

Inspection of Clacton Montessori Day Nursery & Preschool

22 Thoroughgood Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 6DD

Inspection date: 5 January 2024

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

The manager and her team have a good knowledge of the children attending. They have a comprehensive understanding of what the children can do, and understand what they need to achieve next. The staff provide children with a range of learning opportunities within the curriculum. Activities cover all areas of learning and deliver the principles of Montessori teaching while following the children's interests. Staff provide children with interesting, fun environments, both indoors and outdoors, in which to learn. Children make good progress.

Staff are gentle in their approach to the children. Children are spoken to with respect and staff are genuinely kind and reassuring. They teach children the skills they need for successful future learning and transition to school. The Montessori principle of providing an enabling environment where children have autonomy, and encouraging them to make decisions for themselves, is embedded in daily practice. For example, play is not interrupted. Children can select quality resources to support their play from low shelving, displayed to inspire them to investigate. They learn the skills they need to become independent learners. Staff support children to regulate their emotions and are sensitive towards their feelings. They guide children to make the right choices. Children understand the high expectations and their behaviour is good.

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

- The staff team invest time in getting to know the children and the family and understand the importance of professional but friendly working partnerships. They are committed to providing parents with a variety of opportunities and information to support their child's learning at home. For example, stay-and-play sessions are routinely organised. Workshops and training sessions are planned for parents. A lending library and home learning packs are popular and contribute to positive working relationships.
- Partnerships with parents are effective. Parents speak exceptionally highly of the staff and all aspects of the nursery. They comment that the 'brilliant' nursery has offered their children the 'best start in life'. They are assured their children are happy, settled and receiving good care to meet their individual needs.
- Staff have established effective links with outside agencies to support children who may require additional help. They also have a positive attitude towards training, including mandatory safeguarding training, as they are aware of the importance training has to improve outcomes for children. There is a culture of self-evaluation. The manager routinely monitors her staff's practice, supporting staff through supervisions and appraisals. All staff speak of feeling valued. A robust recruitment process and induction programme ensure staff are suitable for their role.

- Children are settled and happy and demonstrate that they are confident and feel secure in their environment. They engage visitors to the nursery in their play. They enjoy being creative and explain how they need to use glue to stick the collage materials. They offer 'cups of tea' as they use the role-play props and enjoy impromptu singing. Mathematical language is used throughout their play. For example, they are encouraged to count, compare size and discuss shapes. Simple sums and numbers are used as they sing along to familiar songs.
- Children have established secure and trusting relationships with their key person. They are taught how to take care of their personal needs. They learn the importance of fresh air and exercise and the need to keep warm when playing outdoors. Children relish snack time. They peel fruit and are competent using knives to chop a variety of fruits of their choice. Children learn the importance of staying safe when using tools during activities, for example wearing goggles and footwear during carpentry activities.
- The quality of teaching and staff's interactions are good. The curriculum is planned around all areas of learning and based on children's interests. However, the curriculum is not consistently challenging and, sometimes, staff do not help children to build on what they already know and extend their knowledge to an even higher level.
- Staff engage children in meaningful conversation and provide running commentaries during activities. They have a clear comprehension of how children develop their conversation skills, and introduce new words to challenge children's ability to communicate and increase their vocabulary. However, on some occasions, staff often provide the solution to a problem and are not consistent when asking questions to encourage children to think critically and problem-solve for themselves.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- plan more opportunities within the curriculum to challenge children's thinking, to consistently build on what they already know and can do
- consistently use effective questioning techniques to extend children's language, help them think critically and solve problems independently.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY461712
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10311855
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	1 to 3
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	48
Name of registered person	Clacton Montessori Day Nursery & Preschool Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP902411
Telephone number	01255433339
Date of previous inspection	12 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Clacton Montessori Day Nursery & Preschool registered in 2020. The nursery follows the Montessori approach to learning. The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens on Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 setting.
- The inspector, manager and early years manager completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum and what the team wants the children to learn.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at the inspection.
- Parents provided the inspectors with written and verbal feedback.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and managers. The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including the safeguarding procedures and evidence of the suitability of staff members.

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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