

Westwood Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY337582
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Inspector Lynn Clements

Setting address Spriggs Farm, Thaxted Road, Little Sampford, Saffron
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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

Westwood Montessori Nursery was established in 2006. It is registered to care for a maximum of 60 children in the early years age group at any one time, of whom 12 may be under 2 years. There are currently 70 children on roll, of whom 63 are in receipt of early education funding. The nursery is accredited and quality assured under the Montessori Evaluation Accreditation Board scheme and their practice is supported by documents, such as the 'Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage in Montessori settings' (Montessori St Nicholas, with the National Strategy and DCFS, 2008). The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register.

The nursery operates from purpose-built premises in Little Sampford, Essex. They are open each weekday from 9am until 3pm during term time and run a holiday club for three weeks in August which is open from 9am until 2pm.

15 members of staff work with the children. All members of staff hold early years qualifications above those required by legislation. Two members of staff are qualified to degree level, two hold Early Years Professional Status and two members of staff are currently working towards their Early Years Professional Status. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

All staff have an exceptional understanding about the individual needs of each and every child in their care. Children are extremely safe and secure and have wonderful opportunities to learn about other cultures and customs and the natural, wider world around them. Partnerships are exemplary, both with other agencies and with parents and carers; they are significant in making sure that the needs of all children are met, along with any additional support needs. This attention to detail makes sure that children are fully enabled to make exceedingly good progress given their age, ability and starting points. Excellent attention is paid to reflective practice and self-evaluation and the setting is proactive in responding to user needs.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to make effective use of the local neighbourhood to further enhance opportunities for children to work alongside artists and other creative adults to advance and extend their experiences of the world.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider, management team and all members of staff have an extremely comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues and how to deal with these if they have a concern about a child in their care. This makes sure that children's personal welfare is protected at all times. Attention to regular training in areas of safeguarding and health and safety provides all staff with an excellent knowledge and understanding of how to keep all children safe and secure. A wide range of extremely relevant policies and procedures, which have been personalised to the nursery, are shared fully with parents, carers and visitors and implemented robustly. This supports the smooth daily management of the nursery and makes sure that any concerns are prioritised and dealt with effectively. Children are protected by extensive recruitment and vetting procedures, including the successful induction of new staff and the continuing professional development of existing members of staff. Clear and thoughtful risk assessments are regularly undertaken in order to minimise any potential hazards to children. All records and training required by legislation are in place and updated as necessary. Furniture, equipment and resources are of exceptionally high quality and extremely suitable for the differing ages of children who attend. This consideration fully supports children in their active, free-flow investigations, learning and development. Outcomes are clearly attributed to the excellent use of resources and the extremely effective deployment of staff throughout the nursery. The environment is exceptionally conducive to learning, both inside and outside. It is safe, very well managed and carefully looked after. The provider, management team and staff are taking well-considered steps to ensure resources and the environments remain fully sustainable.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of this nursery's ethos and work. All members of staff are highly committed and effective in ensuring that each child is integrated well and that steps are taken to close any identified gaps in their achievements. Each member of staff has an exceptional knowledge of children's backgrounds and needs. In partnership with parents, carers and other agencies, they have introduced effective systems in order to fully support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Superb partnership working takes place to ensure every child receives high levels of support at an early stage. There is no bias in staff practice in relation to gender, race or disability and as a result they are successful in helping children to learn about and value the society in which they live. Children make smooth transitions into mainstream school because staff take the time to develop effective working relationships with the feeder primary schools in the area. There is a cohesive approach to working and being part of their local community and this has been identified by the management team and staff as an area for continuous development. The nursery has exceedingly constructive relationships with all groups of parents and carers. Parents and carers are clearly involved in decision making on key matters affecting the nursery through well-established and highly inclusive procedures, including questionnaires and self-evaluation. Children too are involved by contributing their views and suggestions, which they do with confidence. Parents and carers are very well informed about all aspects of their

own children's achievement, well-being and development. Staff provide tailored guidance and information about ways parents and carers can support their children's learning across different areas and they fully encourage them to share learning which happens at home. Parents report that staff embrace their cultural needs and respect difference. They feel safe when leaving their child and find the two way flow of communication informative and helpful, finding that as their child moves between home and the nursery the continuity of care is exemplary.

Recommendations raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. Self-evaluation at all levels reflects rigorous monitoring and searching analysis on what the nursery does well and what it needs to improve. As a result, actions taken are extremely well targeted and have an effective impact in bringing about sustained improvement. The provider and management team are highly successful in communicating ambition and inspiring the staff team. All staff have high expectations about what they can achieve and they set very high standards which are embedded across all areas of their practice. Morale is very high and staff wholly believe in their setting and are passionate about continuing to build and improve on the services they provide.

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

Every member of staff has a clear understanding of the practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They effectively assess children using both the Montessori and the Foundation Stage criteria. The effective key person system fully supports each child and clearly encourages the parents and carers to be actively involved in learning that happens in the nursery. High quality observation, assessment and planning are a significant strength and as a result each child is accurately monitored and supported remarkably well. This in turns helps them to make tremendous progress towards the early learning goals. There is an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning opportunities which build on the children's imagination and participation. All members of staff are devoted to the development of sustained shared thinking by offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions to support and extend children's thinking and help them to make connections in their learning. Children are eager to attend and clearly demonstrate that they are successfully developing the skills that will help them in the future. They play a dynamic role in their learning, offering their ideas and responding to challenges with great enthusiasm.

Children show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration. For example, they clearly enjoy being creative and using a wide range of different media as they make Father's Day cards. They concentrate on the design and talk avidly about who their creations are for. Children also engage in opportunities to explore simple symmetry and repeating patterns as they enjoy making butterfly prints, painting one side then folding it over so the pattern is repeated. All children are eager to investigate outside and inside. They enjoy learning how to care for other living things, for instance as they observe baby chicks in the classroom or go out to feed the pigs, guinea pigs, rabbits and ducks. They learn about sustainability, growing their own vegetables, such as pumpkins,

potatos and broad beans. Children also discover the importance of recycling, feeding left over snack to the animals and finding out how packaging can be re-used. An excellent addition to the nursery since the last inspection has been the Forest School. This innovative idea has been brought to life by the provider and staff and is now used as an invaluable learning tool, helping the children to engage in and enjoy first-hand experiences in the natural world. Children sustain attentive listening as they enjoy stories and group discussions. They confidently link sounds and letters and demonstrate key skills, such as writing their names confidently on their creations. The living willow music den provides a perfect place for the children to explore sounds through different musical instruments. Children enjoy more strenuous activities and negotiate space successfully as they play in the exceptionally well-equipped outside area. Here they are fully supported to gain a secure understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Behaviour is extremely good and emphasis is place on positive reinforcement and exploring children's emotions. This helps to raise confidence and self-esteem.

Children clearly show that they feel safe and are confident with each other and interact warmly with all members of staff. They discuss how to keep themselves safe during open discussions, where they learn about their right to be and feel safe. They also learn to handle single-handed tools with care, for instance, during snack preparation or when engaging in woodwork activities. The high quality adult interaction and exemplary organisation of routines help babies and very young children to gain an exceptionally strong sense of security. Children clearly enjoy their independence, for example, they take pleasure in preparing their own snack, selecting their named glass and plate and then clearing away and washing up afterwards, taking these excellent opportunities to extend their self-help skills. Children show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good hygiene routines, washing their hands at pertinent times and clearly understanding why they need to do this. Babies and very young children are extremely content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met to an exceptional standard.

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	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

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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	1
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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