

Cherubs Montessori Day Nurseries Ltd

5 Castle View Road, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3PP

Inspection date	21/05/2014
Previous inspection date	03/04/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff are highly motivated and promote children's learning and development extremely well.
- Staff build excellent relationships with children and their families and fully involve them in learning. This enhances children's well-being and development.
- Adults prioritise children's health and safety. They endeavour to protect children from harm through rigorous risk assessments and daily checks.
- Staff use highly developed systems of observation, planning and assessment, to plan for all children individually. As a result, all children make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Management involve staff, parents and children in their self-evaluation. They are fully committed to continuous improvement.

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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector held meetings with the owner and the managers throughout the inspection.
- The inspector observed activities both indoors and outside.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation including planning documents, policies, children's records and the nursery's self-evaluation form.
- The owner and the inspector conducted a joint observation.
- The inspector spoke to staff, parents and children to ascertain their views.

Inspector

Annette Blundred

Full report

Information about the setting

Cherubs Montessori Day Nursery Ltd registered in 2004. The nursery operates from seven rooms, located over three floors in a large detached building. It is situated in Strood, in the city of Rochester, Kent. Local bus routes and a mainline train station are close by. There is also a car park to the rear of the premises. The setting is registered on the Early Years register and compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is open each weekday from 7 am to 7 pm for 51 weeks of the year. All children have access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas. There are currently 101 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting receives early education funding for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 32 childcare staff employed. Of these, 25 hold appropriate early years qualifications and the remainder are studying towards them. The owner and the manager hold Early Years Professional Status. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance further the younger children's experience of information, communication and technology.

Inspection judgements

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

The staff meet children's needs extremely well. They build on each child's starting points, abilities and skills. They plan for children exceptionally well, on an individual basis, involving parents in this process. For instance, they develop children's vocabulary, communication and language skills by using simple signs and picture cards to help children to understand the daily routine. For children who are learning English as an additional language, many parents provide key words, pronunciations and simple rhymes in their first language, for all to enjoy. This helps children to settle in and feel included in their new environment.

Staff work extremely closely with parents. They gather detailed information to establish children's interests so that they can meet children's needs from the start. They then carry out thorough observations in order to assess children's level of development. Staff know each child in their care extremely well. Consequently, they plan to extend each child's learning and development at an appropriate level for that child. They do this by providing a range of exciting and stimulating activities for them to enjoy. Parents say that they feel

very involved in their child's learning. They make suggestions for their children. Some parents do this by email. Staff keep parents fully informed of any topic or theme and as a result, parents support these by bringing in additional materials of interest for discussion or display.

The nursery has an extremely wide range of resources which support all age ranges and abilities. Staff rotate these regularly to ensure that they remain interesting and stimulating. Children are able to access resources easily as staff label them attractively with pictures and words. Staff teach children that print carries meaning. Children enjoy a large variety of story and non-fiction books, which they share with adults. The babies enjoy cloth, board and interactive books. In addition, to reading popular story and rhyme books, staff support the older children to use non-fiction books and to use the computer to gain information and share what they have found. For instance, staff provide topic boxes which depict different countries and cultures around the world. They then support older children to research further and share what they have found.

Staff are highly enthusiastic. As a result, children are well motivated, eager to participate and explore during the session. There is a sensitive balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and children are encouraged to practise their emerging skills. For example, staff develop mathematical skills by counting frequently, sequencing, and singing number rhymes with babies and toddlers. They also teach children how to estimate and then to measure accurately. This gives children confidence in their abilities.

Staff are highly skilled in using questions that encourage children to solve problems and think for themselves. They are equipping children with valuable skills for the future and preparing them very well for life-long learning. Staff scribe for children, link sounds to letters and show them that writing has a purpose. There are numerous opportunities around the nursery for all children to experiment with their mark-making and writing skills with a variety of materials. Although there is no computer in the toddler room at present, all children also learn how to use computers and digital cameras, which supports their understanding of information technology.

Staff plan in detail for children's next steps in learning. They are also aware of the learning styles and different needs of children. For example, they plan additional opportunities for the more energetic children to engage in physical play. There are excellent opportunities for children to learn outside. They have access to wheeled toys, climbing, balancing, sand and water play. They have great fun with the musical instruments and playing imaginatively in the make-believe bear cave, in which they act out a popular story. They enjoy cleaning the windows, and painting the walls of the cave, which develops their coordination skills. The babies have a separate sensory garden to stimulate their interests with a variety of toys, natural materials and fragranced plants and herbs. Parents comment that the outdoor activities are very popular.

Children learn about the natural world both indoors and in the outside areas. Staff teach children to enjoy gardening with real tools. Children examine worms and they are interested in comparing the snails. They grow flowers, fruits, vegetables, and herbs. They also learn about the ideal conditions for things to grow well. They delight in suggesting ingredients from the garden when they pretend to make worm soup. Staff make and use

recipe cards to enhance the children's learning.

Children experiment with construction toys outside and learn about how to make their structures stable. For instance, they experiment until they find a safe way to place planks so that they can balance. They also learn about how water travels through an arrangement of pipes. Staff show children how things work, and this arouses their curiosity about their surroundings.

Indoors, babies and children enjoy seeing fish swimming in their tanks. The older children watch caterpillars form a chrysalis. They learn about the wider world. They learn about the world map and that we live on an island, and they make model islands to reinforce their understanding. Staff promote general knowledge very well. Children express their learning through their varied creative work, which is on display throughout the nursery, to share with others and to teach children that their work has value. The nursery reflects diversity; there are multicultural toys and books, rhymes in different languages and a variety of musical instruments and artefacts, currently reflecting African culture.

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

Staff promote children's well-being extremely well. They prioritise health and safety. As the nursery is organised over three floors, staff teach children about the risks of stairs. They show them how to negotiate these safely and children know that they must always hold on to the bannisters when using them.

In all areas of their development, staff assist children to be as independent as possible. For example, they encourage children to put on their coats and shoes, to serve their own drinks and snacks, to use tissues, and to attend to their own toileting needs. They also encourage children to assist each other when possible, fostering skills in cooperation.

Staff give children a strong sense of belonging. Children have their photograph on their named coat pegs and staff allocate a special named place in which they keep their outdoor shoes and other belongings. There are photographs of children and staff all around the nursery and this gives information about individuals, groups and the key-person system. Children get to know their key person when they start at the nursery. They visit twice before they start and staff gather information from parents to help children to settle in. If children have additional needs, then staff prepare effectively for them.

Following discussion with parents, the nursery has recently introduced plans for staff absence or changes. Each key person now has a buddy, to act as a deputy key person for children in their group.. This means that staff provide continuity of care and can ensure that they plan very effectively to meet children's needs. Parents comment that this is now a much more efficient system, as changes of a key person if a member of staff leaves can be unsettling for children. They are pleased with the care that their children receive and state that the nursery 'puts the needs of the children before the needs of the routine'.

Babies have individual routines, which staff decide with parents. They inform parents

about their baby's activities during the day and parents can see when their child has had a nappy change, what they have eaten, and when they have slept. Staff are vigilant about monitoring sleeping babies, making regular checks, using a monitor to hear if a child wakes, and maintaining the room at a suitable temperature.

During the day, older children can rest if they wish, and most choose to do so. Staff play quiet, calming music during this period. Those who do not need to rest choose creative activities, play imaginatively in one of the other rooms, or carry out individual activities which staff have planned for them. For example, some children spend time in other rooms during this quieter session. This enables them to socialise with older children and gain more confidence and self-esteem. It also prepares them for moving to another room at a future date. Staff plan transitions extremely well and parents comment that this is a very positive aspect of the nursery.

Staff teach children about health and hygiene. They support children to wash their hands regularly during the day and to clean their teeth after lunch. Children keep their named toothbrushes separate to avoid cross contamination and infection. Staff encourage children to be active, and children have many opportunities to benefit from fresh air and exercise. They learn about healthy life-styles and good nutrition. Two cooks at the nursery provide a diet of healthy snacks and freshly prepared meals. Menus are on display for parents. Fresh drinking water is always available. There is a water machine so that older children can help themselves when they wish. They are developing healthy habits for the future.

Children behave very well. The atmosphere in the nursery is calm. Staff gently remind older babies of appropriate behaviour to keep them safe. For example, they remind them not to climb on tables, but to sit on chairs. Older children help to decide the rules in their rooms, and these are on display as a reminder. Staff also remind children, using positive terms, saying for example, that, 'We walk inside, we do not run.' They also invite children to recall the rules, by asking, for instance, 'What do we have to remember to do when we are inside?' This helps children to memorise the rules and to manage their own behaviour. Staff also teach children how to assess risk for themselves. Therefore children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe is excellent. They are able to state the rules and guidelines, for example, how to use the garden tools safely, how to hold scissors safely and how to take care when using the climbing and balancing equipment. Younger children learn how to avoid bumping into others in the soft play area. Should accidents occur, the nursery has thorough recording procedures.

When it is time for children to transfer to school or move to other settings, the nursery passes information on. Some teachers visit the nursery, but as children are from a wide catchment area this is not always possible. Occasionally, staff take children to visit a school if parents are not able to do so. This is to ensure that they prepare children as well as possible for their transfer to school.

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

The leadership and the management of the provision is outstanding. The owner is a highly motivated leader and practitioner. She and the team have worked hard since the last inspection to put all recommendations into place and to increase their qualifications and expertise. They have the highest aspirations for continuous improvement and this underpins all aspects of care and education. There are secure and robust systems for implementing and monitoring both the safeguarding and welfare requirements and the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Policies and procedures are detailed, and staff review these regularly. Policies are available for parents and some contribute to these.

The setting has rigorous recruitment, vetting and induction procedures in place to help ensure that new staff are suitable to work with children. All staff receive regular training in safeguarding and first aid. They have a secure knowledge of how to protect children from harm and neglect. They recognise the signs of a child who may be at risk, and they are confident to follow the correct procedures, should the need arise.

All procedures relating to health and safety in the nursery are thorough and transparent. Management carefully monitors evacuation procedures during monthly fire drills. Staff undertake regular risk assessments for the premises, equipment and outings. They carry out daily checks each morning to ensure that the environment is safe before children arrive. A member of staff on each floor takes responsibility for recording the children's attendance and another ensures that only known adults gain access to the nursery. Management maintain good adult-to-child ratios and parents highlight this as a reason for choosing the nursery.

The management team demonstrates a strong commitment to providing high quality childcare. They are highly reflective in their practice and this is evident in their thorough self-evaluation process. The team and the staff conduct regular audits to identify areas to develop. They speak to children to involve them in planning. For instance, children suggest ways in which to develop the home corner or use it for a different purpose. In addition, staff support children to review their work and to plan their learning. Parents are welcome to be involved in all aspects of the nursery life and they give their views about how to enhance the provision. They do this through informal discussion, the use of a suggestion box and through more formal questionnaires.

Staff receive regular opportunities to develop their professional practice in line with identified areas for development in the nursery. High-quality professional staff supervision is based on consistent and focused evaluations of the impact of staff practice. Practitioners each have areas of responsibility for an area of the curriculum and work with a buddy from a different age range to ensure continuity in planning and in the use of resources throughout the nursery. Staff take advice from the Local Authority in order to support their practice and they regularly attend training to update their skills.

The management has a strong commitment to promote inclusion and this is a priority in the management development plan. In support of this, the staff have a variety of qualifications, skills and experiences to bring to the nursery. For instance, they speak a number of languages, and the setting makes good use of these skills. Children's needs are

quickly identified and exceptionally met well through highly effective partnerships between the setting, parents, external agencies and other providers.

Staff build excellent relationships with parents and carers. They work with them so that they meet children's individual needs extremely well. They share valuable information with parents at the end of each day, and hold more formal parents' evenings twice a year. The team also ensures that there are good lines of communication with local schools and other establishments in the community, such as the library and a home for elderly people which is nearby. Children visit the elderly people on special occasions such as Harvest Festival and to sing carols Christmas.

Children benefit from wide, varied and stimulating experiences in the nursery. Staff continually seek ways to further extend children's learning, to build their confidence and to promote their self-esteem. Children are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their learning and for starting school.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY289709
Local authority	Medway Towns
Inspection number	843679
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	95
Number of children on roll	101
Name of provider	Cherubs Montessori Day Nurseries Ltd
Date of previous inspection	03/04/2009
Telephone number	01634 716282

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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.

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