

# The Montessori Nursery School Day Care of Children

Church of The Good Shepherd (Hall)  
Murrayfield Avenue  
Edinburgh  
EH12 6AU

Telephone: 0131 346 8921 (term time)

**Type of inspection:**

Unannounced

**Completed on:**

19 November 2018

**Service provided by:**

Patricia Thornton

**Service provider number:**

SP2017989234

**Service no:**

CS2017358695

## About the service

This service registered with the care inspectorate on 22 December 2017. The nursery was previously registered with the Care inspectorate, a change of provider (owner) resulted in a re-registration. As such this is the first inspection of the nursery.

The Montessori Nursery School is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 25 children aged from two and a half years to entry to primary school age. The care service shall operate between the hours of 08:15 to 15:00, Monday to Friday, during term time only.

Currently the Montessori Nursery School operates from 8:15 to 15:00 Monday to Thursday and 8:15 to 12:30 on Fridays.

The nursery is located in the Murrayfield area of Edinburgh and operates from a church hall in a residential street.

The Montessori nursery school follows the principles of Maria Montessori. This approach is based on "the child's developmental needs for freedom within limits and a carefully prepared environment which guarantees exposure to materials and experiences which develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities".

The aims of the service include "Our main aim at The Montessori Nursery school is to provide all the children in our care with the best possible start to their education in a safe, friendly, caring and stimulating environment. The nursery school operates on the principle of equal opportunities for all, welcomes children of any race or religion and children with disabilities/additional needs. We are committed to tackling discrimination of any kind and to promoting good race relations".

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives. The Care Inspectorate has an important role to play in supporting this approach in inspecting care services for children.

The Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. It is a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people. The approach helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and how they can act to deliver these improvements. Getting it right for every child is being threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and their families.

## What people told us

Thirteen Care Standard Questionnaires were sent to the service to give to parents and carers. Six completed questionnaires were returned to us prior to the inspection. Written comments included:

- "The Montessori Nursery is a wonderful environment for young children, creating a calming, nurturing environment where children can foster their own pace of development. We love it"

- "The Montessori Nursery School is such a lovely place. Both my children are really looked after in this peaceful but also stimulating environment. All the teachers are very helpful, always happy and there to support the new learning experiences of all the children. A hidden gem".

- "Staff at the Montessori are absolutely lovely, so caring and conscientious. We always feel confident that our child is being well supported both emotionally and intellectually. The staff are great at encouraging individual interests of the children and making topics out of these for all the children to explore. Our child is always happy to go to nursery".

During the inspection we spoke to were very happy with the service provided. They told us:

- "The nursery is very good, staff are friendly and my child is happy".
- "The nursery is great. I love that the staff are Montessori trained. There are opportunities to come in and observe your child in the nursery environment. A lot of information is shared through parents evening where you learn how the classroom is set up and why and your child's own file".
- "There is lots on offer at the nursery that they might not get elsewhere".
- "I am excited about parents night, learning more about Montessori and seeing my child's folder".

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. We have made comments about this in the report.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

|                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Quality of care and support          | 5 - Very Good |
| Quality of environment               | 5 - Very Good |
| Quality of staffing                  | 5 - Very Good |
| Quality of management and leadership | 5 - Very Good |

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

Staff knew children in their care very well. They had positive relationships with families which enabled them to support them and their child. Staff encouraged links between the nursery and home, parents were invited to come into nursery to share their skills and knowledge. Social days were held for current and past families to build relationships and communities.

Children were nurtured by staff in a calm and respectful manner. Staff were constantly observing children and were ready to offer appropriate support when needed. This was empowering for children as they were autonomous in their play and supported in a way which scaffolded their learning.

All children had individual learning plans based on the Montessori philosophy. These were very in depth and evidenced where each child was in their learning. Next steps in learning were planned for each child and all staff were aware of what they were. This meant that opportunities were available for children to progress in their learning. Detailed transition records were provided for each child as they moved on to school.

In addition all children had personal plans which recorded their personal preferences, likes and dislikes. Information was gathered from parents when children started using the service and regularly updated in consultation with parents. This meant that parents were continuously involved in their child's learning.

Through the Montessori approach, children were encouraged to be independent and were supported to regulate their emotions and relationships with others. We observed that children were very positive in their interactions with others and independent in self help skills.

Children with additional support needs (ASN) and their families were supported by staff. Staff worked in close partnership with families and external agencies to support positive outcomes for children. This meant that they were fully aware of how they could support children.

Where children had allergies, staff were aware of them and appropriate procedures were in place. We discussed with the manager and staff how they could improve on the storage of medication to make it more accessible. We signposted them to "The management of medication in daycare and childminding services", available on the Care Inspectorate website, The Hub.

Children's health and well being was contributed to through a varied and healthy snack and opportunities for outdoor play on a daily basis. Children were reminded and encouraged to wash their hands appropriately. Through different activities children learnt about the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The nursery operated from a church hall. The hall was a secure and clean, well maintained environment. There was a large playroom, kitchen, storage room, children and staff toilets. The nursery had a calm atmosphere, contributed to by staff and mirrored by children.

The nursery had their own dedicated outdoor spaces, one which had direct access from the playroom and another green outdoor space where children planted vegetables and had opportunities for large physical play. There were a variety of natural, open ended resources to spark children's imagination and curiosity.

The environment was set up in a purposeful and structured way with opportunities for children to also take part in free-flow and role play. There were a wide range of Montessori resources, set up in the Montessori way for children to work through. In addition there were a range of natural resources, creative resources such as paint, dressing up clothes and fiction and non fiction books. All of the resources were of a high quality and beautifully presented. All tables had vases of flowers or plants on them. Throughout the inspection we saw that all children were engaged in meaningful activity alone or with friends.

The afternoon wrap around sessions provided a range of different opportunities for children. Each day the afternoon had a different theme; art club, baking, music, nature club, creativity and movement and drama. As all children did not attend the afternoon sessions, staff tried to ensure that all children also had an opportunity to take part in these activities in the morning.

The nursery accessed the local woodland to provide outdoor learning opportunities for children. One staff member was particularly interested in outdoor learning and was keen to increase the opportunities available to children.

The nursery had a home corner out twice a week, on other days they had music and material for dance, yoga and role play. We discussed with the manager considering having a home corner every day as the home corner can offer many opportunities for children. This included providing familiarity for new children settling in to the nursery, as well as opportunities for children to act out real life experiences. The manager said that she would discuss this within the staff team as they were always looking into ways to make improvements to the environment, including increasing the technology within the nursery.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

The owner was also the manager. Before becoming the owner she had managed the nursery for three years.

The manager was in the process of completing the Montessori Diploma. One staff member had a qualification in Montessori practice. The other staff member had worked in a Montessori setting for many years and had undergone training in Montessori. Staff were professional, knowledgeable and very enthusiastic.

The manager and staff members had formed as a team, sharing their philosophy and ensuring continuity of care and provision for the children. They played on each others strengths and supported each other well to provide a quality service for children.

The children's well being was at the heart of everything the staff team did. They knew the children in their care well and planned for their individual learning.

We sampled staff files and saw that safer recruitment processes had been followed, this contributed to children being safe. Appraisals had been carried out regularly with staff since they had started the job, we saw that staff had contributed to this and identified their training needs.

Staff had attended a variety of training to increase their knowledge and improve outcomes for children. This included training about additional support needs, City of Edinburgh council training, as well as mandatory training like First aid and Child Protection. All of this contributed to improving outcomes for children.

Two staff care service questionnaires were sent. Two were returned, staff were very positive about the nursery and with the "high professional standards", they said that "management was accessible and encouraged staff participation in improving standards" and that "continuing professional development was encouraged".

Team meetings were held on a regular basis and were recorded. These detailed records of their conversations about children and plans for the week. This evidenced how staff anticipated the future care and learning needs of children which led to children receiving appropriate care and support.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

The manager had received training from the City Of Edinburgh Council to support her in completing the Standards and Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP). This demonstrated how the service planned to make improvements to outcomes for children. This was shared with parents and updated when progress was made. We discussed with the manager the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle of improvement to ensure that improvements worked and were imbedded in practice. The manager was keen to try this.

All policies were available for parents. This meant that parents were aware of how the service operated. Parents were kept up to date with what was happening within the nursery through daily feedback and emailed weekly newsletters. The manager told us that they had received positive feedback from parents about the newsletters as these could be shared with parents who worked away and grandparents.

Information nights were held for parents to learn about the Montessori practice. This allowed them to see and experience how the Montessori resources were used. Parents told us that they found these evenings very useful and informative. In addition parents could observe their child during a session. Parents nights were held twice a year for parents to speak to staff about their child, in addition to annual reports and settling in reports. This kept parents informed and involved in their child's learning and development.

Questionnaires were given to parents annually to gain their feedback on the service. Most of the responses were very positive about the service and staff. Where parents had made a comment, these were addressed directly with them. We discussed other ways of telling parents the results of questionnaires to make feedback more meaningful. The manager agreed to do this.

The manager was aware of her responsibility as a manager and provider to make notifications to the Care Inspectorate. This meant that the service ran within the legal requirements. The manager was very pro-active and keen to keep up to date with best practice and make improvements to her service.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

**What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection**

## Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

**What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection**

## Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the service registered with the Care Inspectorate.

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the service registered.

## Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.



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