

Holly Corner Montessori Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 402169
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Inspector ISP Inspection

Setting address 104 Shrub End Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 4RX

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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

Holly Corner Montessori Kindergarten has been under the current ownership since 1998. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. It operates from a converted house on the outskirts of Colchester. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The Kindergarten is registered for 54 children between the ages of two and five years. There are currently 66 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions, some staying for the full day.

The kindergarten opens from 8.45am to 3.15pm five days per week throughout the year, except Bank Holidays, Easter, August and Christmas.

There are 13 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The Kindergarten offers the Montessori method of teaching.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from exceptionally high quality care and inspirational learning opportunities tailored to individual needs, helping them to make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. The setting has established highly effective partnerships with parents and other agencies to ensure children's needs are met and their protection assured. Leadership and management is visionary and clearly demonstrates the capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase children's knowledge and understanding of conservation and sustainability by introducing recycling of garden and food waste to make compost for use in the garden when planting and growing
- establish and build on links with other early years settings attended by children to ensure continuity of care.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and security are of paramount importance and they are protected from harm or neglect by comprehensive policies and procedures which are consistently applied by all staff. Children display excellent awareness of how to

keep themselves safe as they move about the setting, for example, as they prepare for outside play and use the stairs, they are orderly, careful and considerate of one another, responding to staff's cues and directions.

Equality and diversity are promoted at all times, ensuring the inclusion of all children. Adults have exceptional knowledge of every child's background and needs and use this to plan and complete a learning story for every child. As a result, children's achievements are consistently high and their self-esteem is assured. For children who require additional help, the support is sensitively tailored and monitored to ensure they make maximum progress and are integrated into all aspects of kindergarten life.

Partnership working is valued as an essential means of meeting children's needs and the setting is highly committed to developing working partnerships with parents, carers and outside professionals. Currently, links with other early years settings attended by children are being developed to ensure continuity of care. Parents receive regular informative newsletters covering every aspect of the kindergarten, ensuring they are extremely well informed about activities, procedures, new staff and celebrating achievements. The children's development is recorded in a 'Learning Story' which incorporates observations, examples of work and photographs, contributions from parents and plans for next stages in learning. The professionalism and dedication shown by staff in compiling these records, which are consistently high quality, accurate and informative, make them a valuable document which will aid transition once children move on, as well as providing a record to share with family and friends.

The management at the setting have overseen completion of a self-evaluation to highlight the setting's strengths and areas for development. All staff and users of the setting have their views and opinions considered and, where changes will benefit children's care or learning, they are carefully introduced. The self-evaluation is thorough and comprehensive and demonstrates the rigorous analysis and monitoring which sustain the ethos and continuous improvement of the setting. Staff's training is positively encouraged and promoted, and the team display high morale and enthusiasm throughout. This positively impacts on children, who can be secure in their sense of belonging as planning and activities reflect their interests and follow their initiatives for a large part of the time.

Resources are of extremely high quality throughout the setting and play an important part in children's achievements and experiences. They can access all the Montessori equipment, alongside creative materials, books and puzzles, to work at their own pace. The outside area has an excellent range of well-chosen equipment to support all areas of learning, and children have free choice to pursue their chosen activity in the safe yet highly stimulating environment. Children clearly benefit and thrive as a result of attending the setting, which is highly appropriate for its purpose.

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

Holly Corner Montessori Kindergarten provides children with exceptionally high quality care and education, enabling them to make outstanding progress in skills that will help them in the future. Children enthusiastically engage in a carefully balanced programme of planned and free activities, including small and larger group times, and independently chosen activities which challenge them and extend their thinking. They show high levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. They adapt to the outdoor environment with ease, creating imaginative play scenarios, whether on the boat being 'pirates' or under the trees digging and looking for bugs. They are respectful and kind to one another and develop strong and healthy relationships with the adults around them. This ensures they are listened to and their needs are met, raising self-esteem as they direct their own learning.

Children's healthy lifestyles are promoted as they learn and follow basic hygiene routines and understand why these are important. Prompts and visual aids by the wash basins remind children of the correct procedures to ensure their hands are clean. Mealtimes and snack times are social occasions when children eat together, with staff on hand to help with any tricky packaging or to mop up accidental spills. Children are very competent at managing their own appetites and dietary needs and enjoy discussing what they have on their plates, as well as what they enjoy at home. The garden offers a wealth of physical play and exploratory opportunities and children eagerly don outdoor clothing and boots when necessary. The weather is seen as no bar to outdoor play. There is an undercover area where children can use sand and water or other play equipment and a playhouse for imaginative games. The recent wet weather created a mud pool which was well utilised to slide and roll in. The addition of a full size boat and decked area forms the basis of many imaginative play scenarios and exciting story creation as children climb and negotiate getting in and out. The teddy bears' regatta was a new take on the traditional teddy bears' picnic and a fun and memorable time for all involved.

Children's exemplary behaviour and confident approach underpins their sense of belonging and feelings of security in every aspect of nursery life. They work independently, for example, choosing collage materials and sparkly sequins to decorate a picture, and have regard for others as they are able to share, take turns and cooperate in caring for their environment. They join in with sophisticated group discussions, knowing that their contributions are valued and that they are listened to, for example, as they discuss the planets and solar system.

The exceptional organisation reflects exciting and engaging experiences that meet the needs of children attending exceedingly well. Teaching methods are innovative and embrace all levels of experience among the talented staff team, playing to particular strengths, such as, artistic or musical talent. Plans and activities attend to every detail and are rooted in teachers' expert knowledge of how best to help children learn, blending the Montessori approach with other teaching methods very successfully. Additionally, parents play a valuable part by contributing in various ways, not least by reading stories and teaching songs and rhymes in the many and

varied home languages represented amongst the children. All activities and significant events, from fundrasing and mud sliding to mums reading stories, are recorded and displayed on numerous high quality photographic displays, ensuring that everyone from visitors to grandparents can see and appreciate the full and expansive range of life enhancing activities children benefit from.

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

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	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

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

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

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