

# The Montessori Nursery School Day Care of Children

Church Of The Good Shepherd  
Murrayfield Avenue  
Edinburgh  
EH12 6AU

Telephone: 0131 346 8921

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 6 June 2017

**Service provided by:**  
Judith Park

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003071

**Care service number:**  
CS2003013263

## About the service

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time between the ages of two and a half years until entry into primary school. The nursery operates between the hours of 8.45am to 12.30pm on Monday to Friday during school term time.

The nursery is in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council Children and Families department to deliver pre-school education which reflects the Curriculum of Excellence.

The service is situated within the grounds of a church in Murrayfield near the centre of the city of Edinburgh. The nursery is held in a large church hall with a kitchen. The children have the use of the church grounds for outdoor play. A summary of the Nursery Aims and Objectives is as follows:

"To provide all the children in our care with the best possible start in their education in a safe, friendly, caring and stimulating environment. The nursery follows the principles of Maria Montessori. At all times children are treated as individuals and their specific needs are catered for. Parents are acknowledged as being a vital part of the process in the education of their children and their advice is sought and regular discussions take place as to the best approach with their child."

## What people told us

We observed the children to arrive happily at nursery and to settle quickly. Children were seen to be happy, confident and relaxed in the nursery and were busy and focused at play. They were engaged in a variety of activities and were able to make choices and to develop their own interests. Some children confidently told us what they enjoyed doing at nursery and were happy to talk about their positive experiences.

We received 10 completed Care Inspectorate parental satisfaction questionnaires before writing this report. We also spoke to two parents about the service during the inspection. Feedback from these parents was extremely positive and evidenced strong confidence in staff and the service. All 10 parents who returned our questionnaires 'strongly agreed' that they were happy with the quality of care that their child receives. Parent's comments included:

'I am delighted that my child is able to experience his early years education in a Montessori setting. The staff are super.'

'With three children having all gone through Montessori nurseries I feel that we have found the perfect one. The staff are kind and follow the Montessori philosophy honestly and practically.'

'Very happy with my child's care here and delayed my child's planned move to another pre-school setting as she has been so happy in Montessori. She will now go directly into primary one. It is a warm, nurturing and calm environment, which allows a wealth of experiences and learning opportunities. A very special place.'

'A great nursery with warm and intelligent teachers, who provide a calm environment and a sufficiently supportive structure that leaves our children feeling valued, accepted and happy.'

'We have entrusted all three of our children into the Montessori nursery. Our child is extremely happy there as are we. In addition, we see the enormous benefits to our older children who are both achieving well above the average standards at school. Both their teachers report that they are strong and independent learners who also show care and compassion for their classmates. This is Montessori all over and we are extremely grateful to all the staff at the nursery.'

'The nursery provides an excellent environment to support the early development of our son. He has done extremely well over the past year through the Montessori approach and the kind and supportive staff. He always looks forward to going to nursery in the morning.'

This positive feedback from children and parents mirrored the positive findings of the inspector.

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. These demonstrated their priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	5 - Very Good
<b>Quality of environment</b>	not assessed
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	5 - Very Good
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	not assessed

## What the service does well

The Montessori nursery school is a small, friendly and inclusive service that was most welcoming to families and strongly embedded the philosophy and beliefs of the Montessori framework. We saw that families were greeted warmly as they arrived, staff made time to talk with parents and children settled quickly at play. We saw that children were happy, settled and secure. They had formed strong and trusting relationships with staff and approached them readily for help and support.

There was a highly child-led ethos that was supporting children to lead their own play and to be creative and inquisitive. Staff were seen to be highly skilled and aware of children's individual needs, they used observation skills effectively to support independence and recognised when their intervention would enhance the children's experiences and learning. Staff spoke softly and kindly to children, demonstrating respect and consideration for others. Children's behaviour mirrored the calm and gentle staff engagement and there was a tranquil atmosphere in the nursery. Children were encouraged and praised, their contributions were valued.

We observed very good learning opportunities for children, who were developing and thriving in the setting. We saw that children were confident, self-assured and developing a range of skills and knowledge through the high quality staff interactions, diverse resources and varied activities that were provided. Numeracy and literacy were routinely and naturally threaded into play. We saw that children were confident with numbers, they counted in context, sorted, measured and weighed. They were developing understanding of size, scale and shape.

Children had developed excellent language and communication skills and expressed themselves confidently. Staff engaged in meaningful conversations and discussions with children and asked open-ended questions that helped children to extend their thoughts and understanding. The flexible and mostly free-flow programme enabled children to make choices and to develop their own ideas and interests. Resources were easily accessible to children, they accessed materials independently and tidied up when they had finished playing. They were benefiting from imaginative and good quality resources with great emphasis on natural materials and everyday objects, like sponges, pebbles, shells, tweezers, empty jars still smelling of their original ingredients, which generated great discussion with the children.

Children were not rushed, play was not interrupted and they had opportunity to go back and revisit and consolidate their learning. Children understood boundaries within this calm and respectful atmosphere, this structure supported children very well to be responsible and independent. They played cooperatively, shared, negotiated and were respectful and kind to each other. We saw that children had made strong friendships that were important to them.

The Montessori principles that underpinned practice sat comfortably with GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) and the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) indicators to support children's holistic wellbeing. We saw that children's needs were very well met during the observed session, with respect, inclusion and supporting wellbeing at the heart of practice

Children's progress and achievements were noticed and celebrated. Individual journals effectively tracked children's learning and supported their next steps. Journals were very well presented, making excellent use of photographs to evidence children's experiences and learning. The journals were very well written, with a friendly and supportive tone that provided an excellent record of the child's time at nursery that could be enjoyed and revisited by children and their parents. Journals included excellent summary reports that detailed children's progress and achievements, further evidencing how well that staff knew and understood the children in their care. We found that staff were highly in tune with individual needs.

Staff worked in close partnership with parents and external agencies, when required, to support best outcomes for individual children. We looked at the child protection procedures and practice in the service. We were satisfied that they were suitably robust and ensured that children were safe and protected.

Children did not access the outside play space during this inspection, due to the persistent torrential rain. Observation of records, displays, journals, photographs and discussion with children and staff confirmed that outdoor learning was generally a routine aspect of daily practice. We saw that children had been involved in a range of nature and recycling projects that were helping to extend their understanding of the world. Children did have some opportunities for indoor active play .

Children's health was well supported by a varied, healthy and plentiful snack. Some children stayed for extended hours and brought packed lunches from home. We saw that they enjoyed a relaxed and sociable shared mealtime and were well supported by staff. There was a very good approach to hand washing and children were learning about healthy lifestyles.

We observed excellent team work that ensured that the session ran smoothly and that children's needs were very well met. We found that staff were highly enthusiastic, professional and clearly committed to working at the nursery. Staff held relevant childcare qualifications or were working towards a recognised qualification. They continued to develop their skills and knowledge through a range of training and development opportunities. The manager was very much part of the team and worked directly alongside staff in the service, being an excellent role model. We saw that she led by good example and was open and approachable, demonstrating excellent communication skills with children and adults. Staff recruitment ensured that appropriate checks were undertaken before staff commenced employment and staff were appropriately registered with the SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council).

We concluded that the nursery was providing children with very good experiences that were supporting them to flourish and achieve. There were aspects of excellent practice observed during this inspection and we were impressed by the high standards of care and support for children. We saw that children were safe, happy and very settled. Parents told us that they were very happy with the service and had great confidence in staff. Parents told us that their children were developing well and were making very good progress in this nursery setting. Children also told us that they really enjoyed coming to nursery and had lots of fun with their friends.

## What the service could do better

The service needed to do very little to improve this very good service that was very highly regarded by parents. We suggested that staff considered ways that they could introduce some opportunities for children to access ICT and develop confidence and skills with technology. We also suggested that training opportunities for staff could be broadened and that they extend their knowledge of key childcare frameworks, including Building the Ambition and My World Outdoors to further support practice and staff development.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
10 Feb 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
22 Jan 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
31 Jan 2011	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
21 Jan 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
16 Dec 2008	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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