



## Christchurch Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY136941
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Christine Coram
<b>Setting Address</b>	Beauchamp Place, Reid Street, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2BS
<b>Telephone number</b>	07971621470 (1st) 01202 481298 (2nd)
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Gillian Mary Thomas
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Sessional 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 satisfactory. 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?

Christchurch Montessori is a privately owned nursery. It opened in 2002 and operates from 2 rooms in a purpose built scout hall. It is situated in Christchurch, Dorset, near to the town centre. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 08.00 to 17.30 for 48 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 46

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 7 members of staff. Of these, 5 staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and 2 staff are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn good hygiene habits. For example, they all wash their hands before snacks. A three- year-old said that she was washing her hands because she had been to the toilet. When asked she knew that it was 'because of the germs'. Children needing medication are protected well as the medication records are clear about what is to be given. In the case of accidents, children's needs are met because a number of staff members have current first aid certificates. Children needing a rest can do so in a small room where stackable beds are used and children have their own sleeping bags. The arrangements meet the children's needs well.

Children's need for regular fluid is met very well as they can help themselves to drinks of water from the water dispenser. They do so with confidence. Children's nutritional health is promoted well because the setting provides cooked lunches. A menu displays a variety of healthy meals and children's favourites. For example, children eat cottage pie and steamed vegetables, chicken with pasta and meat with roast potatoes. The meals are rotated on a six-day basis. Some children bring their own lunches. A fridge is available for storage. Healthy snacks are provided by the setting to ensure that children eat something filling and nutritious during the session. These include toast and raisins with water or milk to drink.

Storage of food is healthy and safe because the fridge and freezer temperatures are taken and recorded each day. Children with special dietary needs are protected as staff are aware of these needs. They remind each other and double-check if children are able to eat particular food before giving it to them.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from safe areas for activities. The premises are divided and arranged to provide this. Staff transform an empty hall into a stimulating play and learning environment. The outside play area is secure. Children benefit from plenty of space for gardening, imaginative and physical play.

Children are protected as they play because the toys and equipment are well maintained and set out attractively for children to access. There is plenty of appropriate play equipment for all ages and this is clean and safe for them to use.

Children know what is offered as it is very easily seen.

Children are protected in the setting as staff undertake daily tasks to check safety. Comprehensive risk assessments are completed. However, there is an issue about security at the beginning of the session as it is sometimes possible for an adult to walk into the nursery without being challenged. Children are protected on outings through clear procedures. They are kept safe from possible harm or abuse because staff are confident about child protection issues and procedures.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a wide range of play throughout the session and good opportunities are given to them for outside play. However, the younger children who are separated from the three and four year olds during parts for the session have fewer choices than the older children. Sensory play and creative activities are limited for these children. These are included in the activity plans but are not available each day, restricting the children's access to a full range of play opportunities.

Nursery Education.

Learning and teaching in the setting are good. Children are confident and 'at home' with the routine. They are very sociable and independent, selecting their activities from the open shelving. They complete tasks and seek adult assistance when needed. Children learn to show care and concern for others. For example, a three-year-old sees another child drop a piece of his puzzle. She picks it up, puts it next to him on the table and continues on to another table. They also learn to stand up for what they know to be right. A group of children observe that a child has taken a toy from another child and keep telling him to do his own work and give the activity back to the child. He eventually does so with no adult intervention. Children demonstrate great pride in their achievements. Some of them create a complex pattern with geometric shapes. They are so pleased that one hugs the other and says 'it's gorgeous!'.

Children choose to use the book corner and sit quietly in the chairs looking at their chosen books. They turn pages and look at each page in turn with great interest. They frown in concentration as they scrutinize their pages. Children begin to recognise letters. A four-year-old confidently says 'k for kangaroo' and 'k for key'. They know that writing has a meaning, stating that 'this has got our name on so that we know whose it is'. Children demonstrate good pencil control. They use one-handed tools and cut very effectively and confidently. A child states: 'I need to cut the corners off' and does so neatly.

Children of three and four years confidently count to ten together. They complete a complex three-dimensional puzzle with logic and confidence. Whilst making a picture of a house with pre-cut shapes, children recognise and name shapes such as triangles and squares. A three-year-old builds a tower with decreasing sized blocks in order with little support until it is much taller than him and he requires staff to lift him for each new piece. They learn to sort items into sets. A child sorts coloured shapes

into four pots. He closes his eyes to think about which pot the next piece belongs in and is successful in the exercise for a time.

Children talk with enthusiasm about their life outside the setting. In a group discussion, they talk about how they can help at home, saying 'I always lay the table'. A four-year-old talks at length about a new child at the setting and how he is at home today and has a mummy and daddy. Children construct with a purpose carefully centring each piece with clear understanding. They investigate through smelling the marmite pots, for example. Children enjoy a planting activity and enter into conversation about what plants need to grow, such as sun and water. They investigate the soil with their fingers. Children are very interested in technology and have opportunities to use the computer. Many come to look at the inspector's laptop and clearly understand what it is for.

Children develop a wide variety of physical skills such as screwing and unscrewing jar lids, building with wooden blocks or commercially produced construction toys. They throw balls with clear aim. They walk up steps of a small slide with one foot to a step and jump off with two feet together. They are beginning to understand their physical needs and develop independence in taking care of these. They know that they wash their hands 'because of the germs'.

Children enjoy creative activities such as free painting. They can choose which colour paper they would like and are engrossed in the activity. A three-year-old uses geometric shapes to make a garden, he makes different coloured and shaped flowers. He tells staff that he has made a butterfly and points to a clear butterfly shape. Children develop their imagination and create scenarios as they play. For example, a child makes an animal with a toy and another child playing with a chain toy says 'I've got a rope and I'm going to rescue you'. He tries to tie the chain to the toy. Children know and enjoy singing a range of songs. They sing with feeling and many sing in tune. A four year old continues to sing the last song as he starts to play.

Children are taught well. Staff follow the Montessori method of teaching. Children work independently, selecting items and working at them, initially without support. Staff watch over the group and, if necessary, demonstrate and encourage children to try again. Children learn at their own pace and staff are aware of the ability of each child. Staff support children very well in their activities. They have a clear understanding of the purpose of the activities. Planning is effective. An annual plan of varied topics is followed and a weekly planning sheet shows how the topic is broken down into activities. For each topic, there is a sheet detailing how each Early Learning Goal will be covered and what children are expected to learn. Children's progress is recorded clearly. A brief daily record of the 1 to 1 activity is made with records of what each child knows and has achieved. Further observations are made at varied activities. Children with special educational needs are carefully observed. Their individual education plans are followed and these are written in conjunction with other professionals where appropriate. The setting follows a clear routine. Children make good use of the 'work' sessions, experiencing many different activities and gaining a sense of achievement. The routine is changed to meet the needs of the children. For example, when more children attend, the group is split at different times of the day and this works well.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children gain an awareness of the differences in society through sufficient images of different religions and cultures. Their individual needs are met because children are known by staff and supported well by them. Children with special needs are respected and their needs met. Developments and progress are celebrated with parents and the setting works in partnership with health professionals to ensure that children have continuity in their care. All children benefit from suitable and positive behaviour management. Staff gently remind children of the acceptable behaviour according to their knowledge of the child and the child's stage of development. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The setting has recently begun to run parent's evenings and provides information about the curriculum through notices and newsletters. They are satisfied with the information given when their child first attends the setting. They find the booklet for parents helpful. They are less clear about the information supplied regarding the themes and activities for the week. All parents stated that staff inform them verbally of their child's progress. Parents stated that they are confident to share any information about their child but could not recall staff asking for such information. They are not given specific suggestions for continuing children's learning. Not all parents have seen their children's records. Some know that they can look at their child's file at any time.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from consistent care with most staff working on a full-time basis. Children are protected as the recruitment and vetting procedures are clear and effective. The comprehensive operational plan works well in practice, although the organisation and planning for under threes and the security of building when children are arriving is less effective. Suitable induction and appraisal arrangements help staff to develop their professional practice and work consistently with the children. Confidentiality is maintained, as records and other documentation are stored in a locked cupboard. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. The registered person provides strong leadership in the setting. She has clear aims for the children. She addresses any issues that arise with staff and is very clear about how she wants staff to work. Staff training is encouraged and in-house training is provided to help staff to develop their practice. The setting receives support and advice from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The educational programme and individual teaching times are evaluated by the deputy manager and the staff themselves. Any identified issues are discussed and suggestions for improvement are noted for the future. Feedback from parents is sought on an informal basis and also discussed by the staff team. There is a clear commitment to improving the setting and the programme offered. Daily conversations with staff mean that they are

involved in the on-going process of development.

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

At their last inspection, the setting was asked to address safety issues in the outside play area, fire exits and procedures to supervise adults who have not been vetted. These have been addressed effectively other than the issue of security at the beginning of the sessions. Children's safety has improved as a result. They were also asked to develop staff's deployment and understanding of their roles and behaviour management. Staff are now effectively deployed and work independently in the setting. Children benefit from greater consistency in their care. Children's behaviour is managed in an appropriate way. The registered person monitors this. The setting's documentation needed improvements and additions, which have all been put in place. This ensures continuity for the children and better information for parents. Issues about the way the premises are used have also been fully considered and assessed by the staff. All areas are now used appropriately and children are cared for in safe and stimulating premises.

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration the last inspection.

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:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. 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 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):

- continue to develop the planning for children under 3 years to include a greater range of tactile and creative play opportunities
- review the security of the building during the arrival of children in the morning

## **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):

- continue to develop partnership with parents to help them to be more involved in their child's learning and provide more information for parents about themes and activities

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