

# Harlequin Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspection date</b>	17/02/2011
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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

Harlequin Montessori Nursery opened in 1992. It is privately owned and operates from a building in the grounds of The Billericay School, in Billericay, Essex. The nursery serves the local community and the surrounding towns and villages. The nursery is open for breakfast at 8.30am. The morning session is from 9am until 12.30pm. Lunch clubs is from 12.30pm until 1.15pm. The afternoon session begins at 1.15pm and finishes at 4.30pm. It is open five days a week during term time. Children attend for a variety of the sessions on offer.

The nursery is registered to take a maximum of 37 children and none can be under two years of age. Currently there are 40 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. It receives funding for early education places. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery follows the Montessori teaching approach, which shares the underlying principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Eleven members of staff work with the children, all of whom are trained in Montessori education. The manager is a qualified nursery nurse and holds a childcare National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 4. Of the remaining staff, one has NVQ at Level 4, four have NVQ at Level 3 and three hold NVQ at Level 2. The principal and director have a Montessori International Diploma which is a Level 4 qualification.

The nursery receives support from the local authority. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register as well as 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.

Children's needs are met well in this fully inclusive nursery. Children work extremely well with each other and display high levels of confidence when they work independently. Children enjoy their time and make good progress, especially in their language development. Most policies and procedures to ensure children's safety are in place and promote children's welfare effectively. Staff are currently refining methods for evaluating the quality of the provision and because of this the nursery has a good capacity to improve.

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

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

- include the views of parents and carers in the ongoing self-evaluation process to plan further improvements
- hold regular fire drills at varying times so that all children attending the

nursery experience these.

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

To ensure children are safe, staff are vigilant about keeping the premises secure so that no unauthorised person can access the building. They understand their roles to safeguard children fully and are alert to signs of possible abuse or neglect. Their training in child protection is up to date. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are reviewed and updated annually. Checks on staff's suitability to work with children are carried out and no member of staff can work with them unsupervised until these are complete. Thorough daily risk assessments minimise potential hazards to the children. Fire drills are held and are documented. However, these are held at similar times in the morning, preventing children who attend different sessions, especially in the afternoon, learning what to do should a fire occur. High staffing levels means no child can leave unattended and that children are always well cared for and supervised at all times.

Staff work closely as a team with a common sense of purpose. This means there is consistency throughout the nursery in the way in which children are expected to behave, respond to one another and become engaged in learning. Staff respect each child's individuality and give high levels of attention. They know the children well because they observe them carefully, and record this information to help plan future activities.

Parents receive good, useful information about children's progress in the nursery. Newsletters keep them informed about events, and open evenings provide insight into their child's experiences. Parents' views are sought about their child's likes and dislikes to assist planning. However, their opinions are not regularly sought with regard to the effectiveness of the nursery, which means that staff do not have access to their views when evaluating the provision.

The manager and her team are determined to improve the provision. They meet regularly to review their methods and discuss improvements, which are focused on promoting the interests and learning needs of the children. Since the last inspection there have been changes to the accommodation, making it spacious and easy for the children to move around in. Cosy corners where children can relax with a book have been established. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are integrated fully into the nursery. Close links with professional agencies ensures that the needs of these children are met and they are supported effectively.

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

Children are confident, settle well and develop excellent relationships at all levels with adults and peers. They work exceptionally well independently on their own initiative and show high quality negotiation and cooperation skills. Children play a

full and active role in their learning, which is fully supported by staff who build on the children's ideas. Consequently, children are curious and inquisitive learners who demonstrate good problem solving skills and a strong understanding of the wider world.

Children settle quickly when they arrive in the nursery and begin choosing activities. They enjoy a range of tasks, such as completing a jigsaw, making a zoo, counting numbers or mark-making that they can do alone, with their friends or an adult. Once all the children have arrived an adult-led group session provides the opportunity for children to take turns in talking about their news. This promotes their confidence, speaking and listening skills. Children converse easily while sharing a book, talking about matters of interest or playing together. Activities, toys and equipment that reflect equality and diversity are easily reached by the children. Resources encourage them to be curious, as well as to develop their thinking skills. For example, many children were fascinated with how they could use a kitchen tool to transfer water from one dish to another.

Children use the good range of Montessori equipment to help promote their skills and progression towards the early learning goals. For example, they count number rods, place rods in ascending and descending order of size and build a tower with cylinders, which help to promote children's understanding and comparison of number and size. Children use sandpaper letters and numerals and use the letter tray to help promote their understanding of linking sounds and letters and develop their early skills in letter formation.

Staff plan activities around a theme each week, such as autumn colours or reptiles, and include ideas that stem from children's interests. These themes ensure children enjoy their time in the nursery and make gains in their knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning. Other activities provide good opportunities for them to use their initiative and ingenuity. For example, children really enjoy making their own hopscotch grid. They cooperate closely to solve the problem of how to make tiles fit together correctly, count numbers from one to ten in sequence, and love playing the game when it is completed. In artwork, children explore colours and textures. Some like to paint pictures, using a paintbrush or slices of apples to produce different effects.

Children are well aware of the diversity of the wider world, and know a great deal about different countries, their traditional foods and the languages spoken. Children make a significant contribution to their community through their exemplary behaviour. They take responsibility for putting away their toys without being asked. They choose when to eat their healthy snack, select their food, pour drinks independently and wash up their plates and cups afterwards. Hygiene routines, such as hand washing before eating or after going to the toilet, are well-established and children have a good understanding of healthy practises. Many activities promote physical development and children spend good amounts of time outside, where they like to ride their wheeled toys, make dens with crates or balance on a beam. Such activities are dependent on the weather as there is no shelter.

Children's care and respect for each other, even though they are very young, plays

an important role in the happy, purposeful atmosphere. Excellent relationships, together with visits from the police and fire services, ensure that children gain a good sense of safety. Before they leave the nursery children make good progress in communication, language and literacy, as well as their personal, social and emotional development. Children's skills for their future lives are outstanding because of their exceptional ability to communicate and because their skills in information and communication technology, numeracy and literacy are so good.

## 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

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

<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	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