

Long Ditton Montessori Children's House

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	14/06/2010
Inspector	Catherine Greenwood
Setting address	The Clachan, Betts Way, Rectory Lane, Long Ditton, Surrey, KT6 5HT
Telephone number	02083988805
Email	gemma@ldmch.co.uk
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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

Long Ditton Montessori Children's House and Children's House Holiday Club was registered in 2010. It operates from premises in Long Ditton, Surrey. The group offers sessional care from Monday to Friday 9:30am - 12:30am during school terms. There are some afternoon sessions that run until 3:30pm. The group also operates a holiday club, which runs from 9:00am - 1:00pm for children aged from three to under eight years. Children have use of a main hall and side room. Toilet facilities are located just off the entrance corridor and the provision has use of a kitchen. There is a secure area for outdoor play.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory Childcare Register. A maximum of 30 children in the early years may be present at any one time and there are currently 37 children on roll. The group promotes aspects of the Montessori philosophy. The nursery currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language.

Six staff work with the children, including the manager. Of these, four have appropriate Early Years Qualifications, of which two staff have Montessori training.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individual needs are very well met as result of good organisation, teamwork, and effective partnership with parents. A key strength of the provision is self-evaluation, which identifies and achieves accurate and realistic targets for continuous improvement, such as extending and re-furbishing the outdoor play area. This shows that leadership and management have a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, which is enhanced through training such as focused improvement plans.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the opportunities for children to become absorbed in action and explorations of their own ideas, expressing them through movement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is fully safeguarded due to good staff knowledge of child protection procedures, which is updated through attendance at local authority training. Robust systems are in place to ensure staff suitability. Since registration significant improvements have been made to the provision and outcomes for children. For example, successful re-organisation of the provision has enabled

children to self-select a wider range of resources, and are they are subsequently happy to access to all areas of the curriculum and provision. A 'cosy corner' has been made in a side room so that children can rest and relax comfortably and look at books, additional programmable toys and information communication technology resources have been obtained, displays now include photographs of children and their independent creative work, books have been audited and improved through a local authority donation, Montessori practical life and mark making resources have been increased, and all policies and procedures have been reviewed and re-written.

Annual appraisals are used to develop staff confidence and identify and support their training needs. All staff hold first aid certificates. Self-evaluation includes clear objectives, for example, to include parents, staff and children in the process, consistently review all areas of learning and resources, and provide staff training on the Montessori ethos and use of materials. Local authority grants are successfully secured, for example, to improve and extend the outdoor play area. A good range of well organised age appropriate resources are made easily accessible to the children and incorporate Montessori equipment for children to self- select. The outdoor area is set up with an excellent range of resources and activities that encourage children to play outside as well as inside.

Activities are adapted for all children to ensure their inclusion, and staff monitor how resources are used and take appropriate action if play equipment is dominated by any of the children. Children who have English as an additional language are paired up with other children to help them establish friendships and interact with others. Parents bring in books and read stories in different languages, and the nursery uses visual prompts help children understand the routine, for example, at snack time.

Parents are provided with good information which includes a handbook, access to all policies and procedures, regular newsletters with information about activities, parents meetings, updates on improvements, and invitations to join training such as first aid. They are fully included in decisions about activities and their child's learning, for example, in the provision of French sessions, dance, and yoga sessions. Parent meetings are held once a term and provide opportunities for keyworkers to discuss children's individual 'learning journeys'. The provision operates an open door policy where parents are encouraged to share information about children's learning at home on an on-going basis, so it can be extended within the nursery. Parents make very positive comments about the provision. For example, they say they 'would highly recommend it to others', 'staff are very friendly and nurturing and are good at building children's self-confidence', 'receive good feedback on children's progress', and that 'they like the ethos and good organisation'. The provision has a positive approach to overcoming any obstacles related to sharing assessment records with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage for children who are on roll within the nursery.

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

Children make very good progress in their learning and development. They are extremely motivated, enthusiastic and confident within their play, and are very keen to participate in everything on offer. They show good personal independence, for example, as they operate the sink that pumps water for handwashing, and serve themselves to fruit at snack time. Children are very well behaved and co-operative and enjoy the company of others, for example, as they play imaginatively in the homecorner and look at books together in the garden. Staff regularly praise children for their help and co-operation. Children learn to take turns with using equipment such as the trampoline, as staff encourage them to use a large egg timer and talk to others about its use. Resources such as puppets are successful in promoting children's self-confidence and involvement.

Children listen and concentrate well during large group times, and enthusiastically answer questions related to elements of stories, for example, as they describe the feelings of animals, and name and talk about crayfish and crabs. Children show good self-confidence in speaking to a large group of children, for example, during weekly 'show and tell' sessions, and demonstrate a good range of vocabulary as they describe items they bring to the nursery, such as DVD's, and their own toys. Staff ensure that all children are included in show and tell times, and support those who want to take part, particularly those who are younger and less confident. Children often initiate conversation and discussion to which staff respond with questions that extend children's learning. Most children are keen to interact with staff, for example, as they sing and talk about songs they know from visiting their grandparents' church. Children successfully recognise and find their name as they use name cards displayed on a large board, which include photographs that help younger children to take part. During large group discussion times, children successfully recognise and sound letters of the alphabet and many can identify other words that begin with the same letter. They learn letter formation through using a good selection of mark making resources, Montessori sand paper letters, and resources such as foam and wet sand. More able children are supported with writing their name and simple words to describe their drawings.

Children count confidently in numerical order and can recognise numbers and count objects in books such as '1001 things to spot long ago'. Children enjoy selecting numbers and pegging them onto a low level washing line in the outdoor area, and using 'battery operated bees', as part of a counting game. Staff encourage children to compare the size of objects, for example the bats they choose to play with in the garden. Memory tray games used during large group times show that children have a very good knowledge of number and are beginning to learn about simple addition and subtraction. Photographs that show children learn about shape, size and colour as they use peg boards, shape sorters, Russian dolls, and play matching games with dominoes.

Children explore and investigate using resources such as microscopes and plastic mini-beasts that are made easily accessible in the 'investigation area'. Some more able children have a good knowledge of life cycles through using these resources

and watching ladybirds and butterflies hatch in nets within the nursery. They find ladybirds in the garden and give them to staff to return to their natural habitat, and are encouraged to look at things such as the bark on trees using magnifying glasses. Children handle tools with skill, for example, as they use rolling pins, cutters and playdough and discover how things work, as they pour sand and water into funnels and containers with pipes. Photographs show that children learn about the roles of other people, for example, through visiting fire people, a doctor, and a 'lollypop' person. Outings with parents include walks in the local community and outings to places such as farms. Activities such as food tasting and dragon dancing are used to promote children's understanding of diversity, for example in relation to celebrations such as Chinese New Year. Photographs show children using headphones to listen to stories and a computer is made available for children to use throughout each session.

Children develop their steering and manoeuvring skills as they use wheelbarrows, bikes, dolls pushchairs and scooters in the outdoor play area. They show good control of their movements as they use a climbing frame, slide and trampoline independently. Children develop good hand and eye co-ordination as they work together using building blocks, and persist in achieving their aims as they repeatedly try to balance the bricks despite the uneven ground. Their enthusiasm captures other children's interest and involvement, for example, as they use wheelbarrows to load the bricks and pretend to be 'builders'. Children take part in weekly football, dance and yoga session where they learn to control their movements. They show creativity as they paint at the outdoor easel and make collages using a variety of resources. Sand, water, paint and playdough are made easily accessible during each session and help to promote children's sensory development. Children play imaginatively with others, for example, as they pretend to be 'Spiderman' and make good use of the role play resources, which are regularly changed to become different environments, such as a vet and a shop. Planning shows that children handle a range of malleable materials which they use to create their own designs such as snails from clay. They take part in cooking activities which helps develop their skills in using one handed tools. Children join in singing sessions with enthusiasm, however, there are insufficient opportunities for them to move creatively to music.

On arrival at the nursery, children happily separate from their parents/carers, and show good self-confidence as they explore their surroundings. Good communication and partnership with parents means that children's individual needs are well met and they feel secure and settled within the provision. The nurturing approach from staff, is consistently identified by parents as a key strength of the provision, and can be seen in the way that children enjoy their involvement in their play.

Children are provided with healthy snacks. The good opportunities they have to help prepare the fruit and serve themselves means they eat well and benefit from having some of their 'five a day'.

All children are extremely happy and show a strong sense of belonging. They have a very positive approach to learning, which can be seen in relation to their desire to participate and their enthusiasm for using all the resources. They work well independently, as well as collaborating and co-operating with others, which is evident as they politely ask their friends if they can join in. Children frequently use

their own initiative and show a high level of independence as they make good use of the varied resources. The respectful and friendly way in which staff communicate with each other means that children are influenced by their positive interaction. Children are very well behaved and show a good awareness of their own responsibility within the nursery, for example, as they quickly help to tidy up at the end of the session and put away resources before taking out something new, in line with aspects of the Montessori ethos. Children's development is well known through the use of 'all about me' forms, which parents complete before their children start at the provision. These are used in children's learning journeys and show that children make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

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