

Little Gems Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

01/03/2011

Inspector

Jane Wakelen

Setting address

The Village Hall, Church Lane, Trottiscliffe, Kent, ME19 5EB

Telephone number

01892870740

Email

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

Little Gems Montessori Nursery opened in 2010 and operates from two rooms in a village hall, in Trottiscliffe, Kent. The setting is accessible to those with disabilities. Children have access to a large outdoor play area and field. The nursery is open from Monday to Thursday from 9.15am to 3.00pm and on Fridays from 9.15am to 12:30pm during term time only.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 18 children aged from two to under five years on roll.

The nursery employs three staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 4. The nursery uses the Montessori Method to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals because staff have exceptional knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and deliver this through the Montessori method. Staff are skilled, well qualified individuals who use their knowledge and expertise to facilitate opportunities to extend children's development and learning in and beyond the nursery. Overall, children play in a stimulating, conducive learning environment using good quality resources. Highly effective partnerships between parents and other agencies further supports children's individual needs to promote excellent outcomes for children. The leadership from the management provides motivation and drive to the nursery and includes the staff team in the self-evaluation of the setting to ensure continuous improvement is given high importance.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhancing the environment with signs, symbols, notices, numbers, words, pictures, music and songs that take into account children's different interests, understandings, home backgrounds and cultures
- further promoting opportunities for sufficient space, indoors and outdoors, to set up relevant activities for energetic play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding is given high priority by the staff and management of the nursery who attend training on a regular basis and ensure the comprehensive policy is fully implemented into the nursery. The nursery works collaboratively with other key agencies to protect children and ensure their individual needs are addressed. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to appoint suitable staff to work with the children. Annual appraisals are carried out to ensure staff remain suitable and encourage staff to update their skills and and training through regular attendance on training courses. Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out to analyse the hazards within the environment and on outings with measures put in place to minimise these, to protect children's safety and welfare. Children show an excellent understanding about keeping themselves safe, using the different equipment around the room with care and attention.

The provider places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all its work ensuring children follow a programme of activities to meet their stage of development and address their individual needs. Staff are highly effective in gaining information from the parents to learn about each child to enable them to plan activities in relation to their starting points. Consistent, robust monitoring, observation and evaluation provides information to the staff team and management to ensure outcomes for children are positive. Children are able to learn about diversity within the wider community through cultural resources and additional items from countries around the world. Children's knowledge is further extended through celebrating different festivals from different cultures and religions. Resources throughout the setting are in excellent condition and displayed at child-height in the Montessori areas, for example sensorial and life skills to enable children to make choices. All resources are in excellent condition and suitable for the age of children attending the setting. However, children are unable to fully benefit from an engaging environment due to the minimal signs, symbols and posters on display.

The staff have a highly positive relationship with the parents and carers and fully involve them in their child's learning and development. All staff act as key people to a group of children enabling parents to build good relationships and trust with the staff. Daily communication and regular opportunities to view their child's learning journals ensures a good two-way-flow of information to support children's well-being. Parents are encouraged to be involved in daily sessions and to provide items from home for the letter of the week, helping children feel confident with the good link between home and nursery. Parental views are sought about all aspects of the nursery, together with children's views to support staff in monitoring the effectiveness of the provision. A prospectus, regular newsletters and comprehensive policies are all shared with the parents to keep them informed about how the nursery operates and its principles.

The setting is highly committed to working with other professionals and agencies to support children's development and ensure they are able to achieve their full potential. This well-established channel of communication provides children and

parents with support to enable the smooth transition from one provision to another.

The excellent management of the setting and the motivated, committed staff provides a secure platform to self-evaluate the provision and ascertain its effectiveness in meeting the needs of its users. The team of staff have an excellent understanding about the settings weaknesses and strengths and constantly identify ways to make improvements or extend provision to ensure a stimulating environment. Constant monitoring and evaluation of activities and resources, along with children's progress ensures the setting is able to maintain continuous improvement.

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

Children are eager to attend the nursery and confidently arrive ready to play. They have a good understanding of the routine when they arrive and enter the nursery with their bag ready to change their shoes and find their name label. Children build excellent relationships with the staff and their peers helping them to settle well into the setting and build their confidence. Children are exceptionally independent and happily hang their coats and bags up before sitting to chat to each other and the staff about home experiences and their week on holiday. Children then move around the room making choices from the different areas of the Montessori programme. Children show good balancing skills as they carefully carry the tray with the glass bowls with water in to a table. They happily select the sensorial equipment using the colours and plates to create 'suns' on the carpet, working together with their friend. Children show excellent concentration as they use the rods to grade them in size and then use them to form a maze, where they encourage their friends to walk around, laughing when they almost fall over. Children show excellent numeracy skills using the beautiful Montessori wooden resources to learn about number and size. They handle the three-dimensional shapes, learning their names and comparing the differences. Children's understanding of number is encouraged in practical situations, such as circle time, where children count how many children and how many staff. They happily represent their age using their fingers and use mathematical language in their games, such as big, small and more than.

Children show a love of books as they spend time sitting with their friends on the cushions or the little chairs, sharing stories and books. They show a strong awareness for letters and sounds and enthusiastically contribute to discussions for the 'letter of the week' when showing their contribution from home. Children trace 'sand-paper' letters and write these in sand using their fingers, developing control and writing skills. The topic of animals from South America inspires children to become fully engaged in many activities to learn about the animals. They cut pictures and make individual topic books, act out scenarios using the small plastic animals and discover where they live using the globes and the world map. Children are able to gain a strong understanding and knowledge base of continents and countries. They use resources to learn about differences in people from around the

world and celebrate different festivals. Children confidently use a digital camera taking pictures of favourite areas both inside and outside and then eagerly watch the picture on the digital photo frame supporting their understanding of technology. Children's excellent learning in numeracy, literacy and communication technology ensures they make excellent progress in developing skills for their future.

Children show enjoyment using their creativity and imagination through paint, collage and role play. They sing along as they paint, making marks with a purpose and then confidently write some letters from their name to identify their picture. Children sing songs from memory and are encouraged to make songs up to connect with their topic or recent experiences linking their learning together. Opportunities for physical play are offered on a daily basis, enabling children to use good-sized large play equipment outside to develop their physical skills and provide a challenge. However, space for large physical play indoors is not always exploited. An adjacent field offers children the opportunity to explore their environment in a safe, secure area with space to run and be energetic. Children show excitement and interest as they touch the trees and find the daisies hidden in the grass and marvel at the big roller used to flatten the ground.

Staff constantly observe and evaluate children's learning using written 'snap shot' observations, narratives and the Montessori record sheet. Each child has their own learning journal which contains pieces of their art work, achievements, observations and photographs providing a lovely record of their learning. This consistent monitoring and evaluating ensures children are able to make excellent progress in their development taking into account their starting points. Planning is carried out weekly and adapted where necessary to provide topic based activities and specific activities to meet children's interests.

Children adopt healthy lifestyles and excellent self-care routines. They confidently select their snack, using the tool to core the apple and slice it and then place it on a plate. Children show skill in pouring their drinks from the jugs and carefully carrying this over to the table using a tray. All children are familiar with the routine and enjoy washing their plate and cup once they have finished. They use tissues when necessary understanding the importance of putting these in the bin and understand the need to wash away germs after playing outside and using the toilet. Children understand the importance of keeping themselves safe and stay near the adults when playing in the large field. They approach adults if upset or they need reassurance reflecting the warm, caring relationships between the children and the staff. Children learn to tidy away their work before they move to another activity, showing good discipline and an understanding of routines and procedures. Children take responsibility for their actions, for example if they spill any water they understand the need to mop it up to ensure they don't slip over. Children behave exceptionally well and show care and concern for their peers if they see them upset or hurt. Constant praise and encouragement enables children to grow and develop to their full potential, developing their confidence and self-esteem.

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	2
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	2
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	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