the correct number of beads on each rod. They learn to recognise numerals through using the Montessori Sandpaper Numbers.

The children's creativity and opportunities to express themselves through art and design are exceptional, both indoors and in the outdoor classroom, where they have independent access to a wide range of resources and materials to explore their own ideas. For example, children use pens, marker pens, chalk, card and paper and become absorbed in drawing pictures. They find glue, sequins, tissue paper and other shiny items to complete their pictures. They write their names on their work, some with support from staff. A three-year-old is able to find different colour paints, pots and brushes to make 'orange'. The child is excited and animated in the process and others soon copy. A four-year-old uses paints to create their mum on a 'train to India', taking great care and attention to the detail.

Children's health and safety is promoted highly effectively. They learn to keep themselves safe through clear instructions and expectations from staff. They learn which plants in the garden can be picked and those which must be left. Children eat healthy snacks of fruit and fresh bread that they have helped to make. They enjoy daily outdoor play, initiated by themselves, regardless of the weather, where they have opportunities to climb, pedal and run. They are confident in taking care of their own personal needs as they wash their hands after using the toilet and before they eat, access tissues and use the mirror to help clean themselves up after messy play, and wash up after their snack.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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