

St Gregory's Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Lisa Toole
Setting address	Victoria Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 8QY
Telephone number	01323 639164
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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

St Gregory's Montessori Nursery School is owned by the Catholic Church Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It opened in 1989. It is non denominational. It operates from a church hall adjacent to St Gregory's main church building in Eastbourne, Sussex. There is an enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery serves the local area.

A maximum of 29 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 55 children from two and a half years to four years on roll; 35 children receive funding for the provision of early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9am until 4pm, with children able to attend for a full or half day. Seven staff work with the children. All of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery school uses the Montessori Method of teaching. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The group is successfully meeting the needs of every child because staff are skilled practitioners who clearly understand their role and responsibilities. The group is very strongly led and managed, with a clear and driving ambition to provide high quality provision through self assessment and continuous improvement. Excellent arrangements are in place to safeguard children at all times, both in and outdoors. Children are active learners, who make their own decisions about what they do and play with. Staff plan a broad range of activities, although a little less consideration is given to children's free and spontaneous creativity through art and craft experiences. The combined Montessori and Early Years Foundation Stage assessment systems do not always clearly show where children are making progress, to inform their future targets and planning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the cycle of observation and assessment to show more clearly where children are making progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- provide more opportunities for children to explore and share their own

thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art and craft experiences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the group is exemplary and this very strongly contributes to the outstanding safeguarding procedures followed by the staff in order to protect every unique child. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and take the protection of children seriously. They attend training regarding child protection to keep up to date with current practices and guidelines; they record and monitor children's accidents and any existing injuries they have in order to safeguard each child. All mandatory documentation is in place and is well maintained, with comprehensive systems in place to review and update records such as policies, procedures and risk assessments. Thorough recruitment and ongoing vetting procedures also contribute to their excellent safeguarding measures.

Self-evaluation is used to help drive their continuous improvement; with achievable targets to improve the outcomes for children. The views of parents and children alike feed into their driving improvement because they are valued for their contribution. Staff are highly committed to improving their skills and knowledge by undertaking regular training courses and increasing their overall qualification level. This contributes to children achieving well.

Excellent partnerships with parents are in place because staff highly value these relationships and the importance of working together for the benefit of each child. Parents are provided with a wealth of information, are invited to discuss their children's progress informally as well as through a formal consultation and are able to see their children's records at any time. In discussion, parents praise the group and its staff very highly; they are very happy with the care their children receive and feel actively involved in their children's experiences at the group. Staff are also working well with external agencies in the wider community to ensure that every child receives care and education in line with their specific needs, including any special educational need and/or disability they may have. Staff are also aware of the need to work with other settings that children attend to support them through collaborative working. Equality and diversity is positively promoted, helping each child and their family feel included. Children and families with languages other than English are able to see their home language reflected in the physical environment, through labelling of resources and equipment for example. This also helps all children understand about the diversity of the social world around them.

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

Children show through their behaviour that they feel happy, safe and secure in the group. For example, children spontaneously sing about how much they love

coming to nursery when asked for their views, explaining that it is because they can do lots of building. Children are able to feel emotionally secure because of the caring approach by staff, who know the children well. Children are also able to feel a sense of belonging because the photographs they have taken and paintings are displayed around the room. Staff act as positive role models and teach children about respect, being kind and following their golden rules, such as walking indoors to help them also learn to keep safe. They learn about equality through a good range of activities and the celebration of cultural and religious events throughout the year. Parents are also invited to come in and celebrate their particular faith with the children, so they learn through first-hand experiences. The outdoor environment is well used to provide children with fresh air and exercise, as part of a healthy lifestyle. They also do activities indoors such as music and movement to learn how to move their bodies in different ways and to get out of breath in order to stay healthy. Topics such as keeping healthy, along with the introduction of different fruits, such as dried apricots at snack time, support a nutritious diet. Fresh drinking water is freely available to help the children keep hydrated throughout the day. Snack and lunch times are lovely sociable occasions, when both adults and children sit down at the table together to eat.

All of the children are developing important skills for the future because of the good range of activities and resources they have access to. Group times are successfully used to discuss their news and chat in general, helping their communication skills. Equipment such as child-sized digital cameras supports their developing use of technology, another key skill for the future. Staff are skillful at using open-ended questions to challenge the children's thinking and help them make progress in their learning. Children show that they are active learners who can problem solve, design and make models independently and delight in expressing themselves creatively through free painting, when they delight in creating new colours and shades by mixing the paints together. At times, the opportunities for them to express their own ideas through art and craft are a little limited because they are based around project work and adult-led activities rather than being able to use their own ideas, thoughts and emotions to express themselves. Staff plan a range of activities for in and outdoors based around the Montessori teaching methods, and also follow this when assessing the children. Each child has a learning journey record, based on the six areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage which include examples of their work and photographs of them engaged in activities. However, these two assessment records are not being fully combined to show clearly how children are making progress. This has an impact on how the staff are able to fully successfully identify and in turn plan for the most appropriate next steps in each child's learning and development.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
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	2
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	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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