

# Bowland Montessori Pre-School

St. James C of E Primary School, Greenacre Street, CLITHEROE, Lancashire, BB7 1ED

<b>Inspection date</b>	17/06/2014
Previous inspection date	08/12/2008

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- There is a strong emphasis on outdoor learning and on children developing a wonderful knowledge of the world through exciting first-hand experiences that ignite their curiosity, imagination, exploration and investigation.
- As a result of an interesting and accessible learning environment and the manager's own enthusiasm for children's learning, skilful questioning and motivating approach, children show good levels of interest and are eager to learn and join in.
- Children are effectively safeguarded because staff keep their knowledge of child protection up to date, ensure good security of the premises and successfully teach children how to keep themselves safe.
- Positive relationships are established with parents and/or carers. They are very much involved in the life of the pre-school, in order for their contributions to positively impact on children's care and learning.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to review and enhance the use of information gained from observations and assessments, so that children's next steps for learning are precisely identified and more successfully reflected in planning.
- The information given to parents and or/carers about their children's progress and individual next steps for learning is not always frequent or precise enough, in order to maximise a shared and consistent approach.

## 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 inspector observed activities and care routines in the main pre-school room, the outside learning environment and during a visit to a wool shop.  
The inspector spoke with children and staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection and undertook a joint observation with the provider alongside holding a meeting with her.
- The inspector looked at children's records of learning, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and information included in the pre-school self-evaluation document and action plans.

## Inspector

Rachel Ayo

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Bowland Montessori Pre-School was registered in 2008 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is operated by a private individual who also manages the pre-school. The pre-school operates from St James' Church of England Primary School in Clitherhoe, Lancashire. It serves the children of the local and wider areas and is accessible to all children. The pre-school opens five days a week, from 9am to 3pm, term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. They are cared for in one playroom and have access to the enclosed school playground. There are currently 29 children in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who use English as an additional language. The nursery employs three members of childcare staff, including the manager. All of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 to Qualified Teacher Status, which the manager holds, alongside a Montessori Diploma. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and the learning programme incorporates the Montessori methods of teaching.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- analyse the information gained through observation and assessment more robustly, in order to identify children's next steps in learning more precisely and demonstrate how these are incorporated into planning
- strengthen parents and/or carers involvement in their children's learning, for example, by sharing more precise and regular information about children's progress and their next steps for learning and how these can be supported at home.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements. Consequently, they plan exciting educational programmes that enable children to engage in first-hand experiences that help them to consolidate their learning and develop a strong awareness of the world around them. As a result, they effectively promote active learning through children having opportunities to observe, explore, investigate and engage with their indoor and outdoor environments. For example, as part of a topic about bees, children visit a bee keeper and learn about how bees make honey. Following this, they visit a river to find oval-shaped pebbles to decorate and create their own bumble bees. They also have the opportunity to observe the borrowed bee keeper's suit. Photographs capture such activities, which helps children to recall and reflect on their

learning. Alongside the many adult-planned activities based around themes, children are left alone to initiate their own play, in order to learn skills that prepare them for their next stages of learning as they move onto school. For example, children enthusiastically explore and investigate the sand and dough, thinking creatively and expressing their own ideas. They develop early literacy and mathematical skills as they make different marks in the media, create patterns with shells and make a range of shapes, such as a green caterpillar. This results from them learning about the life cycle of the butterfly. As part of this, children can look at sequencing cards, which show the process clearly and observe the current stage as cocoons dangle from the container lid. As children use the dough tools, they show precise small physical skills.

Once children are settled, their starting points for learning are identified and logged on a tracking document. Following on from this, staff observe children and assess where they are in their learning. However, information gained from what the children know and can do is not always reflected precisely enough to gain an accurate picture of each child's progress and incorporate their individual next steps for learning into planning. This means that children are making good progress, but not necessarily making the best progress possible. Parents receive updates throughout the year on their children's progress and areas of development that they can support at home. In addition, they receive information through daily conversations and newsletters about different events, outings and weekly themes. Parents and/or carers are actively encouraged to contribute to these, for example, by bringing in associated items. They are also invited into the pre-school to talk about their profession and help children with activities, such as gardening. Parents and/or carers are also encouraged to share any new development or emerging interests, in order for staff to incorporate these in their planning. However, staff do not consistently share children's next steps for learning on an ongoing basis or share significant achievements frequently enough. This means that they are not always fully successful in ensuring a shared and consistent approach to help children make optimum progress in their learning and development.

Children show their excitement as they prepare for the visit to the wool shop, planned as part of the current theme about farm animals. This also includes interesting visits to local working farms. Children are well prepared before embarking on the outing, as the manager explains what is going to happen when they arrive there. During the visit, children concentrate very well and observe the demonstration with intrigue. They show their inquisitiveness, asking questions to clarify their thought processes and find out new things. The manager extends their language for thinking extremely well as she models being a 'thinker' and showing children that she enjoys finding out things she does not know. Children use their senses to explore the texture of the newly sheered coat of wool, exclaiming 'It's smelly!' They learn about how the wool changes colour and develop an understanding of how things work as they see the wool being spun onto the reel. On children's return to the pre-school, after having lunch, they enjoy playing in the sensory garden. Staff support and extend children's play and imagination, asking if they want to collect petals to make 'perfume' in the 'mud kitchen'. They encourage children to explore and develop their own ideas. Children demonstrate their understanding of what they have learnt. For example, they delight in observing the bumble bees exploring the flowers, explaining the bees are collecting nectar for the beehive to make honey. Staff respect and listen to the voices of all children and give children ample time to think about and respond

to open-ended questions. As a result, children are confident communicators and use language well in a range of ways, including those who use English as an additional language.

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

Staff are aware of and sensitive to potential and actual harm to children. They have thought through how they would deal with safeguarding issues, in order to protect and support children in their care. Children are happy and confident, as a result of good settling-in processes. These ensure a smooth transition from home to a new environment and enable positive relationships to develop between parents, staff and children. This helps children to learn to be strong and independent from a base of secure relationships. There is close consultation with parents during this period where a range of information is exchanged to help staff meet children's individual needs. For example, they find out about children's home language, cultural background and their likes and dislikes. Consequently, staff can build up a picture of each child's background and uniqueness, which they clearly value and celebrate within the pre-school to ensure inclusion. For example, where families originate from other countries, practitioners reflect their cultural heritage within resources, by using their home language and celebrating festivals. Parents help to bring these alive by bringing in cultural items and sharing their experiences with the children. This also helps children to value and appreciate the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Children's sense of belonging is fostered further as they bring in items from home for the interest box, which they talk about during 'cushion time'. As children leave for school, their continued sense of security is fostered, for instance, through the use of transition documents that summarise children's development. Where children are upset, for example, when they have cut their finger on a blade of grass, they readily approach staff and are suitably comforted, which helps them to feel safe.

Staff value children's achievements through positive reinforcements and act as good role models. They show politeness and praise children for how well they walk to the wool shop and sit and listen to the presentation of how wool is made. Children behave well in the main. Any over-exuberant or disruptive behaviour is appropriately dealt with, in order to calm children down and reinforce their understanding of behavioural expectations. Staff remind children about good manners, such as not talking at the same time as somebody else, reinforcing their social skills. Children are encouraged to share and take turns and they have clearly formed friendships as they link up during a range of activities. For example, a group of children engage in superhero role play, using props imaginatively, such as sticks, as part of their game. When play becomes a little too aggressive, adults intervene to discuss the use of the sticks, in order to help children learn about keeping themselves and others safe. Children share ideas as they work cooperatively to build a complex construction with bricks. They thrive on the praise and encouragement, which they receive and this is reinforced as the manager takes a photograph of their creation. As a result of a welcoming and child-accessible environment, children develop good levels of independence and are encouraged to manage their own personal needs relative to their ages. For example, children who have a school meal rather than bring a lunch box are reminded to use their cutlery at lunch time. Children readily select what they want to play with and are effectively supported in developing a sense of responsibility by helping to tidy

toys away in a relaxed and unrushed manner. Children take turns to play the calming 'clear away' song and are further supported through labelling on shelving units. This effectively supports children because they know that everything has a place and learn to take care of their resources.

The pre-school does not provide meals for the children; parents have the option of choosing a meal provided by the school or bringing a packed lunch. Nonetheless, staff reinforce appropriate messages to children about the importance of a healthy diet. For example, they encourage children to eat more of their salad items and to try more of their sandwich before eating the chocolate bar. They also encourage children to learn about where healthy food comes from as they harvest their own fruit and vegetables, such as strawberries. Children are involved in good hygiene routines, in order to develop their understanding of how other practices contribute to healthy lifestyles. For example, they wash their hands before eating and staff explain to children why they have to use the hand gel after touching the sheep's wool. Children benefit from ample fresh air and exercise through free-flow access to the outdoor area. They have opportunities to gain an understanding of risk through activities that encourage them to explore their environment. For example, they learn how to ride wheeled toys, use wobbly balancing equipment in the sensory garden and access more challenging apparatus in the park. Children also learn about other dangers and keeping themselves safe through externally delivered fire activity sessions and visits from the police and the traffic warden. As part of a topic about bees, children also learn about safety around such insects, for example, staying still as they fly close by, rather than waving their arms around.

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

The provider has a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, she fulfils her responsibilities in meeting the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development requirements, without compromising her Montessori ethos and approach. This is because it complements and shares the underlying principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The recruitment and vetting of staff are carried out in line with requirements. This ensures that children are protected and cared for by suitable adults. New employees are subject to an induction, which ensures they have a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Adults safeguard children through their secure knowledge of possible signs of abuse or neglect and of the procedures for seeking advice where concerns arise on such matters. They ensure children's safety through good risk assessments. For example, the use of an electronically controlled gate and coded key pad prevents unauthorised access to the pre-school. Security is enhanced further by the gate leading to the host school's sensory gardens, to which there is public access, being kept locked when not in use by the children. A walking line is used to promote children's safety on outings and adults issue clear instructions for crossing roads.

The provider demonstrates a strong commitment to the continuous improvement of children's achievements over time through good systems for reviewing the pre-school practice. For example, she makes effective use of local authority evaluation tools, having

gained their quality award since the last inspection. As part of her targeted plans for the future, highlighted in quality indicator audit action plans, the provider's focus is developing a forest school approach to the use of the outdoors and working towards gaining a local authority quality award. The provider keeps her knowledge of changes in practice, for example, through attending cluster meetings and she disseminates information to her staff team, for example, during team meetings. These are also used as a forum for reviewing practice and looking at areas for development, alongside the use of communication books. Because the provider is also the day-to-day manager, she provides good leadership because of her dedication, her enthusiastic approach and her high-quality teaching. She has identified that some staff lack confidence and do not consistently mirror her own standard of teaching. However, she is introducing a more formal appraisal system to precisely focus on targeting and improving this. Alongside, staff keeping mandatory training updated, they are encouraged to attend further courses that are relevant to their own setting. For example, after an intake of a number of children who use English as an additional language, staff attended communication and language training. This has helped them to support such groups of children further, in order to contribute to narrowing any achievement gaps and ensure inclusion.

Parents and/or carers are well informed about many aspects of the pre-school provision, as a result of positive relationships being established. They are warmly welcomed into the pre-school environment and are seen as an important part of children's care and education. However, arrangements for discussing children's progress and next steps for learning are not always fully successful. Information is relayed in a variety of ways, such as through notices, newsletters and daily friendly contact during drop off and collection times. The views of parents and/or carers are valued and encouraged, in order to develop the service. This is achieved informally through face-to-face exchanges, progress meetings and social evenings and more formally through questionnaires. Parents express complimentary comments about the pre-school, such as the activities children take part in, the progress they have made and the friendly and approachable staff. If required, the provider has a good understanding of liaising with other providers where there is shared care or with other professionals where children are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that she is aware of her responsibilities in ensuring a shared and consistent approach.

### **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	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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY373011
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	858157
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	16
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	29
<b>Name of provider</b>	Nancy Jane Bigmore
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	08/12/2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01200 429 579

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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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