

# Summertown Montessori Nurseries

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date** 07/04/2011  
**Inspector** Tom Radcliffe

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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*.

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## **Description of the setting**

Summertown Montessori Nursery opened in 2009 and became a limited company in 2010. The nursery operates from a church hall in the Summertown area of Oxford close to the town centre. The rooms available include the main hall, kitchen and toilet facilities. Children have access to an enclosed garden with grass surfaces for outdoor play. There is a ramp leading to the main door and hall.

The nursery is open each week day in term time only from 8.00am to 3.00pm. Morning and afternoon sessions are made available to children. A maximum of 30 early years children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 26 children in the early years age group on roll and the setting is registered on the Early Years Register. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early years education to children aged three and four and mainly provides for children in the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs three members of staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery also has the support of volunteer helpers. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy in providing childcare in conjunction with Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The well organised and child-friendly setting works with a good understanding of children's individuality which enables their learning and welfare needs to be given good attention. Children thrive under the expectation that they will make choices, be independent and play with children of different ages. The setting works with a good understanding of the need to establish and use effective partnerships with parents and other settings or professionals. This impacts on the progress that most children are able to make. The provider and manager use self-evaluation and reflection to gain an understanding of what the setting does well and what may need to be improved. This ensures that the setting has the capacity to improve and to enhance outcomes for children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- continue to develop children's play experiences to ensure that the specific age needs of all children are catered for.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

The setting has a range of written policies and procedures which parents can readily access. These are regularly updated and ensure that the setting is safely and efficiently managed and that it meets the needs of its users. Children are very well safeguarded as attentive staff implement effective practice consistently. All staff are vetted for suitability, visitors are monitored and children's interests are always protected. Children are very well supported by skilful staff who allow children to direct their own play and make decisions while making only timely interventions. The play environment that children use, including outside, is thoroughly risk assessed to ensure that any potential hazards are minimised. The security that children feel while in the setting encourages them to explore and boosts their confidence. Children particularly enjoy outdoor play and regularly have outings into the locality. Children's good health and well-being is promoted by staff, for example, in cases of minor injuries or illness.

The provider uses effective self-evaluation to inform the setting about its level of performance. The recently appointed manager is very keen to build on this as she gains feedback from parents and children. In addition she leads a committed team of staff who work well to ensure that they build on their effectiveness as children learn through play. As reflective practitioners staff are well placed to develop the setting's already good level of provision. The setting has a strong capacity to improve and has progressed since it reregistered. The setting has a good working relationship with parents as key persons promote good levels of communication both formally and informally. In addition the setting understands the value of wider partnerships to support the ongoing learning and development of children.

Children play in spacious accommodation which is very well organised and which most children find interesting. Resources are made available which encourage children to develop in all areas of learning. Staff respond very well to the needs of children and exert a very positive influence in the setting. Staff allow children to direct their own play but remain on hand to support and help children's understanding and enjoyment as they play. A striking feature of the setting is how children of all ages show independence, resilience and high levels of motivation as they immerse themselves in their play. The setting promotes inclusive practice at all times as children are treated as individuals with the capacity to build on what they can already do. Staff allow children to have an age appropriate understanding of their diverse world and community. Children with additional learning needs are very well supported in the setting.

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

Children generally make good progress as they take part in mainly child-led play. The setting has effective processes in place to understand children's starting points, interests and preferred learning styles. Staff undertake regular and

sensitive observations to gain an understanding of the progress that children make. Written development information is shared with parents and is used to provide individual learning journeys for all children. In addition the setting uses commercially produced software to analyse the progress that each child makes towards early learning goals. This approach ensures that children are interested in their play and that they face appropriate challenge and new learning. The setting has a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and a very good understanding of how children learn through play and first hand experience. The use of some Montessori principles has a positive impact in the setting. Children play in mixed age groups as they make decisions about how they want to spend their time. This is very beneficial to all children. However the setting does not always give sufficient thought to the specific age needs of some children, for example, the youngest children in the setting.

Understanding staff support the choices made by children very well. Children decide to play with trains on a track, select books or use construction sets. They also use modelling clay and access ICT equipment. There is a large element of experimentation and discovery as children play, for example, about quantities of sand and how liquids behave when using a funnel. Children respond very well to the interactions that they have with adults either when they facilitate their child-led play or when they take a more direct lead. Children have valuable opportunities to learn about letters, sounds and numbers when talking to adults and they enjoy making animal masks with a member of staff. In addition children enjoy being inventive when using outdoor play equipment, have opportunities to take part in cooking and understand how plants grow on their nature table.

The setting promotes children's welfare very effectively. All children are safeguarded and have a growing understanding of their own safety and that of others. Children's behaviour is managed very well as they are expected to share, cooperate and include each other in their play experiences. Children of all ages show the ability to manage their own behaviour and solve potential conflict for themselves. Staff enable children to have an understanding of the varying needs of other children, for example, that as children's age varies then so will their skills and abilities. These are daily experiences for children as they are used to playing in mixed age groups. Children show very good levels of concentration and understand that different activities require different responses, for example, when playing in a whole group or when playing independently.

The setting also promotes outcomes for children very effectively. Children are absorbed by the play opportunities that they have. There are high levels of purposeful play as children make choices, use their imaginations and talk to adults. Most children are motivated to explore and use all available spaces. Children feel very safe within the setting and enjoy supportive and caring relationships with adults. Children learn about healthy lifestyles and choices as they talk at snack time and enjoy being active. Children are also very positive about being in the setting and most respond well to the expectations that are placed on them as young learners. Children generally acquire skills and abilities which are appropriate to their age and their progress ensures that most children are prepared well for future learning skills.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
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	2
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	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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