

The Grange Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Inspection date | 23/11/2010 |
| Inspector | Cilla Mullane |

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| Setting address | Westcliff Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9LJ |
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|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Telephone number | 01843588840 |
| Email | philippa@tmnursery.com |
| 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

The Grange Montessori Nursery has been registered since 2008, and is one of four nurseries owned by this provider. It operates from a two storey converted school near to the centre of Ramsgate, Kent. A wide entranceway gives access for wheelchairs and there is a disabled toilet. There is a baby and toddler room, a two to three year olds room and a pre-school room. The baby unit is upstairs. The nursery serves the local area.

The nursery is registered to take children aged from three months to eight years. There are currently 132 children in the early years age range on roll, 53 of whom are in receipt of government funding. The provider is also registered on the Early Years Register and both compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery opens five days a week, all year round. Sessions are from 8.00am to 6.00pm. There are 21 staff members, including the manager who have an early years qualification to level 2 or above. Of these, one member of staff is working towards an appropriate qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress, they very much enjoy their play and learning, and their uniqueness is valued. Skilled and well-qualified practitioners support individual children's learning extremely well. Children are noticeably safe and settled, keen to learn, self controlled, and act sociably and independently. Very strong links with other professionals who support the children, such as speech and language therapists, lead to consistency of care, and all children receiving maximum support. Children benefit greatly from the exceptional well-resourced and organised indoor environment, and the calm and busy atmosphere throughout the spacious and welcoming building. The exceptionally high quality of leadership and management motivates staff well, and ensures that the capacity to maintain continuous improvement is consistently excellent.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the availability and variety of activities and resources in the outside area
- improve the two-way flow of information with parents to further involve them in practical ways to support their child's learning and development

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

A great strength of this setting is the exceptionally strong leadership and management, which ensures that high standards are maintained, and that the nursery is very well organised. Children are safeguarded well. Thorough risk assessments are in place, and carried out as new situations arise: for example, the recent merging of two rooms has been risk assessed so children can move between them safely. In addition, comprehensive daily checks around the whole setting ensure that children are kept safe. A clear record of staffs Criminal Record Bureau checks is efficiently maintained, and an effective policy is implemented to limit the use of mobile phones, further protecting children. The member of staff who prepares snacks and serves lunches runs a well ordered kitchen with robust checks in place, for example, regarding food and fridge temperatures, and she ensures that special diets are adhered to.

The effectiveness of every aspect of the provision is carefully monitored and evaluated, resulting in well targeted actions and improvements. Staff are given every opportunity to offer suggestions for change and improvement. Their views are valued and taken into account. They have a budget for the room in which they work, and are therefore in control of, for example, enhancing resources, or accessing training. They are therefore motivated, and included in the operation of the setting. Self evaluation is used very effectively to plan future improvements; a current exciting plan is the development of the outdoor area, and children's views have been sought and acted upon. There are also plans to reorganise the building to enable free flow to the outside.

Staff meetings are very effective in driving improvement and promoting good practice. Staff discuss, for example, the importance of maintaining the appearance of rooms to a good standard, and information from important training is cascaded, for example, safeguarding, so all are staff well informed.

Resources and staff are deployed extremely well, so that children are able to move around freely and independently. They can learn at their own pace, selecting from an extensive and readily accessible range of good quality resources. Adults support children, giving them time to explore, experiment, and achieve their desired result. In each room, the designated book areas are attractive and inviting, encouraging children's interest in the written word.

Parents report great satisfaction with the quality of the staff and their children's care and education. They feel supported by their child's key person, and regularly discuss their children's developmental records. If children have special educational needs and/or disabilities staff work closely with parents, supporting them as they work with the child at home. However, not all parents are helped to continue children's learning at home. Staff establish very strong links with other professionals who are involved with the children, which ensures continuity of care and learning. For example, a speech and language therapist visits to work with staff and children, and she also visits the children at home.

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

All children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals from their individual starting points, and show positive attitudes to learning. Staffs excellent use of observations enables them to plan suitable next steps for each child, and to recognise how well each child is achieving. They can therefore intervene at an early stage to help support children.

Children have a wonderful time, making the most of play and learning experiences. Children's personal social and emotional development is especially good. They adeptly serve their own food and scrape their plates after lunch. They form good friendships, singing 'Bob the Builder' together as they sit and wait for lunch. Turn-taking comes naturally, passing the bowl of vegetables to their friends, and securing the lid on the water jug before passing it on. They happily take responsibility for keeping their environment clean and tidy, helping to mop up a water spillage, and replacing the musical instruments before selecting another. They develop excellent fine motor skills, persevering and concentrating when using the practical life resources, such as small spoons.

Children are developing skills for the future daily through their play. They make informed choices, learn at their own pace, so are able to consolidate their learning, and they take pride in finishing chosen activities. They successfully cut up their own food at snack time. They are good at self help skills, aided by the range of equipment where they practice: for example, fastening buttons and zips. They develop trusting relationships with adults, who show them that they are important and valued.

A strong emphasis is placed on helping children to be settled and content. Babies show that they feel safe: they are happy to explore, becoming independent and confident with adults nearby, or to cuddle up with staff. Children move 'up' to the next room when they are ready, and with the careful support of their key person. Adults make the most of opportunities to reinforce the importance of safe behaviour, for example, chatting about how to use knives safely.

The outdoor environment is well used, and children enjoy exercise in the fresh air, and are challenged by good quality resources, such as a trampoline. However, it has been recognised that this area could be enhanced. There are therefore plans to develop this area to better reflect the indoor provision. Pre school children do not have frequent trips into the local community, limiting their opportunities to learn about their surroundings and how to take care on the paths and roads. Frequent visits from health professionals help children learn about being healthy: for example, a dentist visits, and children enjoy dance, football and yoga classes. Good personal hygiene habits are encouraged from an early age, so children become very independent. Even the youngest toddlers independently squeeze the soap dispenser, and get their own towels.

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

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| 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

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| 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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met