

Clevedon Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	05/07/2011
Inspector	Timothy Butcher

Setting address	34 Albert Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7RR
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Clevedon Montessori Nursery was opened by the present proprietor in 1987. It operates from the ground floor and gardens of a large semi-detached Victorian house in the seaside town of Clevedon, North Somerset. The nursery is registered to care for 25 children aged between two and eight years. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday during term time, between 8am and 5pm. There are 45 children currently on roll. The setting is in receipt of early education funding.

The nursery operates from the ground floor of the property and children's activities take place in two rooms, the hall, the conservatory and the outside classroom (Octagon). There is also a kitchen and toilet facilities. The upstairs, which is inaccessible to children, contains an office and staff facilities. There is a fully enclosed rear garden for outside play. The nursery has pet guinea pigs.

The nursery proprietor is qualified as a Montessori teacher. She is supported by seven staff; four of which hold a level 4 qualifications in the early years. Two members of staff hold a level 2 qualification this includes the cook who has direct contact with children. The nursery also employs an administrator. The nursery is run according to Montessori teaching methods.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The nursery provides outstanding care and provision for its children. The exceptional organisation of the educational programmes provide rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of all children very well. The proprietor and the whole staff team share high standards which are embedded across all areas of practice and they show through the effective evaluation processes their ability to plan for and drive continuous improvement. Partnerships with parents are highly effective in meeting the needs of children. Planning and monitoring processes ensure that resources are used extremely well; this includes the deployment of staff. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that children's welfare is securely safeguarded.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review further the process of formative assessment to provide consistent recording of children's progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

A comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues is held and there are clear policies and procedures in place, as well as other detailed documentation to support staff, if there is a safeguarding concern about a child. Robust risk assessments are consistently carried out and updated to ensure the on-going safety of children. Children have a very safe and secure environment in which to play. Children very quickly develop an excellent awareness of safety issues as daily routines and support from staff, strongly encourage children to take responsibility for themselves, each other and the learning environment around them. Children move chairs safely and discuss where best to place them so that they do not pose a hazard or inconvenience to others.

The Principal and whole staff team are highly committed to driving improvement and fully share the ethos of the setting. Reflective practice takes place at all levels with rigorous and extensive monitoring, searching analysis and evaluation that ensure well targeted action planning. For example, the nursery has successfully implemented the planned development of the outside classroom and children now have greater access to a wide range of experiences when outside. The principal monitors all lesson plans so that topics and activities are well coordinated. Policies and procedures are regularly updated and well organised systems ensure the information is robustly shared. As a result outcomes in children's achievements and well-being are at least good and some extremely high. Future plans clearly identify the areas for further development such as the minor lack of consistency in some formative assessment records.

The accommodation, resources, furniture, and equipment are of a consistently high quality and very well-managed and organised. Outcomes for children are clearly attributable to the excellent use of resources and to the highly effective deployment of staff. Children freely self select from a wide range of very carefully prepared Montessori resources and specific learning materials. The well qualified staff skilfully guide and support children in their play. Children confidently develop new skills as they are given one-to-one support when engaging in new tasks. Space is used effectively to maximise the experiences for children and they move freely from room to room following their interests.

A particular strength of the setting is the highly positive relationships that are established with parents and carers. They are kept very well informed about all aspects of their own children's achievement, well-being and development. This ensures an excellent continuity of care and learning for all children. Parents report very positively indeed about all aspects of the nursery, in particular, they are very happy with the good progress that children make. They comment positively about the comprehensive exchange of information, through news letters, website and leaning profiles; and value the discussion with the key worker (Special Responsibility Teacher), marvelling at the staff's close attention to the needs of children. Adults are highly effective in ensuring that all children are well integrated. Comprehensive initial processes ensure smooth introductions for children and parents to the nursery and clear information is gained about children's starting points such as documented in "the parents voice". The setting places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all that is done and has an established track record of supporting all children including those with special

needs for example through individual play plans. The nursery takes a lead role in establishing effective partnerships with others who also provide care and support to children that attend; such as childminders.

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

The nursery offers a very stimulating provision, with exceptional organisation of the educational programme and learning environment. The staff has a clear understanding of the practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and effectively assesses children using both the Montessori and (EYFS) criteria. Overall, high quality observation, assessment and planning are a significant strength of the nursery provision and as a result each child is accurately monitored and supported exceptionally well. A minor lack of consistency in some formative assessment records means that some information is used less effectively in the planning processes that support children. Children are eager to attend and overall make significant gains in their learning; have excellent levels of achievement and show very positive attitudes to learning. There is an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning opportunities which build on the children's imagination, participation and independence. An experienced staff team skilfully support children to think and to explore by offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children's progress in communication and numeracy skills are exceptionally good. They clearly demonstrate that they are well equipped with the fundamental skills that will help them in the future. They play a dynamic role in their learning, offer their ideas and respond to the challenges, often set by themselves, with great enthusiasm. The staff consistently model and explain the use of materials so that children maximise their learning and can go on to explore in their own way. For example, a child and member of staff explore weight together using oblong plaques of different weights, hues and texture. The child handles the plaques before he blind folds himself and is handed one plaque in each hand. He makes comparisons of the different weights saying which is heavier and which lighter before the roles are reversed and he provides the guidance to the member of staff. As a result he learns about weight comparison through use of his senses, expresses his thinking, and takes turns. He is given responsibility to lead and the member of staff is able to confirm his understanding, before going to select a similar resource of his choosing. Children show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration. They self select floor puzzles to construct together compare shape, size and colour and initiate conversations with each other. Staff only intervene when essential. This is highly beneficial for children as they learn at their own pace, naturally develop a thinking pattern and learn to be independent thinkers. They skilfully encourage children's thought processes as they ask open ended questions and introduce new concepts to stretch children's learning. This also means children develop good listening and speaking skills. They learn about different traditions from around the world and use a range of creative media such as shown in the range of activities presented in a recent topic area that also featured "the royal wedding". In circle time activities, older children gain confidence in speaking in a group, for example, they practice their French language skills. Younger children role-play "greeting

visitors" and practice their social skills, as well as gaining confidence in speaking to the group.

Children feel safe and develop a very strong sense of belonging. They are very well behaved and are kind and thoughtful toward each other. Children choose what they would like to play with and once finished they return the equipment to its rightful place. Thus children show that they respect the environment and resources; and show a mature response towards each others safety. Their independence is promoted exceptionally well. They thoroughly enjoy their independent access to snacks; for example, they use their name labels to register that they have eaten and take great pleasure in preparing their own snack and drinks. A child diligently clears away her plate and glass and earnestly washes these up afterwards, showing she knows the importance of good hygiene.

Outside areas are well planned to provide a rich variety of experiences and free flow activities encourage children to regularly take their play into the garden. The use of the octagon further enhances the link between learning and outside play for children. Planning and learning profile documentation show that children make good or very good progress in their physical development as staff closely observe and specifically plan for this area of their development. Children are active for example when growing plants, digging in the garden and using the tyres to create stepping stones. Indoors they dance, move to music and follow action rhymes.

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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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