

The Montessori Place

45 Cromwell Road, HOVE, East Sussex, BN3 3ER

Inspection date	17/06/2013
Previous inspection date	12/12/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children have exemplary opportunities to be independent, make decisions and take responsibility for what they do.
- Staff have exceptional skills in assessing children's engagement in activities and their achievements, and planning for their future learning. Children make rapid progress as a result.
- Leaders and managers have an inspirational approach to their work, using Montessori educational methods to bring about excellent outcomes for children.
- Children show exceptionally good behaviour. They are polite, thoughtful and considerate as a result of the strong focus on 'grace and courtesy'.
- Staff have highly effective methods for judging when children are ready to move on to the next stage in their learning, which means that any transition within the setting appears seamless.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children in the Infant Community and the Children's House.
- The inspector discussed assessment and planning methods with the head in each room.
- The inspector met with parents to gather their views.
- The inspector and head of the Infant Community discussed practice seen in a joint observation.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation and policies, including those for safeguarding children, recording accidents and information for parents.

Inspector

Susan McCourt

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Montessori Place is a privately owned nursery and school setting. Of the three directors, two work in the early years provision. It opened in 2011 and operates from a converted house in Hove, East Sussex. There are two main areas dedicated to early years children in the Infant Community and the Children's House. The Children's House also has children aged five and six years. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday from 8.45am to 3.30pm during term time only. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 26 children aged from one year to under five years on roll. The setting supports children with English as an additional language. There are seven members of staff working directly with the early years children, one of whom has Early Years Professional Status and five have the AMI Montessori Diploma. The setting operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the information given to parents by including information in the handbook about how the setting manages risk.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff have an exemplary understanding of how children learn and develop. They provide varied and imaginative activities which demonstrate their expert knowledge of the areas of learning. Staff have consistently high expectations of children and use highly effective methods to engage them in purposeful play. As a result, children show high levels of fascination and complete absorption in their chosen activities.

Staff have exemplary teaching skills. Activities are carefully laid out on individual trays or boxes around the room for children to self-select and take to a table or appropriate area. For example, a tray may contain a bowl with oranges, a juicer and a jug, or a water-spray, cloths and a window-wiper. Staff make careful presentations to children to show them how the equipment works so that children understand how to use it effectively. Children can then carry out the activity on their own and develop their skills for as long as the activity holds their attention. In this way, children play for lengthy periods and are completely absorbed in what they are doing. Staff have exceptional skills in observing

children at play and making expertly judged interventions. In this way, they notice if children need to have the presentation again, or just need another child to give them a little support. Children independently gain an excellent ability to estimate size and space. They judge where in the room is sufficient space for them to play and judge where equipment will fit back on the shelf. Children explore shape and measurement using well-crafted resources, helping them to see how triangles can make squares and hexagons. Children have excellent communication skills and demonstrate a mature use of vocabulary and explanation. Children use a variety of technological equipment from apple corers to CD players, often initiating spontaneous group singing as children and staff gently join in with the songs played. Children benefit from being in a calm and purposeful atmosphere which helps them to concentrate on their chosen tasks.

Staff have exceptional skills in assessing children's development. They closely analyse how involved each and every child is in their activities throughout the session. They also assess the quality of the child's achievements to note emerging and secure skills. Staff use the information gained from this to expertly plan further activities for children to build on these skills. They can also assess when to introduce any new teaching because they have a secure understanding of when the child will be most receptive to their intervention. As a result, children make rapid progress given their starting points and capabilities. Staff write a summary of achievements for the child's check at age two. They write it as a series of vignettes which demonstrates key moments in the child's development and gives an excellent description of the child's attainments as an individual. Staff meet with parents every term to discuss the child's development and future plans so that they are working in a complementary partnership. The plans made as a result of the parent meeting and the regular pedagogical staff meetings build an individualised plan for every child. This exceptional focus on each and every child means that educational programmes are expertly tailored.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children have exemplary opportunities to be confident and well-settled. The leader of each community carries out a home visit to every child to give the partnership a very strong start. When children start, the group of children and staff members are consistent every day, which helps children to form a great sense of belonging. Children learn very quickly how to be independent as the underpinning philosophy of the staff is to facilitate the drawing out of the child's individuality. As a result, children quickly take charge of their belongings, their actions and learn to be part of a community. The learning environment is highly effective at supporting children's independence. Children always have everything they need within easy reach and staff are on hand to give support only when the child really needs it. In this way, children independently gather, use and put away any activity they choose, and they are continually absorbed in high quality play. Resources are of excellent quality, and staff regularly include items which are inherently beautiful, as well as useful, for children's enjoyment and appreciation. The outdoor learning environment is arranged to the same very high standard and includes a lot of planting and opportunities to explore a natural environment.

Children benefit from exemplary opportunities to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Meals and snacks are prepared on site and are well-balanced and nutritious, using seasonal and organic produce. Children take a part in preparing food by chopping vegetables and juicing oranges for example. As children take a very authentic role in the setting, they help to prepare the tables and chairs at lunch time and have special roles in pouring drinks or helping with the food. Children have excellent hygiene habits as routines are so well established. As a result they are very independent in their self-care and personal hygiene. Children's physical development is extremely well fostered as they use their strength and dexterity to move chairs, steps and chairs, as well as carrying trays and using equipment. Children demonstrate an exceptional understanding of risk and how to manage their safety. Staff give very clear guidance about what children can do to keep safe, such as pointing out when water has been spilt. By using open questions such as 'what can we do about this?' children learn to take responsibility for mopping spills, carrying heavy items and leaving trays tidy. They also learn to manage more complex tasks such as handling appropriate knives. This gives the children exceptional skills.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff plan regular activities to help children learn about 'grace and courtesy'. As a result children learn to complete any task they have undertaken, show respect for their friend's work by not disturbing them and offer help to their friends. Children develop a very strong sense of their community and how they can work together. When the time comes to move up to the next community, children are aware that they are well-versed in the routines and activities and a source of help for younger children. This awareness of how they have grown as individuals helps them to make the move, as they understand that they have 'outgrown' their surroundings. Staff manage this move between communities exceptionally well as it is entirely geared around the child's readiness. Parents comment that the staff judge the exact day with great expertise, and that the children have all the skills they need in order to make this step to the next stage of their learning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leaders and managers provide inspirational leadership. They work as members of staff directly with children, which means their expertise and experience is of direct benefit to children, as well as being exemplary role models for staff. Leaders and managers have an excellent understanding of how to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements. All staff undergo rigorous checks to establish their suitability, and receive training in child protection. Policies and procedures, such as those for recording and monitoring any accidents or injuries, are detailed, and staff review and update them regularly to ensure their practice is up to date. This means they can respond immediately if they have any concerns about the welfare of a child. The staff team assess the risk of all activities, rooms and equipment and write procedures for staff to follow which supports children's safety. Staff expertly supervise children in all of their activities, while facilitating them to manage their safety within these strict guidelines. For example, they provide a science activity which involves young children lighting a candle using matches. This activity is only available to children who have been carefully assessed as having the required skills. Staff

also demonstrate the activity to the child until they are confident of the child's understanding. As a result, children are only exposed to activities that they can ably self-manage.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the requirements for learning and development. They provide an exceptionally enabling environment and monitor it closely. Leaders oversee the individual plans for each child and provide expert supervision and mentoring for staff. Leaders work with staff to support their skills in assessing children's learning and development and planning for their future learning. All staff constantly reflect on their practice which means they are exceptionally well-placed to spot any achievement gaps for children. Biannual appraisals identify staff's strengths and areas for development. A rigorous system of analysis of all aspects of the setting results in well-targeted action plans and drives continuous improvement. Ideas from parents, staff and children feed into action plans to ensure their partnership in the work of the setting.

Staff work in close partnership with other agencies and carers to give children highly consistent care. For example, home-carers and childminders attend open days and a rolling programme of learning sessions to develop their understanding of how the setting works. Learning sessions may cover aspects such as literacy or their approach to safety. As the vast majority of children stay on in the school, the partnership is extremely strong. Where children do leave to attend other schools, staff provide excellent transition documents and work closely with the school to support the child and family. Parents have exemplary opportunities to work in partnership with the setting. The family room at the entrance of the building provides a space for parents to meet and build their community links. Staff run courses for parents to experience activities as their child would, or work on wider parenting issues. Policies, information about Montessori ways of working and other literature are available on the website and in other formats, so parents can easily access any information they need. However, the parent handbook does not describe the setting's approach to managing safety, which can affect parents' understanding of this issue and the impact on children. Parents value this close partnership very highly, with many of them stating that it facilitates family life. For example, they see their children are extremely skilled in self-care, which builds their trust in the child and the setting.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY428014
Local authority	Brighton & Hove
Inspection number	919962
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	1 - 5
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	50
Name of provider	The Montessori Place Limited
Date of previous inspection	12/12/2011
Telephone number	01273773764

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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