

Discoveries Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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.

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

Discoveries Montessori Nursery School is privately owned. The setting opened in 1999 and is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from one large room in a scout hut located within the parish playing fields of Brenchley in Kent. The setting is accessible and all children share equal access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm Mondays to Thursday and on Fridays until 12.00 during school term times.

A maximum of 16 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 35 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children come from the local rural community in Kent. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff, six holding an appropriate early years qualification. There are currently two members of staff working towards a qualification. The nursery provides funded nursery education for three and four-year-olds and receives support and advice from local authority early years professionals. The education provided is based on the Montessori approach.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The uniqueness of each child is recognised by staff who provide good support for individuals, ensuring that all children make progress in their learning and development. There are good procedures in place to keep children safe and secure. Methods for self-evaluation are effective, and identify the strengths of provision and ensure areas for development are generally addressed appropriately. Partnerships with parents/carers are very good and this has a positive impact on children's learning and development. They successfully combine the Montessori approach with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Children play and explore within safe boundaries where they can embrace new challenges and skills.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- show that children's next steps are being clearly identified and used in leading future planning
- strengthen the use of creative connections through everyday experiences and less through the use of worksheets and adult led art activities
- overcome problems in accessing and using the outdoor environment because

of the design or organisation of the building

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding is given high importance by all the staff and management team who understand the written policy and implement it well. All staff have had training and update this on a regular basis. Robust procedures are in place for recruitment and vetting procedures implemented to ensure the suitability of the applicant. An induction and probationary period compliment this process to fully protect children's well-being. An appraisal system further supports the ongoing suitability process and identifies training needs for individual staff's personal development. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the setting is safe for children to play in. Children display a good awareness of keeping themselves safe, such as holding scissors carefully and not running while indoors.

The staff actively promote equality and diversity by ensuring all children are welcomed into the setting and planning takes account of their individual needs. All children are valued and treated with respect by staff who have a good knowledge of each child's background and needs. They have good opportunities to learn about differences in people in the wider community, through activities and learning about celebrations of different cultures. Children use a range of resources to reflect positive images of diversity, such as books and puzzles. Children are able to choose resources and activities organised by the staff or make some additional choices from the storage trolleys containing other resources and equipment. All the resources are well maintained and suitable for the age of children attending.

Partnerships with parents is strong. Parents are happy with the care their children are receiving and feel they are making good progress. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress and invited to contribute to their daily diaries if they wish. Regular newsletters, e-mails and questionnaires also keep parents informed and give parents an opportunity to express their views on the setting. Parents are welcomed into the setting and can speak to their child's key person and discuss the assessment record for their child. All the policies and procedures are shared with the parents to keep them informed of the roles and responsibilities of the staff and the setting. Parents are asked to give written consents for aspects of care to promote children's well-being and enable staff to care for each individual child. The setting understands the importance of liaising with outside agencies and other providers who share the care of the children, to maintain continuity of care and to meet the individual needs of each child.

The staff and management team have completed a self-evaluation of the setting and have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. Regular monitoring of the effectiveness of the provision through daily evaluation and adult-led activities, including daily observations of children's progress ensure a good understanding of areas to develop. The manager has recently organised an action plan which provides a clear audit trail for improvement. The management team and staff are motivated and committed to providing continuous improvement to

promote good outcomes for children.

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

Children arrive confidently and happily say goodbye to their parents and carers. They self-register, finding their name on the board and then sit on comfortable cushions to listen to a favourite story. Children enjoy a varied and interesting range of play activities to support their progress towards the early learning goals. The staff work closely with the children, listening to what they say and encouraging them to express their own ideas. Children are able to select activities from the available resources which are chosen to reflect children's interests and learning needs. Additional resources are available from the storage trolleys. The staff make flexible daily plans, covering all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage, using information from observations. However, not all observations are sufficiently clear in planning their next steps.

Children use their imagination as they play with the role play resources, acting out stories with puppets or familiar roles from home, cooking dinner and making cups of tea in the garden. Children play with their peers, each taking their own particular role and including the staff within their play. Children have opportunities for messy play, painting with different mediums, cutting, sticking and experimenting with different materials, although this can be overly directive by adults when working with the younger children when making fathers day cards. Children are able to develop good physical skills as they use a range of equipment outdoors. Chalking on the walls of the wooden house in the garden is very popular, with children drawing large shapes and little people and insects. Making marks, using various resources happens on a daily basis, with children developing good hand and eye co-ordination. Some children are beginning to write their own name independently, although worksheets and templates are also used. Many children can recognise their name cards as they self-register. Books are always accessible and children show good concentration as they sit and read with an adult or choose to look at books independently. They develop good communication skills with both adults and their peers.

Children develop well in numeracy. Children use mathematical language in their play talking about the tall giraffe and the small duck. They are encouraged to count in all activities and are able to sort by colour and object. Children access equipment to support their mathematical skills, counting cubes, finding numbers in the jigsaws and sorting by colour with the different coloured small animals. Adults use questioning in many activities to encourage children to count, with many of them recognising several shapes such as circle, square and triangle, although worksheets are also used. Some children confidently count beyond ten with several knowing the concept of numbers one to ten. Children can freely help themselves to different maths equipment from the trolley providing further choice including many Montessori activities. They handle natural materials such as pine cones, wood, stones and shells, using the magnifying glass to have a closer look. Children build with the large wooden bricks and use the wooden train tack. They become very

familiar with technology and use resources, such as battery-operated toys, confidently and competently all of which contribute towards their future learning.

Children can easily help themselves to tissues and older children use the toilets independently. They wash their hands before meals and choose water or milk to drink. They each have a plate to help themselves to pre-prepared fruit or a plain biscuit at the snack bar, all of which reinforces their understanding of good hygiene. Children have lovely opportunities to play outdoors and learn about growing plants from seeds, such as cress, strawberries and herbs or digging in the garden, developing their understanding of the world in which they live and what plants need to grow. However, opportunities to allow children to link the indoor and outdoor environments so that they can move freely between them limited.

Children are happy in this safe environment and feel secure, enjoying contact with staff who they trust. Children's understanding of right and wrong is successfully promoted through consistent boundaries which enables them to learn desirable behaviour, developing their confidence, and to learn to take turns and share. They are very polite and helpful to others and exhibit good manners. For example, they ask to borrow a resource from another child and remember to thank them when they have finished. They assist staff in tidying up and have positive relationships with adults who employ sensitive strategies to support their self-esteem.

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	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

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

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