

Inspection of Secret Garden Montessori

100 High Street, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1AH

Inspection date: 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The curriculum is well designed, with a strong focus on supporting children's personal, social and emotional development and their communication and language skills. Toddlers develop their own stories, building on their knowledge about Arctic animals. They tell the journey of a polar bear family, using different voices and intonation. Children reach, balance and climb confidently to re-enact the journey. They test their ideas to 'rescue' the polar bears successfully.

Older babies are confident to explore the inviting environment. They take their shoes off and step into the tray to feel the different textures. They listen to the ongoing commentary from staff. This helps them to build their vocabulary, for example, as they 'wrap' the sheep in tissue paper. Older babies make it known when they are unhappy about having oats on their feet and staff acknowledge their feelings, helping them to name their emotions. Staff help them to resolve the problem. Older babies listen well and decide to brush the oats from their feet with their hands before putting their shoes back on.

Older children immerse themselves in their imaginative play, developing roles and ideas with their friends. They communicate their ideas well, such as to use red, blue, and yellow chalks to draw the flames on the fence, and take turns well. Children use tools and equipment purposefully, such as to collect water or to fill syringes to put out the fire, working collaboratively.

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

- All staff are actively involved in planning a broad range of opportunities based on children's interests. Staff have a good knowledge of how children learn, and understand the importance of children rehearsing and repeating their learning before developing more-complex skills. For example, children learn to construct with wooden blocks before they explore more-complex three-dimensional shapes. On occasion, staff do not fully deliver the intended learning, such as to explore animal sounds using the chosen resources in a focused activity.
- Leaders and managers empower staff to develop their chosen roles and reflect well on their practice. Leaders and managers provide effective support for staff's emotional well-being and welfare. Staff receive good opportunities to share and develop their professional skills.
- Staff carefully consider the learning environment, ensuring that it is welcoming and encourages children to make independent choices. Staff are skilled in the Montessori approach and their positive interactions support children's learning. Children show motivation as they choose an activity, learning to place their mat on the floor. Staff interact well, providing new vocabulary to help children to identify the different animals and where they may live. Staff help children to

recall what they know and build on their own life experiences.

- Toddlers are excited to share a favourite book, 'Dear Zoo'. They engage well, predicting the animals and lifting the flaps. Staff encourage them to demonstrate how they think the animals will sound, and children receive praise for their attempts. However, children's learning is interrupted for handwashing and some children miss out on the end of the activity.
- Staff use their recent training exceedingly well to promote calm and respectful one-to-one time when changing young children's nappies. Young children and babies are fully engaged, build relationships and communicate with their special person.
- There are clear routines throughout the nursery to help children to feel happy and settled. For example, children enjoy a group welcome song, where the youngest children learn each other's names and build a sense of self. Familiar staff know the children exceptionally well. For example, they know which special comforters children use to help them to self-soothe and the signs for when they need these. Staff cuddle babies and reassure them when there are unfamiliar adults in the room, such as the inspector.
- Children learn to be respectful of each other's choices, which staff model well. Staff provide gentle reminders for children to ask if they want to join a friend in their chosen play. Staff manage minor refusals to play collaboratively, with good explanation, distraction, and redirection for their learning. Children begin to understand that once they finish with an activity they need to put it away, developing a good understanding of expectations.
- Children gain very good independence as they learn to dress themselves for outdoor play, change into slippers, and wipe their own noses and faces using a mirror for guidance. Older children serve themselves at lunchtime, pour their own drinks, and refill the water jug from the tap.
- Staff understand and follow the nursery's policies and procedures very efficiently to keep children safe and healthy. For example, staff gather relevant information from parents to ensure that they administer and record medication accurately. Staff use risk assessments to provide children with a safe and secure space to play and learn. Staff take time to teach children about assessing potential risks around them and help them to manage these, such as using and carrying resources safely.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that put 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:

- use all available resources more consistently to support babies' and young children's learning in focused activities
- review the organisation and timeliness of group activities to enable children to focus on their learning without interruption.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY536199
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10326427
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	33
Number of children on roll	55
Name of registered person	Secret Garden Montessori Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP536198
Telephone number	07948556830
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2018

Information about this early years setting

Secret Garden Montessori registered in 2016. It operates from premises in Nailsea, North Somerset. The nursery opens daily from 8am until 6pm, for 48 weeks of the year. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The owner/manager holds an International Diploma in Montessori Pedagogy. She employs 16 staff, many of whom have Montessori teacher qualifications. Four staff hold qualified teacher status, one holds an early years qualification at level 4, six hold level 3 qualifications, and two hold qualifications at level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rachael Williams

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 deputy manager, room leads, and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke with parents and children during the inspection and considered their views.
- The inspector observed staff interactions with children and assessed the impact that the quality of education was having on children's learning.
- The inspector conducted professional discussions with the leaders and managers, the special educational needs coordinator, and the designated safeguarding lead.
- A sample of documentation was viewed and discussed.

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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