

Inspection of Tavistock Montessori Pre-School

St. Peters Junior School, School Close, Greenlands, TAVISTOCK, Devon PL19 9HW

Inspection date: 26 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive happily and settle quickly in the care of the pre-school staff. They are secure in the routines staff provide. Children develop independence as they learn to hang up their own coats and help prepare a snack for the group. The manager has a clear ethos based on the 'Montessori' approach. Children learn how to make their own choices about learning and use natural resources. They concentrate as they pour water from a small jug into containers and use resources to learn about number patterns.

Staff build positive relationships with children and their families. While parents do not enter the building due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they comment on how well staff communicate with them about their children's learning. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities feel supported by the caring staff. They comment how delighted they are at the progress their children make. Staff celebrate children's learning and achievements with parents on collection.

Staff ensure younger children have plenty of time to settle in. They support them effectively, for example by providing resources that interest them. For instance, children enjoy playing with model tractors on a play farm. Children behave well. Older children enjoy learning to be part of a group and join in with singing and counting together. Staff engage with the children, tuning into their interests and talking with them about their ideas. Children learn to play cooperatively as they shop together in the role play garden centre. Staff encourage children to develop confidence and play socially together, for example when they share toy vehicles and play together with a garage and road mat.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The manager is proactive in developing the setting. She has completed training as a forest school leader and is developing the outdoor area for children to explore. Children enjoy looking at the bluebells growing and are fascinated by butterflies flying past. Children develop physically as they play in the large garden. They learn about safety as they ride around on balance bikes and challenge themselves to walk along a wooden balancing beam. Younger children delight in running and chasing each other around on the grass. They freely explore the space and benefit from plenty of exercise and fresh air.
- Staff interact with children effectively, helping to develop their language skills. They introduce new vocabulary as the children play with clay, using words such as 'slimy', 'sticky' and 'wet.' Staff teach songs through the day to accompany routines, such as tidying up. They read stories to children, who listen with attention and interest. Older children are enthusiastic as they join in with rhymes to help them learn about the initial sounds in words. Staff identify where some

children need further help to develop their speech. They liaise with parents to discuss any gaps in learning and identify ways to help children make progress.

- Staff encourage children to make marks during their play, such as writing shopping lists and creating their own drawings. Children develop good hand-eye coordination as staff patiently wait for them to develop their cutting skills using scissors. Children learn to recognise their own name on their coat peg, and staff provide examples of writing around the room to engage children's interest. However, sometimes staff are not sufficiently precise in planning the curriculum to match children's individual stages of development. For example, staff encourage some younger children to trace their name before they are fully confident in handling a pencil.
- Staff liaise with other professionals to support individual children. They work closely with parents to help children learn skills, such as using a toilet independently. Staff make links with future schools that children will attend to ensure a smooth transition for children.
- The manager ensures all staff complete essential training to fulfil their roles in keeping children safe. She has also completed recent training for her role as the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator. The manager provides supervision sessions for staff to reflect on their practice. However, there are not always sufficient opportunities for staff to build on their existing good skills and knowledge, to develop a more consistent and secure understanding of how to meet children's individual needs. For example, staff provide children with interesting and varied opportunities to learn about numbers, but occasionally they do not ensure that children are secure in their understanding of counting before inviting them to recognise numerals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff all attend safeguarding training and have a good understanding about what to do if they have any concerns that children may be at risk of harm. The staff know how to identify wider safeguarding matters and how to deal with any allegations against staff. Staff have appropriate policies and procedures in place to support their practice. They complete risk assessments to ensure children learn to evacuate the building in case of fire. They talk to children about how to stay safe near a road as they walk to the outside area.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop the planning of the curriculum further, particularly in developing the sequencing of children's skills in early writing to help all children make even more progress

- provide further support and coaching for all staff to further develop their skills and knowledge about the curriculum and areas of learning, to meet all children's individual needs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2533190
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10210690
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	14
Number of children on roll	16
Name of registered person	Tavistock Montessori Pre-School CIC
Registered person unique reference number	2533189
Telephone number	01822 613927
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Tavistock Montessori Pre-School registered in 2019 and operates from a site at St Peters Junior School in Tavistock, Devon. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday, 9.15am to 3.45pm, during term time only. There are three members of staff, all of whom hold early years childcare qualifications at level 3. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The setting follows the Montessori approach.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Stephanie Wright

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector spoke with the manager and staff and completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to talk about the ethos and curriculum of the setting.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents to receive feedback about the setting.
- The inspector spoke with the children as they played, indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector reviewed documentation held, including staff suitability checks and training certificates.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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