

Whitstable Montessori Nursery School

Unit 4, Chaucer Business Park, Wraik Hill, WHITSTABLE, Kent, CT5 3FE

Inspection date	07/01/2013
Previous inspection date	08/06/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children's independence is developing well through daily activities and routines, such as dressing themselves for outside play, serving themselves food and scraping and stacking their plates when they have finished their meals.
- An effective key person system is in place, which includes a 'buddy' system when the key person is not available. As a result, children are forming good secure positive relationships with staff.
- Leaders and managers pursue excellence through regular monitoring of the environment and practice, developing clear action plans for improvement based on a secure understanding of how children learn.
- Performance is effectively monitored and action plans put in place to resolve any identified weaknesses, such as training to further support children's communication and language skills.

It is not yet outstanding because

- evaluations of unplanned adult-led activities do not always clearly explain what has worked well and what could be improved to ensure all staff can learn from each other and improve the quality of their practice and the activities they provide.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The majority of inspection time was spent with the staff observing them and the children they were caring for. This took place in all main play rooms and the outside play area.
- Children's information, development records and attendance records were sampled, along with the safeguarding policy and documentation regarding complaints.
- Ongoing discussions were held with the manager, area coordinator and various members of staff throughout the visit. Behaviour management and information on special educational needs and/or disabilities was discussed with the designated person of the setting and manager.
- Parents' and carers' views were gathered through discussion with a parent and a grandparent during the visit.

Inspector

Jacqueline Walter

Full Report

Information about the setting

Whitstable Montessori Nursery School is one of seven nurseries run by Townsend Montessori Nurseries. It opened in 2010 and is situated on the outskirts of Whitstable, in Kent. It operates from many rooms on a ground and first floor within a self-contained converted office block. Access to the first floor is via two flights of stairs. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.30pm for 51 weeks of the year. There are currently 167 children in the early years age range on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are 25 members of staff who work with the children; of these, 23 hold appropriate childcare qualifications to at least level 2. One member of staff has achieved Early Years Professional Status and two members of staff are currently working towards a childcare qualification. The nursery operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy and is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- sharpen the evaluation of unplanned adult-led activities so that they clearly show what went well or did not go well and why; how the activity can be improved for the future where needed.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff provide a child friendly, welcoming environment where there is a good range of stimulating, good quality equipment. Some innovative activities effectively challenge children; for example, children enjoy using their physical skills to explore feelings and ideas through dance sessions provided by a professional dance tutor. Children practise gaining coordination and physical skills during a variety of activities. They also enjoy using the trampoline and engaging in ball and racket games with staff in the outside area. Babies delight in using their senses, exploring the sounds they make as they hit a mobile created from large serving spoons and spatulas.

Staff interact and support children's learning in all rooms well overall. They extend young children's speech effectively by introducing and repeating words. Staff use open-ended questions with older children to extend their learning. For example, they ask questions, such as what cards children are going to use when they participate in a cutting and sticking activity and what the cards feel like. This encourages children to use their senses, think about what they feel and then use speech to communicate. Staff encourage children to use number language during their activities and model creative processes by speaking about what they are thinking. For example, when a child notices there is no space to fit her cut-out picture on a piece of paper, staff talk about alternate solutions, such as using a new sheet of paper or using the back of the paper. This helps the children to make decisions on how to approach a problem and reach their goal.

Staff are friendly and caring with children. They skilfully question children to extend their learning and encourage them to think about what they are doing, reshaping tasks to meet needs. As a result children enjoy their activities and make good progress in their learning. However this is not always as successful for unplanned adult-led activities as it is for planned activities. For example during an unplanned elastic band activity some of the younger children were not clear about what they needed to do to make their patterns. However they were eventually joined by another member of staff allowing for the younger children to have additional support. Staff working with very young children show a genuine interest and are willing to play along with children who are beginning to pretend. For example, they encourage children to serve food on a plate and then pretend to eat the food that children serve. Staff use story times to encourage children to talk about what they see and predict what will happen next. For example, during a group story time, the member of staff used a story sack to fully involve the children. They listened intently to one of their favourite stories about going to nursery and joined in showing they knew the story well. Items in the story sack related to the content of the story, such as a blanket. They were used as visual aids and to encourage the children to talk about what they could see and compare it to their own nursery. The member of staff skilfully questioned children with open questions to encourage them to think and further extend their learning.

Staff know the children well and use information from observation effectively to ensure children achieve as much as they can. They find out about children's starting points successfully through initial assessments completed by the child's parents and key person. The key person completes regular short observations on what children know, can do, and understand and links these to the areas of learning. They also regularly identify the children's next steps in learning as part of longer observations. Staff then effectively use all the information gathered to inform their planning and appropriately share this with the other practitioners involved with the child. As a result, children make progress in their learning and in turn acquire the skills, attitudes and dispositions they need to be ready for school or their next stage of learning.

Parents are very involved in their children's learning. Staff share information effectively with them regarding the child's achievements and any concerns through daily discussions and regular parent meetings. Parents also successfully contribute to their children's development by sharing and documenting 'wow' moments at home. This in turn allows staff to continue and consolidate children's learning in the setting.

Staff appropriately complete the required two-year-old progress check and through discussion and documentation demonstrate a good awareness of meeting the requirements in this area.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are happy and settle well, displaying confidence in talking and playing with staff. Almost all demonstrate security when leaving their parents and staff are quick to reassure and distract children that show signs of distress with activities. As a result they too settle quickly. There is an effective key person system in place, which includes a buddy system when the key person is not available. As a result, children are forming good positive relationships. For example, older children excitedly discuss things with staff as they enter the setting and babies initiate kisses with staff and delight in cuddles and playful games.

Positive strategies promote children's good behaviour. Staff are good role models and children benefit from their use of praise and encouragement. They sensitively deal with inappropriate behaviour. For example, they discuss their concerns in staff meetings and implement strategies appropriate for the children's ages and abilities. This ensures staff take a consistent approach to help children learn. Consequently, children behave well and some of the more able children are starting to negotiate and solve problems without using aggression. For example, they inform staff when other children take away their equipment.

There is an appropriate emphasis on healthy lifestyles overall. For example, detailed medication and accident records are in place, and staff complete additional training to use technical equipment, such as feeding tubes. The cook has received appropriate training in the preparation and handling of food and all staff complete basic hygiene training as part of their induction, ensuring they are aware of safe hygiene practices in the preparation of snacks. Children are active and enjoy regular outdoor sessions every day. They also regularly enjoy using a suitable range of challenging equipment, such as ball pools and soft climbing cushions in a sensory area set up in one of the rooms. This appropriately increases their understanding about the importance of regular exercise.

Children are developing some understanding about healthy eating, hygiene and keeping themselves safe. They make choices regarding what they wish to eat and staff display notices on good hygiene practice near the sinks. Children also refrain from running in the setting when staff remind them to stop. Children are reminded during daily routines and activities about why they do things, for example, they were asked why they wash their hands during the story activity when children in the book were washing their hands. Children are eager to explain why they do or do not do things in the nursery and when asked can clearly show they are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. 'You mustn't run in nursery cause you might fall down and get hurt, but we can run outside' explained one little boy.

The learning environment is effective in helping all children progress towards the early

learning goals. Staff organise resources well, giving good opportunities for independence and choice making. This results in children being able to direct their own play. Resources and equipment are set out on low level shelves and in baskets so children can see what is in them and access these items independently. Children's confidence and independence is also developing well through daily activities and routines, such as dressing themselves for outside play, serving themselves food and scraping and stacking their plates when they have finished their meals.

Staff have good systems in place that help children to prepare for transition to school. Parents share details of the children's new schools and children become familiar with staff and the new environment through visiting the schools. They also meet the teachers who visit them in their current setting. Staff also participate in transition meetings with the various schools sharing records of transfer. These strategies effectively help to ease children's transitions.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leaders and managers pursuit of excellence is clearly having an impact on the very well-documented drive for improvement. The management team has a good understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements overall. They regularly monitor practice and review actions for improvement that have been identified by the manager or operational leads from the organisation. Action plans are reviewed with room supervisors to identify what has worked and where any additional actions are needed. The monitoring visits from the organisation leaders result in detailed progress reports for the nursery which are cascaded to staff through meetings and supervision sessions and training.

Arrangements for safeguarding children are well established and effective. Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures when concerns involving children's welfare arise. They understand and provide a safe indoor and outdoor environment for children. Staff ensure a consistent approach by conducting and effectively implementing written risk assessments on outings and the premises, which include procedures such as how children using the stairs should be supervised. The leadership team works well with the manager using very robust procedures to appoint staff, ensuring they are suitable to work with children. For example, before employment candidates undergo interviews by phone and in person, as well as attending play sessions. This ensures they have the ability to interact effectively with children and demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The manager places high priority on protecting children's welfare and the leadership team follows good procedures in investigating concerns raised involving children.

The manager works closely with support staff. For example, the company Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator makes monthly visits to the setting to check each child's individual planning folder. This helps to ensure that the planning is consistently implemented. Staff welcome and successfully implement their advice. For example, they have recently introduced an overview sheet that depicts the children's developmental

stages and identifies whether there are any gaps in their learning. In addition to this, staff value and take account of parent's views. For example, they have fitted a bell to alert staff to their presence as a result of a parent identifying a long wait when wishing to enter the premises. Planning documents include a section to enable staff to evaluate unplanned activities. However the evaluations do not always clearly show the impact of the activity to enable all staff to learn from each other and further improve their practice and the activities they offer.

The management and staff regularly assess what they offer the children and their families and accurately identify areas for improvement. For example, the manager's monthly observations of staff practice and use of resources identifies where staff have successfully created further opportunities for children to develop understanding and skills regarding information technology. In addition to this, staff have improved the system for parents to share information on what children are doing at home, by introducing the 'wow moments at home' form.

Extremely good attention to staff development results from management implementing a detailed six stage system that incorporates twelve weekly supervision sessions and a full appraisal each year. Leadership demonstrates an expectation that staff both attend courses and gain additional qualifications, supported actively by the manager through meetings with staff and their tutors. As a result staff are motivated and keen to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice.

Staff work closely with parents. They effectively involve them in settling in their child. Staff provide a wealth of information on the setting through newsletters, emails, the company website and several notice-boards. Consequently, everyone takes a consistent approach. Parents are very happy with the care and learning that staff provide. They find the atmosphere is calm and well organised; staff and management are on hand and easily available to talk to. They feel staff get to know the children well and children are happy and supported well in their development. Children also benefit from the staff developing strong links with other professionals from the local community. Staff welcome and implement advice from other professionals, such as speech therapists and community nurses. For example, they have accessed additional funding to support children with one-to-one care. This means that they support the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY412806
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	894730
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	100
Number of children on roll	167
Name of provider	Townsend Montessori Nurseries Ltd
Date of previous inspection	08/06/2011
Telephone number	01227274444

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

