

Colourbox Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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05/09/2011

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*.

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Description of the setting

Colourbox Montessori Nursery is one of two privately owned nurseries registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. It operates from a church hall in Loughton, Essex. Children come from the local community and surrounding area.

The pre-school is open four days a week from 9.15am to 12.15pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and from 9.15am to 3.15pm on Tuesdays. Children access outdoor play through the use of the adjacent church grounds.

The setting supports a small number of children who have English as an additional language and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 22 children on roll, of whom 11 are in receipt of early education funding.

The pre-school employs three members of staff. Of these, all staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Staff have a limited knowledge of children's individual needs. As a result the uniqueness of each child is not fully identified in planning to ensure that no child is disadvantaged. There are weaknesses in staff's understanding of protecting children's welfare inside and outside of the setting. Communication with parents is inadequate with regard to children's learning. Partnerships with other providers of care and education is satisfactory. As a result, the needs of all children are not being adequately met. This means that children's progress is inadequate given their age, ability and starting points. Systems for self-evaluation are ineffective and as a result they fail to accurately identify and prioritise action needed to improve outcomes for children.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this refers in particular that there is a designated practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the setting and liaising with local statutory children's services agencies
- 20/09/2011

- as appropriate (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)
- take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this refers in particular to obtaining information from parents in advance of the child being admitted to the provision, including: emergency contact numbers and ensuring that all staff are aware of the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 20/09/2011
 - take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this refers in particular to ensuring that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 20/09/2011
 - indoor spaces must be safe and suitable for their purpose and reasonable steps taken to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum, this refers in particular to low level glass (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 20/09/2011
 - maintain records required for the safe and efficient management of the setting this refers in particular of the names of the children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance (Documentation) 20/09/2011
 - plan and organise systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs (Organisation). 20/09/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that risk assessments cover all areas accessible to children
- improve the exchange of information with parents to involve them more in children's ongoing assessments of their learning and development
- improve the systems for the organisation of the setting to include ongoing effective procedures to evaluate the provision and implement areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding are inadequate because the systems in place are ineffective. For example, the provider has failed to meet the statutory requirement to have a designated practitioner to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the setting. In addition, while staff demonstrate an awareness of the signs and indicators of child abuse they are not vigilant in safeguarding and promoting children's safety. For example, records which are a mandatory requirement and support the safe day-to-day running of the setting are

incomplete. Including children's emergency contact details, their hours of attendance and written risk assessments. There is an entry system on the main doors of the setting which prevents any unauthorised access to the building. However, this system does not prevent children potentially leaving the premises unnoticed. In addition, reasonable steps have not been taken to ensure that potential hazards to children are kept to a minimum this is with regard to ensuring that all low level glass is safe for children to access. The confidentiality and privacy of children is not assured regarding accident and incident records. All members of staff hold a valid first aid qualification. This ensures that children are provided with appropriate care in the event of an accident.

The deployment of staff ensures that the nursery routine is implemented, although at times the setting's routine means that children's access across all areas of learning is restricted. Equality of opportunity is not promoted because the setting is ineffective in identifying and addressing differences in children's achievements preventing their full involvement in activities.

Parents and carers are provided with access to the settings policies and procedures. However, there are very few opportunities provided for parents and carers to share secure information about their child's learning. There are some systems in place for working in partnership with other providers of care and education to ensure all children receive complementary provision. Parents express their satisfaction about the care provided for their children.

Self-evaluation has been undertaken and some areas identified by the provider as needing improvement. For example, reflecting and evaluating risk assessments regularly and continuing to reflect and evaluate daily practice implementing change when necessary. However, very little action has been taken by the provider to secure improvement. Therefore the effectiveness of current leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving and securing improvement is inadequate.

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

Children's learning is not fostered because systems for observation and assessment are inadequate. They clearly demonstrate staffs lack of understanding of children's learning and development linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. As a result there is insufficient information gathered to plan activities to meet children's individual needs and to support them to make progress in all areas of learning. Children demonstrate a sense of security as they look to staff for support and comfort. However, the failure to implement effective safeguarding procedures means that children at this setting gain a false sense of security.

At times during the session children are able to make choices about what they would like to do next. They demonstrate their interest and enjoyment as they take part in child-led learning opportunities. For example, they demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the world as they investigate construction materials and successfully join pieces together to build and balance. Children have

some opportunities to express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings using a sound range of materials such as play dough. They take part in real and imagined experiences as they play with 'small world' figures in the dolls house. Some children demonstrate their confidence as they talk to members of staff about a variety of subjects including going to the seaside during the school holidays. Children's independence is encouraged as they help adults to prepare paints for use at the easel. However, this is not consistent, for example, they are not provided with the opportunity to pour their own drinks at snack time. Children demonstrate their developing concentration skills as they carefully place lids on paint pots successfully. They demonstrate a sense of pride at this achievement when they are provided with positive praise from a staff member.

At times behaviour management places expectations on children which are inappropriate to their level of maturity and understanding. For example, the nursery routine does not take account of the varying concentration levels of the children attending. This has a negative impact on their behaviour and younger or less able children become distracted or lose concentration during group times. In addition, the daily routine at times limits children's ability to make independent decisions about their play. Children are not consistently provided with challenges which are appropriate to their individual needs and as a result, at times they disengage from activities and become bored, for example, getting up to wander around.

Children are provided with a healthy range of foods at snack time each day. Parents are asked to supply information about their child's individual dietary needs at the start of placement. Children's understanding with regard to developing healthy habits such as good hygiene practice is adequately promoted, for example, they are supported by staff to thoroughly wash their hands prior to eating snacks. Children are provided with regular outdoor play opportunities which helps them to begin to gain some understanding about the benefits of exercise.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	4
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	4

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	4
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	4
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	4

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