

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	139385
Inspection date	25/11/2008
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt / Samantha Powis
Setting address	Chapel Lane, Yetminster, SHERBORNE, Dorset, DT9 6LJ
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Lower Covey Day Nursery was registered in 1998 and is situated in the rural village of Yetminster, near Sherborne, Dorset. The nursery is privately owned and occupies premises attached to the proprietor's home. The ground floor provides care for babies and children up to three years, and offers an out of school club for children aged from five to 11 years. The Montessori pre-school is accommodated on the first floor. Both floors have their own kitchenettes, toilets and storerooms. In addition the nursery has a sleep room, laundry room and main kitchen for the preparation of meals. There is a communal playroom used by all the children. There are fully enclosed areas available for outside play. The nursery is open Monday to Friday all year round from 08.00 until 18.00. It serves the local community and surrounding villages, and places are offered to children who come from a range of different backgrounds.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 63 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 111 children on roll. Of these, 78 are in the early years age group. The setting receives government funding for early education, and supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The owner is Montessori qualified. She employs a full-time supervisor who has both NNEB and Montessori qualifications. There are 17 members of staff, most of whom either hold, or are working towards, a relevant qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children are happy, settled and well cared for in a generally well organised environment which helps them develop independence and make good progress in their learning. Staff get to know children as individuals through good communication with parents and the effective support they provide for each child in their play. Children develop a good sense of belonging and an awareness of the wider world through discussion and planned activities. The setting has clear aims for development and some good systems in place to help identify and implement improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide increased opportunities for children in the two-to-three-year age group, to explore and make choices
- develop links with other settings that children attend and share information to support their learning
- develop the system for risk assessment to ensure potential hazards to children's health and safety are identified and addressed.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Clear recruitment and induction procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and are fully informed of their roles and responsibilities. They work well as a team and carry out procedures outlined in policies to promote children's welfare. However, the risk assessments and daily checks are not always fully effective in identifying hazards such as open socket covers, uncovered water containers and a torn changing mat. Overall, staff have a secure understanding of signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow with concerns, which helps protect children from harm.

A good partnership with parents means that children are cared for according to their individual needs. Parents are supplied with clear information about the setting which includes regular newsletters listing projects, so that they can support their child's learning at home. Key persons make themselves available to talk to parents and carers as children are delivered and collected, sharing information to meet children's individual needs. There are some positive links established with schools which helps children's transition to reception classes. However, there are no systems for sharing information with other settings that children attend to enhance the planning for their progress.

Children's health and safety has been improved as the recommendations set at the last inspection have been fully addressed. Security has been increased by installing a key pad system at the main entrance. The procedure for recording medication administered has been updated and clarified. Staff and management work effectively together, communicating their ideas throughout the day and at meetings. The regular staff appraisals help to identify areas for improvement and staff development. Staff are well supported in up-grading their qualifications, and their ideas for the future of the nursery to improve children's experiences are valued. For example, the outside area is being developed to provide resources to enhance various areas of learning.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are confident and secure as they are valued as individuals in a welcoming environment. They are cared for by qualified and experienced staff who are attentive to their welfare and learning needs. Children make good relationships with adults and their peers. There is a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities to encourage children's curiosity and learning. For example, babies enjoy an art activity as they investigate the feel of paint on sponges and scrunching tissue paper. Older children enjoy learning about dinosaurs as part of project work. They use a wide range of resources which encourage their awareness of number, sounds and letters and problem solving. However, some planned activities for the two-year-olds do not fully interest them or encourage them to explore for themselves. Overall, children have access to a good range of equipment. In the pre-school room, children understand the expectation of selecting equipment for themselves and returning it to the shelf when they have finished the task. This encourages children to develop good practical skills and responsibility. However,

there are times in the room for two-to-three-year-olds when there are minimal resources freely accessible, for children to make choices independently.

Staff interact with the children effectively to support their welfare, enjoyment and learning. They are developing a new system for recording children's progress which links the six areas of learning with aspects of Montessori teaching. They use these successfully to plan children's learning and set appropriate challenges, which in turn, helps children make good progress in all areas of development.

All children learn good procedures for a healthy lifestyle. They have daily fresh air and exercise where they use a variety of equipment to develop large muscle skills. Children enjoy making dens during 'Forest School' activities. From a young age they learn about having clean hands before handling food and are offered nutritious balanced meals cooked on the premises from fresh ingredients. Older children are involved in planting, harvesting and preparing fruit and vegetables grown in the garden. They learn about taking care of their bodies which includes brushing their teeth after meals. Children develop knowledge of how to stay safe as they use various equipment and resources, such as glass jugs and garden tools, and practise safe routines for crossing roads safely when on outings.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging to a community. They can see photos of themselves and their work displayed within the nursery. They go for walks in the local area and go to places such as the post box, farm and the church observing features of their environment. The children perform a nativity play in the local church which is attended by family and friends, they are also involved in fund raising events for community projects. All this helps to promote children's positive awareness of the world around them.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Met