

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery

Chapel Lane, Yetminster, SHERBORNE, Dorset, DT9 6LJ

Inspection date	16/10/2014
Previous inspection date	25/11/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- Children throughout the nursery are extremely happy, settled and confident, and feel valued and fully included.
- Staff skilfully focus on children's individual care and learning needs, to ensure they receive exceptional levels of support that help them all make excellent progress.
- Strong leadership and management, alongside a highly qualified and committed team of staff, mean that all those working with the children have an excellent knowledge of their individual roles and responsibilities, and are constantly seeking ways to make improvements.
- Staff and management consistently follow comprehensive procedures for safety, safeguarding and staff recruitment, to help promote children's welfare to a high standard.
- The exceptional partnerships with parents and other providers mean that all children thrive and receive consistent support that enables them to reach 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 activities in the playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector completed a joint observation and held meetings at an appropriate time with the registered person and managers.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documents, and sampled welfare records.
- The inspector checked evidence of staff suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children; she also reviewed the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day of the inspection, and engaged in discussions with staff.

Inspector

Samantha Powis

Full report

Information about the setting

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery registered in 1998 and is situated in the 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 facilities including toilets. In addition, the nursery has a sleep room, laundry room and main kitchen for the preparation of meals. There are several outdoor areas available for play, and the children take part in Forest School sessions. The nursery is open Monday to Friday all year round from 8am until 6pm. It serves the local community and surrounding villages. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 143 children on roll. Of these, 79 are in the early years age group. The nursery receives government funding for early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The owner holds a level 6 qualification in childcare. She employs two deputy managers, both of whom have Early Years Professional Status. Three staff are Montessori trained; nine staff hold level 3 qualifications; two staff hold level 2 qualifications and are currently working towards a level 3 qualification; and three staff are experienced in childcare.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider how some group sessions for pre-school children are organised, to enhance their involvement.

Inspection judgements

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

Children thrive in the welcoming and stimulating nursery environment. They settle quickly and engage in motivating activities and exciting play opportunities that reflect their individual interests and choices. Friendly, familiar staff are close by to provide just the right levels of support to help children learn and make exceptional progress. Staff are skilful at knowing when to stand back to allow children to explore, investigate and find things out, and when their input will extend children's learning further. For example, they observe carefully as a toddler experiments with putting wellington boots on. At first, the toddler sits on the floor, but when this is unsuccessful, they try to stand up and step into them. A little encouragement and help from the staff enables the child to succeed, as they learn to steady themselves against a nearby table to increase their balance. This means

children are gaining confidence, physical skills and independence, and are ready for the next stage in their learning. Children are heavily involved in planning and creating their learning environment. Older children source stones and rocks from nearby fields to design and make their own path in the outdoor classroom. They consider size, shape, weight and levels to create a pathway that adds interest and increases safety in the classroom.

Children throughout the nursery are extremely confident communicators. Staff constantly talk with the children and listen to what they have to say. They also use sign language, pictorial signs and children's home languages, adapting their approach to support all children to make their needs known and understand what is happening. The children have many opportunities to develop literacy skills. Books are available in all areas, with group and individual story times a frequent event. Older children recreate a story about a bear when they go outside to play. They discuss how they squelch through the mud and swish through the grass, recalling the order and repetitive phrases used throughout the book. A multisensory approach to mark making, using sandpaper letters, mud, sand trays and pencils, means older children are able to identify their names and have a go at writing letters, numbers and words. During register times, pre-school children listen carefully to initial letter sounds to help them link these to their names. The majority of children are actively engaged in this activity, which helps to support their language skills. However, a few younger children find it difficult to concentrate fully for all of this session, due to the length of time they need to sit and listen.

Staff have an excellent understanding of what they can do to support children's learning. They have an in-depth understanding of individual children's learning needs, due to the rigorous and accurate records they maintain about children's starting points, progress and next steps. These records help them plan activities that link closely to children's interests and learning needs, which means all children make exceptionally good progress in all areas of learning. Staff are quick to identify any gaps in children's learning, working closely with parents and other professionals involved to target their support and help narrow these gaps. This includes using approaches such as the Every Child A Talker programme, which helps staff to focus on supporting children's language development. Parents are fully involved in all aspects of children's care and learning. They receive daily diaries, which are adapted to provide the information that parents say they want. Parents also meet regularly with their child's key person to share information and discuss children's progress and next steps. This two-way exchange of information means that staff are able to consider children's all-round development when planning for their progress. Staff complete regular assessments of children's learning, including the required progress check for two-year-olds. Staff discuss and share these with parents; they make copies available for health professionals, thereby keeping everyone well informed.

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

Children develop an immense sense of self-worth as staff consistently make them feel valued and important. At the start of the day, older children register by using their names and photographs, discuss how they are feeling, and shake hands with staff and their friends if they choose to. As well as developing bonds within the nursery, the children feel

part of the local community as they participate in events such as Harvest Festival. Staff frequently discuss and celebrate the cultures and beliefs of children attending, inviting parents into the nursery to share their knowledge and skills. This helps children to learn about the wider world, and to respect and value diversity. Children learn to be polite and develop excellent social skills. Staff sit and eat with the children at meal times, helping to teach children about table manners and making this a relaxing, sociable time for the children. Children serve themselves to their meals, pass food around the table, and learn to take turns and share. This helps children to form positive relationships with others.

Exceptional use is made of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments to support children's learning and enable them to choose to play in a way that suits them. All areas are extremely well resourced with both natural and manufactured toys and equipment, and provide children with opportunities to use resources in the way they choose. For example, low-level shelving and drawers in the baby and toddler rooms allow even the youngest children to make choices and find what they want to play with. Children have quiet areas for sleep. Staff monitor children closely as they rest, to help keep them safe.

There is a strong focus on safety throughout the nursery. Staff, led by senior management, carefully consider children's safety and complete regular risk assessments on all areas of the nursery, activities and outings. Staff involve children in helping them to complete daily safety checks and also make children increasingly aware of how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff teach older children to identify hazards such as toadstools and nettles when they go to feed the rabbits and quails. When children notice anything that they think might be a danger, they immediately tell a member of staff. Parents state how vigilant children are about hazards when they take part in outings at home. This demonstrates that skills learned in the nursery help children to keep themselves safe when they are away from this environment. Staff follow excellent practices and procedures to support children's health. Children enjoy healthy snacks, meals and drinks during the day. They discuss the foods that are good for them and how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Children help to chop up fresh vegetables to make soup, learning how good these healthy ingredients taste.

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

The management and staff team are highly professional and committed to providing the very best service for children and their families. They all have an excellent understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Highly comprehensive arrangements for induction and ongoing supervision mean that all staff have a thorough understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities, and receive the training they need to enable them to fulfil these. Extremely effective systems for monitoring staff performance mean that managers are able to identify and address staff training needs to benefit children. For example, specific training for all staff on the Characteristics of Effective Learning means that they have a clear understanding of how to support children's learning successfully. The impact of this training is evident throughout the nursery, as all children are making rapid progress in their learning. Well-embedded

management systems help to ensure that educational programmes offer a breadth of experiences to suit all children. Targeted action plans produced from thorough and extensive systems for monitoring and evaluation help to ensure that the nursery consistently strives for excellence. Staff are dedicated in their roles and go over and above expectations to extend their own skills to support individual children's needs. For example, staff have attended training sessions, alongside parents, outside of the working week, to ensure they are able to provide consistent support for children's needs and prepare them well for transitions. The nursery seeks, and acts on, feedback from other professionals, parents and children, and has taken steps to address recommendations raised at their last inspection. This helps staff to make positive changes that improve the outcomes for children's care and learning. Systems to support children with additional needs are very effective, and help to ensure parents, staff and other professionals work consistently to enable each child to reach their full potential.

Safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough, which helps to keep children safe. Comprehensive policies and procedures are made clear to staff through detailed inductions, supervision, training and meetings. This means that all those working with the children are confident to act promptly should they have any concerns. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures help ensure that only those whose suitability has been fully checked are left alone with children. Documentation is well organised and used very effectively to support children's ongoing welfare. Frequent monitoring of the accident records helps staff to quickly identify any patterns or aspects of safety that need immediate attention, to protect children's future well-being.

Parents state that they are exceptionally happy with the nursery and feel that their children receive high levels of support, make outstanding progress and have lots of fun. Parents value the commitment of staff to meeting children's individual needs, which helps parents to feel confident and relaxed that their children's needs are fully understood and met. Parents receive regular newsletters and information about all aspects of the provision. Daily diaries provide accurate and detailed information for parents about children's care routines and development, which helps to promote consistency. The nursery is proactive in establishing links with other early years settings and professionals involved in children's care, ensuring a cohesive approach to meeting children's all-round needs.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	139385
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	841359
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	63
Number of children on roll	143
Name of provider	Julie Partridge
Date of previous inspection	25/11/2008
Telephone number	01935 872544

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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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