

# The Old School House Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY241373
<b>Inspection date</b>	17/03/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Lisa Toole
<b>Setting address</b>	The Old School House, De Montfort Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1SP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 480492
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## 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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## Description of the setting

The Old School House Nursery opened in 2003. It operates from three rooms of a renovated school building in Lewes, East Sussex and follows Montessori teaching methods. The nursery is open each weekday, full year, from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 45 children, of whom no more than nine may be under two years. All children share access to an outdoor play area and a garden.

There are currently 86 children on roll aged from 12 months to under five years on roll. Of these 36 children receive early education funding. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 staff, eight of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification; there is one member of staff in training. One member of staff holds Early Years Professional Status.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are provided with exceptional levels of care, in a fully inclusive environment where they are confident, very independent and unmistakably enjoy their days. The nursery is led by an energetic, highly-motivated, and extremely enthusiastic management team. All of the staff embrace the process of self-evaluation and demonstrate a dynamic approach towards their continuous improvement, in order to enhance the outcomes for children even further. Staff have an excellent understanding of their role and responsibilities within the Early Years Foundation Stage and this results in children making excellent progress in their learning and development towards the early learning goals. They promote equality and diversity throughout the nursery and are aware of the need to continue to reflect children's other languages throughout the provision.

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

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

- continuing to develop how children's languages, other than English, are reflected and supported in the nursery.

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

The nursery is exceptionally well led and managed, with comprehensive systems and procedures in place to safeguard all of the children. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that all mandatory documentation is in place and is accurately maintained. These include meticulous record keeping such as risk assessments, accident and medication records. Staff have an excellent understanding of child protection procedures and the possible signs of abuse; they ensure that children are protected from any persons not vetted through their close supervision and general vigilance and by ensuring the premises are kept secure. Recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are appropriately robust, and the nursery owner is committed to employing staff who are knowledgeable and also committed to providing consistently high quality provision.

The staff work extremely well together as a team, ensuring the day runs very smoothly and children are exceptionally well cared for at all times. They create a harmonious, child-friendly environment, which is stimulating, well-organised and safe. High quality resources support the children's play across all areas of learning; it is extremely well organised to maximise free choice for all of the children, throughout the nursery. Self evaluation is consistently used to critically review their practice and identify key priorities for further improvement in order to continue to provide outstanding levels of care and education. Therefore the nursery has an excellent capacity to continue to improve the outcomes for children in order to narrow any achievement gap. Children with special educational needs and disabilities are given exceptionally good support. The special educational needs coordinator has a comprehensive understanding of her role and diligently works to support equality and inclusion for every child, for example by introducing visual timetables for children to help their transitions through the day. Children who speak English but also have languages other than English are also fully considered and supported through the excellent provision and by working collaboratively with parents. The reflection of home languages within the nursery is an area for further consideration, as part of their promotion of equality and diversity.

Partnerships with parents are highly positive and inclusive because of the nursery's strong commitment to working with them to support each child. A wealth of very good-quality information is provided for parents to keep them informed about events happening at the nursery and so they are fully aware of the activities their children will be doing during the week, besides their spontaneous free play. Information such as policies and procedures, self evaluation and the nursery in general are clearly displayed in the entrance area, along with details of how to make a complaint. The views of parents are actively sought, as part of their driving improvement, and ideas raised by parents, such as extending the opening hours and providing a buggy storage area, are acted upon by management. Discussion with parents show how delighted they are with the care their children receive. They comment about the superb home to nursery links and how much progress they have seen their children making. Partnerships in the wider context, such as with other early years settings children attend and special educational needs service are excellent, because of the commitment put into them by the staff. This

partnership working greatly benefits the children, ensuring everyone works together to support the ever-changing interests and needs of the unique child.

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

Children are flourishing in a truly enabling environment within the nursery because of the dedication, care and attention given to them by the staff. They are knowledgeable about how to challenge and extend children's learning, to enable them to become critical thinkers who are enthusiastic and active learners. This can be seen in how happy, busy and confident the children are. They are greatly encouraged to be independent learners, in line with Montessori teaching, which is wonderfully supporting their self esteem and confidence. The nursery environment is harmonious because children are extremely well behaved; they are engaged in a wide variety of activities, which encompass all areas of learning and take ownership of their own learning. In the mini monties area, the toddlers explore the resources with a keen interest; they develop their physical capabilities as they learn to negotiate the small slide, steps and tunnel, playing peek-a-boo with staff at the same time. Staff working with the younger children provide many sensory activities, including treasure baskets, to encourage their inquisitiveness and understanding of texture and touch. They support the toddlers emotional well-being extremely well with plenty of cuddles, to help them feel secure. The older children are very active learners, with wonderful imaginations and a strong drive to extend their learning and capabilities. The staff use excellent questioning techniques to stimulate their critical thinking, problem solving and general language skills. They delight in tracing the letters of their name in sand, and chatting about how a model they have made looks like the swirling patterns in the story of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. All of the children are developing their key skills for the future regarding literacy, numeracy, and technology. Children are able to count beyond ten with ease and understand how shapes cut into four equate to the number four, when working out how many they need to give each person at the table a piece of cake. Popular stories, with repeated refrains such as 'oh no, we can't go over it, we can't go under it.' are wonderfully recreated outdoors, through spontaneous play by the children, with excellent support by staff. As well as the spontaneous free play activities, staff plan a diverse and highly successful range of activities, using topics as a foundation for the children's continuous learning. For example, topics such as hot and cold help the children learn about equality and diversity of the social world around them, how we live in different countries, and have to wear different types of clothing, as well as the different animals found in the world. For their current topic, about new life, children are planting bulbs outdoors which they plan to monitor growing, as well as washing real vegetables as part of their understanding of healthy eating. The children's development is monitored, evaluated and tracked through meticulous observation and assessment; these are recorded in wonderful learning journals which show clearly where children are making progress and why particular targets have been prioritized, to help them move forward with their learning.

The nursery follows meticulous hygiene procedures to reduce risks of cross

infection and teach the children about their own good health and hygiene. They learn from a young age about the importance of washing hands, cleaning noses and getting plenty of fresh air and physical exercise. Music and movement helps them learn to move their bodies in different ways, while outdoors the toddlers delight in learning about taking risks as they clamber up the wooden climbing frame. All of the children eat a nutritious range of snacks and lunch provided by the parents and nursery, as well as growing their own fruit and vegetables outdoors to eat. Fresh drinking water is freely accessible and the older children make their own decisions about when to eat snack, promoting their independence. The toddlers are supported with their feeding, as they too enjoy the social aspects of eating together. The children learn about safety through good role modelling by adults, and clear behaviour expectations. The children show through their behaviour that they understand the need to stay safe, by walking indoors and following instruction when asked. Children learn about respect, compassion and being part of a diverse social world through the celebration of cultural events and the positive promotion of ethnicity, gender and disability through the comprehensive range of resources available to the children.

## 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>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### 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>	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
--	---

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

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **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