

Little Orchard Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Heather Morgan
Setting address	Recreation Hall, Palstone Park, Exeter Road, South Brent, Devon, TQ10 9JP
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Little Orchard Montessori Nursery has been registered and run by its existing owners since September 2005. The nursery operates from Palstone Park recreation hall in the village of South Brent and has sole use of the premises during opening hours. The premises include a room for play, a kitchen, associated facilities and an enclosed garden area. The nursery is open during school term times from 9.00am until 3.30pm on Mondays to Thursdays. It is registered on the Early Years Register and cares for children aged two to five years, following Montessori methods. There are currently 20 children on roll. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who learn English as an additional language. There are currently four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The nursery is a member of Montessori Education United Kingdom and the Montessori Schools Association. It is accredited by the Montessori Education Accreditation Board.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The highly skilled team of staff know each child extremely well, and consequently they provide a wide range of activities that effectively promotes children's learning and development. The nursery provides children with a very safe, secure learning environment and many opportunities to make independent choices about their play, overall. There is an excellent partnership between the nursery, parents and other professionals, which ensures that all children are supported exceptionally well in achieving their full potential. Staff regularly reflect on their own practice, and canvass the views of others in order to effectively drive improvement and ensure they are providing and sustaining high quality care and education for all children attending the nursery.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- providing further opportunities for children to make independent choices between indoor and outdoor play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children settle very well in the safe, secure environment provided by the nursery. Robust recruitment procedures and regular training ensure that all staff working with the children are suitable and very knowledgeable about protecting children from harm. A wide range of clear, comprehensive procedures is implemented effectively to ensure the health and safety of the children attending.

The staff team work really well together, under the strong leadership of the manager. They regularly reflect on their practice and constantly seek ways to improve the service they provide. This strong commitment to improvement includes listening to the views of children, parents and other professionals, and attending regular training to renew and update their knowledge. They have a genuine openness to trying out new ideas, which has regularly led to significant improvements in the way they support children's welfare, learning and development. For example, they have introduced a discreet, quiet area which children use regularly to rest or enjoy a peaceful moment away from the rest of the group. Rigorous self-evaluation results in ongoing action plans to drive improvement. For example, despite introducing two-way radio transceivers to enable staff to offer children opportunities to make independent choices about playing outdoors, the team are still unable to provide free access between the indoor and outdoor environment throughout the day.

Staff are deployed effectively throughout the session and are skilled in supporting children's independently initiated play activities. They use open-ended questions to encourage children to work things out for themselves, and introduce new ideas to stimulate children's play. Staff introduce simple yoga movement when children show an interest in exercise, and help children make 'hospital appointments' when they use the role play area to explore the role of a midwife. Careful planning, based on close observation of children's interests and achievements, further supports the staff in ensuring that each child is making very good progress in their learning and development.

The learning environment is attractively presented each day, with the wide range of well-maintained resources easily accessible at child height. Many of the resources reflect the Montessori approach of the setting and support children in developing specific skills over a period. Staff interact sensitively with the children and particular care is taken to ensure that the younger ones are supported fully when they first start at the nursery .

The nursery has developed excellent partnerships with parents, who highly value the care and support their children receive, and the particular attention paid to each child's individual needs. Effective and regular communication between the nursery and parents ensures that everyone works together to support the children in achieving their full potential. Excellent partnerships with other professionals and early years providers also enables the nursery to nurture children with additional

needs and to support a smooth transition to school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children enter the nursery eagerly and with great enthusiasm. They confidently choose from the wide range of resources available to them, and quickly settle to activities that engage their interests well. They form very good relationships with one another and with familiar staff. They are very skilled at negotiation, enabling some to play co-operatively and enjoy group tasks as well as individual endeavours. Resources include items such as glassware and crockery, which children handle safely and with due care. They have a strong awareness of keeping themselves and others safe, and quickly notify an adult if they notice a potential hazard. For example, when playing in the construction area a child comes across a broken plastic brick and immediately gives it to a member of staff, asking her to fix it. Children handle knives and scissors carefully, which enables them to be very independent. For example, they prepare their own fruit at snack time and open commercial packaging on items from their lunch box.

Children develop very good health and hygiene habits, reminding each other to wash their hands at appropriate times, and taking responsibility for choosing when to have a snack or a drink. They make some independent choices about playing outdoors and choose to take physical exercise indoors, particularly during wet weather. They enjoy nature walks in the local woodland and dress up in boots and waterproof clothing to play in the garden even when it is raining.

Children are supported very well by staff who sensitively guide their play. Children engage in lively conversations and participate in the routines of the day. For example, they demonstrate their secure awareness of number as they help staff count the number of children who remain indoors whilst others are playing outside, and learn that this helps to keep them safe. Their complex conversations also show their developing understanding of the world and their environment. They talk about changes between the previous school term and this one or discuss and negotiate how to develop role play and construction when working together. They describe how high they want towers to be, and how close they should be to each other. They include others in their imaginary play by allocating different roles to children that join them. All this helps establish extremely firm foundations for their future learning.

There is a strong sense of community within the nursery and children's behaviour is very good. They are familiar with the daily routines and participate willingly in tidying away and caring for their resources. Each child is supported according to their individual need and stage of development, because the staff know them so well and communicate effectively with their parents. Children and staff enjoy sharing their traditions and festivals with one another. Children's home languages are acknowledged and celebrated as they also develop their confidence in expressing themselves in English.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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