

Lexden Montessori

5 Oxford Road, COLCHESTER, CO3 3HN

Inspection date

03/06/2014

Previous inspection date

26/07/2013

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

- All staff are exceptionally skilled and sensitive in supporting children to form secure emotional attachments. This provides a strong foundation to enable them to develop their independence and motivates them to explore.
- Staff have an excellent knowledge of how children learn and provide a rich, varied and imaginative educational programme, with precise assessment and planning for individual children. As a result, children make rapid progress in their learning and development in relation to their starting points.
- Babies and children are exceptionally motivated, very eager to join in and consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning in this well-resourced, exciting yet homely and nurturing environment.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The rigorous implementation of robust policies and procedures successfully promotes children's safety and well-being.
- Partnerships with parents, other early years providers and external services are exemplary, which means that children's needs are quickly identified and exceptionally well met. Transitions in and out of the nursery are exceptionally well organised to promote continuity of care and learning.
- Leadership is inspirational. The manager and staff team are totally committed to ensuring they provide a highly stimulating and exciting learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, where children have every opportunity to develop to their full potential.

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 the activities in the nursery and outside in the garden.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision.
- The inspector held discussions with key persons and children.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journals, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of staff working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation documentation and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection.

Inspector

Tina Mason

Full report

Information about the setting

Lexden Montessori was registered in 2006 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a three-storey house close to Colchester town centre. The nursery is privately owned and managed by Lexden Montessori Ltd. It serves the local area. Children are cared for in four main rooms and there is a fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play. Children aged under two years are cared for on the first floor, which is accessed via a flight of stairs. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including the manager, who also holds a Montessori qualification at level 4, an early years degree and Early Years Professional Status. There are two deputy managers, one of whom holds a Montessori Childhood Practice Foundation Degree. The owner has a Montessori qualification at level 4 and also works within the nursery.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the information requested from new parents to enrich staffs' already excellent understanding of children's starting points in each area of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Babies and children thrive and are highly motivated to learn as they participate in challenging activities designed to capture their imagination and interests in this exceptionally high quality nursery. As a result, they consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. The environment, both indoors and outdoors, is exceptionally well resourced and organised into areas of continuous provision, which supports children's sense of curiosity and their natural desire to explore and investigate. Teaching techniques are consistently very strong across the nursery. Plans link to children's interests and are flexible to take account of their spontaneous ideas. Children demonstrate a strong exploratory impulse, which is significantly enhanced because staff provide a wealth of interesting resources and materials for them to investigate. For example, babies use their senses to explore an extensive range of resources, such as feathers, leaves, cardboard tubes, rubber mats, soft touch mats and fans as they take part in story-led yoga sessions where they learn to develop their balance and core posture. The older children have a wonderful time as they make pretend pies and cakes in the outdoor 'mud kitchen' and experience different textures and smells as they investigate bark,

stones, logs and herbs and spices. Staff are committed to providing children with opportunities to play outside as they fully understand how important outdoor learning is for very young children. Children have opportunities to take part in 'Forest School' sessions that are designed to promote all areas of learning and are of particular benefit to boys or those children who learn best outside. The installation of a canopy and provision of 'all weather' suits and wellington boots means that children benefit hugely from first-hand experiences of the weather and seasons. Children are learning about number and counting in sequence as they use large foam numbers in the garden; they are able to put them in order from one to nine and also name numbers out of sequence.

Staff place an extremely strong emphasis on helping children to acquire communication and language skills and supporting their physical, personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children gain the skills, abilities and attitudes that provide them with a firm foundation for their future learning. Staff teach children to play cooperatively, take turns, share resources and collaborate in their play. For example, they take part in an art activity which requires them to share and turn take as they squirt paint out of water pistols to make marks and patterns on paper. Babies and children demonstrate high levels of independence as they confidently move around the indoor and outdoor environment and select their own choice of toys and equipment. Communication and language development is supported exceptionally well by the knowledgeable and experienced staff team. They skilfully use a range of highly effective techniques, which have a significant impact on the progress children make in this area of development. For example, staff use open-ended questioning techniques to develop children's creative thinking skills and encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas. They provide a running commentary as they play and help children to expand on what they say by introducing new words and more complex sentences. Children develop their listening and attention skills as they sit in the carpet area and share experiences. For example, the older children are able to talk about their new schools and teachers in preparation for their move to infant school. Children are provided with endless opportunities to develop their physical skills. For example, babies have space indoors to move, crawl and roll along furniture. Children demonstrate their physical skills as they confidently use large climbing equipment and expertly manoeuvre bicycles around the garden.

Staff undertake purposeful observations and assessments that highlight individual interests and preferred learning styles. This information is used superbly, and in conjunction with details of children's home experiences, by translating it into individualised planning that clearly identifies each child's next steps in learning. Children's learning journals illustrate the rapid improvement in their learning. These are maintained to an exceptionally high standard, detailing photographs of the children involved in a variety of activities, their artwork and regular observations, which are clearly linked to the seven areas of learning. A robust system is in place for tracking and analysing children's learning and progress. As a result, children who are at risk of falling below their expected levels of development are identified quickly. This ensures they receive targeted support and appropriate intervention if necessary. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported because staff work extremely closely with external agencies and outside professionals to ensure they receive the appropriate intervention and support they need. Staff work closely with parents from the point of entry. They obtain detailed information to find out what children can do and use this information to establish children's starting

points. Although, there is scope to enhance the information sought from parents at this point to ensure it covers all seven areas of learning. Parents are able to access children's learning journals at any time. They are provided with an array of opportunities to share significant experiences, interests and observations of their children's learning and achievements. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress through regular daily conversations and parents' meetings held termly. The nursery is also highly successful in encouraging parents to support their children's learning at home through discussions with their parents. Children learn about the transition to school through discussions, activities and visits to the nursery from school staff. These systems, devised by the nursery, ensure that reception class teachers are fully informed of children's stage of development and find out about their likes, dislikes and interests from comments made by key persons. A transfer document is prepared and shared with school staff to demonstrate children's progress and their stage of development. Staff have a very close relationship with schools and other early years providers, which some children also attend. This ensures that they experience consistency of care and education to maximum effect. The highly successful strategies in shared learning ensure children are extremely well prepared for the next steps in their learning and school.

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

There is an exceptionally strong emphasis by the management team and all staff on the care and well-being of children. A highly effective key person system ensures that all children settle quickly and they clearly demonstrate that they feel very safe and secure. Parents comment on how well their children have settled through the excellent support of the key person and the positive relationships that have formed. The detailed information gained from parents enables staff to provide high quality care that mirrors home care routines. This information is recorded through a detailed settling-in plan. Staff demonstrate a highly sensitive and caring approach to children, for example, gently supporting a child as they fall asleep. The environment within the nursery has been developed highly effectively to support children's movement between and beyond the nursery. For example, they bring external teachers in for their yoga, theatre and French sessions, providing children with the confidence to work with others. The nursery ensures that babies move smoothly into the next room when their time comes. The nursery is fully mindful where children may be moving to other schools and is proactive in supporting these moves, along with children who attend other early years providers. For example, teachers are invited to visit the children who will be attending their schools and documents are shared to fully support the transition. Often, children are invited to spend time in their new school before the start of term. In addition, children are encouraged to talk about their move to school during group discussion time, providing them with time in a safe environment to discuss their worries and excitement, supporting their emotional well-being.

The nursery provides strong daily routines that contribute to children's rapid development in their social, emotional, physical and communicative development. Staff are extremely considerate to inform children about care routines that are required, such as nappy changes, in order to maintain both their physical and emotional well-being. The staff maintain children's interest and concentration in activities by ensuring that these are

readily available for children to return to, for example, after snack time. Children and babies demonstrate high levels of confidence and a strong sense of belonging as they thoroughly explore their environment, and the opportunities and experiences available to them. They demonstrate strong independence skills and have an excellent understanding of self-care. Children develop a high level of understanding about the importance of a healthy diet and the benefit of exercise. This is due to the highly nutritious food and snacks they enjoy, and the wide range of activities offered, such as yoga, cooking, dancing and daily outdoor play. Older children access their own snacks and at lunch time serve themselves to a healthy home-cooked lunch, selecting from a choice of wholesome organic foods, with bread and butter always supplied. They pour their own drinks, which are readily available, supporting their awareness of keeping themselves hydrated. Cooking is part of the curriculum provided each week and offers children the opportunity to learn many different skills. For example, they learn about weights and measures and how to safely handle utensils. Children skilfully put on outdoor coats, they remember to wash their hands after using the toilet and young toddlers wipe their hands and faces with individual cloths after meals.

Resources and toys are highly accessible to all children indoors and out. The environment is carefully arranged to provide children with a wide choice of activities and experiences that support and stimulate their interests. Parents comment on how happy their children are to be at the nursery with their friends. Children behave in an exemplary manner because they have secure boundaries and routines so they understand fully what is expected of them. Consequently, they become confident, responsible and independent individuals who have very high levels of self-esteem. They are supported by staff who are consistent positive role models. Older babies show an excellent understanding of taking turns and staff enthusiastically praise children to reinforce kind behaviour. Children develop excellent negotiating skills and can manage situations that arise independently, reinforcing the need to take turns without the need for staff intervention, for example, when accessing the ride-on toys in the garden. Throughout the nursery, staff are vigilant at all times, which ensures children's safety.

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

Leadership and management of the nursery is outstanding. The manager has an excellent understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years foundation Stage. There is an extremely strong drive by the highly qualified management and staff team to provide the best possible care and learning opportunities for the children that attend the nursery. The manager is inspirational in her commitment and drive, which inspires the staff team to implement her vision. As a result, staff are motivated and enthusiastic about the high quality care and learning they provide for children. The team demonstrates an excellent capacity to sustain ongoing improvement and all actions and recommendations raised at the last inspection have been extremely well addressed. For example, the assessment processes clearly shows how children's learning is supported through meticulously planned activities, therefore children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Systems for monitoring staff practice are excellent. The appraisal and supervision process is rigorous. Peer observations have been introduced recently to further support

staff in their provision of high quality practice. Robust monitoring systems and moderation ensures that early interventions are put in place for children who may be at risk of falling behind in their learning and development. The views of parents and children are sought to enable the management to consider changes that bring about effective benefits, that are tailored to support the children's requirements. Self-evaluation of the nursery is robust and actively contributes to the high quality of the nursery. This is brought about through the clear development plan that drives change that benefits the children and families attending the nursery.

Safeguarding is excellent because staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to protect and safeguard all children. Thorough safeguarding policies and procedures are known by all staff, underpin the excellent practice and are available to parents. There is a rigorous procedure in place for recording complaints and the manager is fully aware of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements to respond to written complaints within 28 days. Staff receive regular updated training in safeguarding and have an excellent understanding of procedures, so that they can manage any concerns they may have about a child's welfare or the behaviour of any member of staff. Furthermore, the manager regularly tests staff's knowledge by asking them questions about what they would do in a given scenario. Robust recruitment and vetting systems ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so. There are highly effective systems in place to monitor staff's ongoing suitability and regular observations from the manager ensures this practice consistently maintains children's safety and well-being. Rigorous risk assessments for all areas of the premises and outings, daily checks and consistent maintenance of the environment and equipment ensures that children can play and learn in safety. Staff are deployed to maximum effect to ensure children are consistently supervised. The manager has a list of children who will be attending each day and deploys staff accordingly to ensure that ratios are met at all times.

Highly effective partnerships with parents and other providers ensure that children's needs are quickly identified and exceptionally well met. Children who require the involvement of external professionals are supported by staff at the highest level because of their outstanding understanding of the importance of partnership working. Partnership working with other professionals and settings to support children's individual needs is exemplary, including at transition times. Parents are highly complementary about the nursery and the care and education their children receive. They comment that they are well informed of children's progress and what they have been doing throughout the day, through daily verbal feedback and parents' meetings. They state that they can leave their children at the nursery with confidence, reassured that they are well cared for, safe and secure.

Inspirational training is provided for staff that is tailored to meet the needs of the children attending, for example, the manager has gained her level 3 Forest School training. Staff have attended specific training to provide enhanced provision for outside play that supports their all-round development. Partnerships with external agencies are highly focussed. As a result, children's individual needs are met extremely well and when needed, systems for early intervention are rigorous. The nursery works tirelessly to ensure that the children in their care receive the help and support they may require to fulfil their learning and potential. Both carers and professionals comment on the exceptional progress children have made while being in the nursery.

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

Unique reference number	EY338060
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	976231
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	46
Number of children on roll	62
Name of provider	Lexden Montessori Limited
Date of previous inspection	26/07/2013
Telephone number	01206 760863

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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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