

Inspection of Lower Covey Montessori Nursery

Chapel Lane, Yetminster, SHERBORNE, Dorset DT9 6LJ

Inspection date: 28 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are excited and happy when they arrive, eager to explore the inviting environment and highly motivated to find out what experiences are planned for the day. Through expert support, even children new to the setting soon settle when they become engrossed in their chosen activities. For example, following on from the children's favourite story, toddlers are eager to help make crumble, extending their physical and communication skills through sensory experiences. Two-year-olds demonstrate amazing concentration as they enthusiastically recall which toy is missing when one is removed from a group. They remain at the activity, taking turns and keen to do it again.

Staff skilfully provide outstanding support for children to consider what they want to achieve and how they are going to achieve it. For example, older children pull a bucket to the top of a pole. As they add items to the bucket it gets heavier and heavier. Through trial and error, they work out what else they need to do. Staff expertly question children, giving them enough time to think and respond, helping them to recall what did and did not work last time. Children persevere and are extremely delighted when they succeed. When they manage by working together, they chant their mantra of 'teamwork is dreamwork'.

Parents do not go into the premises as they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they cannot speak highly enough about the outstanding communication. Parents confirm how rapidly their children are developing since starting at the nursery. They appreciate the expert support and advice when they have any concerns about their children's development.

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

- The management team plan an ambitious curriculum that has high expectations for every child. They continually evaluate and monitor their provision, actively seeking parents,' children's and staff's views. They are constantly evolving the environment to give children an ever increasing, extensive range of learning experiences. Managers have a strong emphasis on providing children with the best start possible for their lifelong learning. This is shared and implemented highly successfully by their dedicated staff.
- The owner provides high staff ratios to ensure the daily routines do not interrupt children's learning experiences and all children receive excellent support. The owner, manager and deputy are supported by an administration team, enabling them to work directly with the children and provide outstanding role models for staff.
- Managers and staff provide a highly inclusive setting. They work extremely well with families to know precisely how to meet their individual needs. There is

exemplary support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Managers go above and beyond to ensure they have the same excellent opportunities. For example, they have sought pioneering technology and provided resources to help children, having to isolate, to interact with their nursery peers.

- Staff use their meticulous observations and strong partnerships with parents to know the children extremely well. Their interaction and support for children's next stages of learning are consistently of a very high standard. Throughout the nursery, staff concentrate on embedding children's key areas of development to underpin all their knowledge and skills. For example, staff talk to babies, making eye contact and using facial expressions. They recast toddlers attempts at words to help them hear the correct pronunciations. Staff add to children's vocabulary, such as helping older children express how they feel as exhausted. They use books and songs extremely well, encouraging children to remember and embed their learning.
- Children become highly independent learners. The extremely enabling environment supports their confidence in making choices and developing inquisitive minds. Children ask and answer questions, persevere with tasks and have excellent attitudes to learning new skills. For example, two-year-olds try their hardest to cut a muffin, staff acknowledge 'it is tricky but keep trying'. Children eventually manage, raising their arms and declaring 'yes', obviously happy with their achievements.
- Children have excellent daily opportunities to be outdoors and develop very healthy lifestyles. They learn to take care of the menagerie of animals as well as themselves. They grow produce and use it to understand where food comes from. Staff carry out very hygienic practices, such as nappy changing, and follow babies' routines to help them feel secure.
- Managers place a strong emphasis on the emotional well-being of their staff, children, and families. There are highly positive relationships throughout the nursery. Staff sensitively support children to manage their own feelings, such as knowing that we all get sad or angry sometimes and how to manage that, without upsetting or hurting others. Managers are alert to any pressures on their staff and provide outstanding support to have a happy healthy workforce, which has an extremely positive impact on children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have an excellent knowledge of their safeguarding policies and procedures. They embed safeguarding in everything they do. Staff know what to be aware of and who to contact with any concerns if children were at risk of harm. They understand their responsibilities regarding wider aspects of safeguarding children and work extremely well with parents, such as being aware of internet safety. Children have outstanding opportunities to manage safe risks and learn to assess them for themselves. For example, they identify and manage the risks at forest school, such as ditches and using tools.

Setting details

Unique reference number	139385
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10125820
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 5
Total number of places	63
Number of children on roll	291
Name of registered person	Partridge, Julie
Registered person unique reference number	RP513033
Telephone number	01935 488215
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2014

Information about this early years 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 nursery is open Monday to Friday all year round from 8am until 6pm, including a before- and after-school club for children up to 11 years. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years old. The owner holds a level 6 qualification in childcare. She employs two deputy managers, one of whom holds early years professional status and the other a foundation degree. Three staff are Montessori trained, 12 staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and three staff hold level 2 qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Elaine Douglas

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 managers led the inspector on a walk around the setting to discuss their curriculum and the safety of the premises.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with one of the managers.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, spoke with staff, and assessed the effectiveness of safeguarding and care procedures.
- The inspector held a leadership and management discussion with the managers and sampled documentation.
- The inspector spoke with several parents and children at the inspection, and read written feedback left for the inspector, and took account of their views.

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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