



# Harlequin Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	402203
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Samantha Smith
<b>Setting Address</b>	School Road, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9LH
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<b>Registered person</b>	Ann Margaret Arber
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Harlequin Montessori Nursery opened in 1992. It operates from three classrooms in a self contained unit, in the grounds of a local secondary school. The nursery serves the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 54 children from 2 years to 5 years on roll. This includes 20 funded 3-year-olds and 5 funded 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special needs and those who

speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:30 until 16:00.

Eight members of staff work with the children. Over half the staff have Early Years qualifications to NVQ level 3. The setting receives support from the Local Authority. The nursery uses Montessori teaching methods.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good hygiene practises and understand the need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet, handling nursery pets and before eating food.

There are effective hygiene routines in place for the staff to follow. Colour coded cloths for various activities helps prevent the spread of germs and bacteria.

Most staff hold a current first aid certificate and they have received specialist training to administer invasive medicine such as Epipens. This means they can give appropriate care in the event of an accident as well as ensuring that children receive the correct dose of medication in an appropriate manner.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They are learning to take responsibility for themselves as they make choices about what and when to have their snack. They make choices from a well- presented snack table which consists of fruit, milk, juice or water and cream crackers. They enjoy nutritionally balanced meals brought in by outside caterers. Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet. This ensures individual dietary needs are met.

Well-planned topics help children to understand the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. They enjoy taking part in activities that teach them about how their bodies work and about the benefits of rest and exercise. They move confidently in a variety of ways. They engage in good physical activity that keeps them healthy such as riding bikes, running and sweeping leaves in the garden. Children's hand and eye co-ordination is good, they are skilful when playing throwing and catching games. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They are competent when selecting and using small equipment such as fork and spoon, paint brushes and when hanging their paintings up to dry.

Staff have recently completed training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are currently introducing it into the setting to enhance their practice with children under 3 years.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff organise the indoor space very effectively, allowing children to move around safely, freely and independently. Staff give high priority to helping children understand how to keep themselves safe. Through the good routines, gentle reminders and fun, interesting, well-planned topics such as stranger danger, body awareness, road safety and fire safety, and visits from various people in the community.

Children use a wide range of good quality resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. They can access them safely and independently.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, for example socket and radiator covers, effective evacuation procedures and a secure and safe outdoor play area.

There are excellent systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. The security is very good, preventing children from leaving the premises unsupervised and preventing unwanted visitors gaining access. Staff deployment is very good and guarantees that children are well-supervised and safe at all times.

There are effective emergency evacuation procedures in place that the staff and children practice regularly. As a result, children are beginning to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe and become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency.

Thorough risk assessments are carried out regularly. This means that children enjoy playing in an extremely safe environment, in which all potential hazards to children are removed by the vigilant staff.

Staff have a very good understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. Staff receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse. This supports children's welfare.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children gain much from being together. They learn to communicate and develop good relationships. Children under three explore and experiment through a range of well-planned activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Staff encourage young children to express their thoughts and feelings. Good questioning and repeating children's responses encourages use of language.

Children benefit from visits to the group from the police officer and fire officer as they learn how to keep themselves safe and the dangers of fires.

## **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making excellent

progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and they have worked hard to combine the Montessori ethos with the six learning areas.

Staff have a very good understanding of how children develop and learn. They provide a range of activities based on real life situations that help children progress in all areas of learning. They talk to children about what they are doing and respond to children's interest.

Staff encourage children to have respect for each other and their environment. Children are encouraged to clear up after activities and are encouraged to work well together. When numbers are restricted in certain activities children wear hats whilst engaged in a particular activity, when they have finished they remove their hat. This lets other children know they have finished.

Staff are good role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning by presenting activities in an interesting and enthusiastic manner. Staff observe children during free play and focussed activities and use their notes to assess children's achievements. This helps to identify children's stage of learning and allows for staff to plan for the next steps.

Children are extremely well-motivated and enjoy new challenges. They concentrate well at self-chosen activities. They are actively involved in their learning, take initiative and show high levels of concentration.

Children show good levels of independence as they see to their personal needs such as dressing and undressing, visiting the toilet and washing their hands and deciding when to have their drink and snack.

Children develop good relationships with adults and other children in the pre-school. They learn to co-operate and work well together. They are confident, independent and have good self-esteem.

Children's spoken language is developing well. They learn to negotiate well and to express their personal and imagined experiences during a good range of role-play situations such as small world play and when using house-hold equipment. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They spend time listening to stories during group times. Although there are books available around the nursery, the layout of the book area does not encourage children to spend time enjoying them away from the group. Children are beginning to recognise their names and simple words on letters on labels. More able children are developing early reading and writing skills.

Children count confidently and are beginning to recognise number patterns. They enjoy number activities during free-play such as counting bricks and beads as they form number groups to make tens and units. Children's understanding of space, shape and measuring is developing well as they explore geometrical shapes and solids and use a tape measure to measure their height.

Children investigate using their senses. They take part in activities encouraging them to explore natural and man-made objects. Children are confident in using information

and communication technology. They demonstrate good mouse control when playing games on the computer. They use a range of tools to explore their surroundings, such as using a magnifying glass to look at smaller objects.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered as children learn about world and the wider community through the activities and resources provided, such as dressing up. In addition, through the geography area, children can access information and resources relating to various countries. Children are taught to respect each other and co-operate through everyday experiences.

All children have free access to all activities provided. This ensures that children have equal opportunities to maximise their enjoyment and potential.

There are good systems in place to support children who have special needs. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met. Staff offer good support to children with special needs. They are secure in their understanding of the code of practice.

Children are very well behaved and they respond well to staff requests. They benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and from a well established and consistent routine. Children know the boundaries and stick to them. They learn about themselves and their own capabilities as well as important social skills such as sharing and listening to each other.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes considerably to children's well-being while at the nursery. Parents receive good information about the Foundation Stage. Staff hold open evenings with the parents once a term and progress records are shared. This ensures that parents understand about what and how children learn and that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The room is very well-laid out and staff show a very clear understanding of their role in supporting children in their play. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme. Staff deployment is effective and ensures that children are well-supervised at all times. Children receive good support from staff who know them well.

All documentation required for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place, though the register does not show differentiation in children's arrival and departure times. There are effective procedures in place that assess the suitability of new and existing staff. This means that suitable and experienced qualified staff look

after the children. This contributes to their welfare.

Leadership and Management is good. There are regular appraisals that identify training needs and staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant courses. This supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available.

There are clear aims for the provision and staff are aware of them. These aims reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education.

Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last Children Act inspection the setting agreed to review staff training and professional development to further improve the already good care and educational practices at the nursery.

Staff's training needs are identified through the regular appraisal system. Staff show a commitment to training and development. This demonstrates their commitment, and children are cared for by well-experienced and well-informed staff.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- record staff arrival and departure times.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- create an attractive book area where children and adults can enjoy books together

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)