

The Montessori Place

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

The Montessori Place is privately owned and run on a daily basis by the directors. It opened in 2011 and operates from a large and spacious Victorian house in Hove. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday from 8.45am to 3.30pm during term time only.

A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 19 children aged from one year to under five years on roll, some in part-time places.

There are four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 2. Two members of staff have achieved Early Years Professional Status. The setting operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are cared for in an inclusive and welcoming environment where their care, welfare and learning needs both indoors and out are mostly well met. The management and practitioners have a clear vision for the future of the provision demonstrating a commitment to continual improvement. Partnership working is mostly in place and engagement with parents has developed well and is effective in supporting children and providing continuity of their care and learning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase opportunities for all children to play and be outdoors with freedom to explore and be physically active
- create a framework for partnership working with other settings that the children attend.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff team are all trained and experienced in the Montessori approach and two have achieved the Early Years Professional Status. Senior practitioners have additional responsibilities such as SENCO, equal opportunities or safeguarding and practitioners know to refer any concerns they may identify about the welfare of a child to them. A clear policy is in place for reporting concerns to safeguard children

and all staff have been Criminal Records Bureau checked before working with the children. The management and staff team have a clear vision for the future and know how they want to progress for the future and sustainability of the setting. They send out questionnaires to parents for their views and have evaluated their practice in the first few months of operation to measure their strengths and weaknesses so far. They have identified some key areas for improvement such as creating free flow access between the indoor and outdoor environments for all children to have greater flexibility and independence on where they play. Regular risk assessments are completed of all areas to eliminate any hazards and provide children with a safe environment to play and learn. Staff are well deployed so provide good support for the children, they are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are led by the detailed policies which underpin their good practice.

The environment is organised with the whole family in mind, with areas for the children to play and learn as well as a dedicated room for parents where they can sit together at any time of the day, make a drink and relax. There is a viewing panel for them to observe their children discreetly which reassures them that the children are settled and engaged. Parent's involvement in the provision is greatly encouraged as they are regularly invited in to discuss and view children's development records and become involved in their learning. Many social events are organised to build effective partnerships with parents such as poetry evenings and talks about supporting children's learning and additional support is organised such as ante and post natal groups. The resources for children are all of good quality, include natural resources and many replicate those used by adults. They are all accessible to every child because they learn to use them safely under the support and guidance of practitioners. Partnerships with others are being developed when additional support is needed for some children such as speech and language therapy. However, information shared with other settings children attend is based on their general well-being and not their developmental progress to fully support their learning. The provision successfully combines the Montessori approach with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage where children show a strong sense of security, feel safe, develop a strong sense of belonging and are motivated to learn.

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

Children benefit from being in an environment which is organised to promote their independence and self-confidence. They help themselves to the resources which are stored at child height and carefully carry them to a table or floor mat to complete the activity. Practitioners move amongst the children to provide support and guidance as and when it is needed. Children quickly become familiar with the practice of deciding what they want to do and then where they want to do it, at a table or on the floor. They may need to get a floor mat and roll it out in a suitable space, then when they have finished they return both the activity and mat to their respective storage places. For example, children carefully lay out a selection of cloths and brushes, spray solution on to a table and thoroughly clean both the top

and underneath. They scrub and wipe and put the used cloths in the bin, concentrating for some time until they return the whole tray to its rightful storage space. Children competently and safely transport chairs and equipment around the space to have it where they need it, mindful of who is around them so not to hurt anyone. The spacious rooms are arranged into areas of learning and skills which help children find what they want.

Practitioners observe children throughout the sessions, recording their activities and achievements to review at the end of the day. This information is used to plan further activities or reorganise the environment for the following day which will extend the learning and developmental progress for each child. For example, practitioners provide samples of musical instruments on discs with the picture of the instrument for children to listen to and eventually identify. Children are organised into groups of mixed ages which for the over three's in particular, means they have children up to age seven to emulate and learn from. They are confident to ask for help when they need it and approach practitioners as well as each other for support or advice. Children behave well in this mixed grouping showing consideration, cooperation and care for each other. For example, at meal times they all help to prepare the tables, laying out cutlery and crockery with napkins, chatting away as they do so. They serve themselves the freshly cooked vegetarian food and pass round the baskets of bread to each other. Practitioners sit with children to eat as good role models, discussing the food and how healthy it is, some of which has been grown in their own garden. Crockery and glassware are real and miniature versions of those used by adults at home so children learn that they need to handle them carefully so they don't break, combining their knowledge of keeping safe while being independent.

Children have daily opportunities to spend time outside benefitting from the fresh air and additional learning experiences available. However, the youngest children currently only have a short time after lunch to go outside which does not fully support the need for them to be active and practice their physical skills in the interesting outdoor space. All children are encouraged to manage their self-care needs independently in the accessible toileting areas as they are shown how to correctly wash their hands and wipe their noses.

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	3
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