

Inspection of Townsend Montessori @ Maidstone

Townsend Montessori, Priory Road, Maidstone ME15 6NL

Inspection date: 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff warmly greet children as they arrive, which helps children to settle well. Children are excited to begin their day at nursery. They have strong bonds with their key person and familiar staff, who know them extremely well. Staff are good role models for children and encourage them to learn the behavioural expectations. Children learn to be kind, caring and thoughtful towards each other. Children learn about healthy eating and develop independence as they are encouraged to put on coats, pour drinks and serve themselves at mealtimes. Staff remind children to wash their hands and help them to understand about the importance of good personal hygiene.

Children benefit from accessing a broad curriculum. The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for children to develop and practise their physical skills. For example, younger children are encouraged to move safely around furniture to help develop their early walking and balancing skills. Older children are motivated to take part in activities to build on their large motor skills. They carefully climb up the steps of the climbing frame, and they walk, balance and jump over small objects as part of an obstacle course. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills, take turns, share and listen to each other. For example, children use different-sized containers to pour and transport sand and talk about how the sand feels on their hands.

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

- Staff provide a curriculum that follows children's interests. They know children extremely well, including what they can do and what they want them to learn next. Staff carefully use their observations and knowledge of their key children to help them to plan activities to build on children's skills. Staff complete the progress check at age two and make regular assessments to enable them to successfully assess children's development and identify any gaps in their learning. Consequently, children make good progress.
- The knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is extremely passionate about supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The SENCo works very closely alongside staff, parents, and other professionals to ensure that children's care and learning needs are consistently met. For example, she ensures there is effective communication with other settings children attend and that individual plans are consistent. This supports children to achieve their full potential in relation to their capabilities.
- The manager shows a good commitment to the professional development of the team. Staff regularly meet with leaders for supervision meetings. This helps to support staff's practice and identify any additional training to support their professional development. The manager places a high priority on the well-being

of staff. As a result, staff feel valued, supported, and enjoy working at the nursery.

- Overall, staff work effectively to develop children's communication and language skills. For example, staff model language well. They regularly sing songs, introduce new words to younger children and read stories with enthusiasm. Staff support children who speak English as an additional language effectively. They use words in children's home language to help develop their ability to communicate their needs and build on their understanding of new words. Children respond well to staff's interactions and are eager to take part in new activities. However, at times, during some adult-led activities, children are not always given sufficient time to respond to questions. This means that, at times, some children do not have opportunities to build on their thinking skills.
- Parents speak positively about the nursery. They are extremely happy with the level of communication from staff about their children's learning experiences. Parents comment that they feel their child's key person knows their children very well, and they receive personal feedback about their progress. Parents state that their children are making good progress in their development due to the support they receive at the nursery.
- Children learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are offered healthy meals and have plenty of access to fresh air and physical exercise. However, during parts of the day when children move between activities, such as during lunchtime and when going outdoors, the routine is not always well organised to meet children's needs. At times, children are waiting too long and become restless, and their learning is not fully maximised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and how they would raise concerns about a child's welfare. Staff are aware of the whistle-blowing policy and know how to escalate any safeguarding concerns. The manager and designated lead for safeguarding understand the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff. The provider follows safer recruitment procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff complete regular fire evacuation drills to ensure staff and children know what to do in the event of an emergency.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff's interactions with children to allow them more time to respond to questions and further develop their thinking and communication skills

- review and improve the organisation of the daily routine to avoid unnecessary waiting and ensure children's individual needs are consistently supported.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY477930
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10314694
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	146
Name of registered person	Townsend Montessori Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP906980
Telephone number	01622 765817
Date of previous inspection	29 January 2019

Information about this early years setting

Townsend Montessori @ Maidstone registered in 2014. It is located in Maidstone, Kent. The setting is open Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6.30pm, all year round. It receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The setting employs 29 members of staff, 18 of whom hold relevant early years qualifications at level 2 or above. This includes three members of staff who hold a qualification at level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicky Chambers

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager carried out joint observations with the inspector.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Parents shared their views through verbal feedback. The inspector took these views into account.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation. This included evidence of suitability.

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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