

Beckenham Montessori Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Christopher MacKinnon

Setting address	United Reformed Church Hall, Oakhill Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 6NQ
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic
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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Beckenham Montessori Pre-School opened in 1980. The present proprietor was registered in January 2003. It operates from the United Reformed Church in Beckenham, in the London Borough of Bromley. Children use the hall and three class rooms, and have access to a children's garden and paved outdoor play area. The pre-school is open each weekday during school term times, from 9.00am to 12.30pm. With a lunch club two days per week until 1.15 pm.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register only. A maximum of 46 children may attend, aged from two to the end of the early years group. There are currently 58 children on roll and all are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives nursery education funding for children aged three to four years. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There is a staff team of 14 and most have Montessori or early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards early years professional status. The pre-school follows the Montessori teaching method.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The pre-school is well organised with trained and experienced staff successfully promoting individual children's development. A well resourced play environment is provided, and a highly organised programme of planned activities ensures children make excellent progress with their learning. The quality of teaching and continual assessment of children is exemplary. The setting has effective partnerships with parents and other carers and staff are developing aspects of documentation. Self-evaluation is positively used to maintain improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the organisation of record keeping to ensure a higher level of confidentiality.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting is long established Montessori pre-school provision, and has the benefit of an experienced head teacher, who provides consistent and effective leadership. All members of the staff team are involved in the day-to-day management of the setting, and work together effectively to present an excellent play and learning

programme for children. Safeguarding is successfully supported within the provision. Staff have a good awareness of child protection procedures, through well maintained training. An organised range of security and safety procedures are also in place. The use and application of documentation within the setting is generally effective. However, some aspects of record keeping are not organised to provide sufficient confidentiality and this is an area for improvement.

The pre-school has successfully made a number of improvements over recent months, particularly with the establishment of an enclosed outdoor garden area for children. A range of quality assurance and good practice promotions are also currently underway. These involve the accreditation of pre-school's Montessori system, and further staff training to support children's speech and literacy. Self-evaluation is positively promoted, and several methods are used within the setting. Good use is made of team meetings to appraise practice, and staff make use of a range of trouble shooting and self-evaluation documents to identify areas for improvement.

The pre-school has a well organised play environment. Three separate classrooms are used to present children, in small groups, with a wide variety of play and learning. A stimulating range of resources is also in place, providing a well balanced mixture of main stream and Montessori materials. A strong element within the play environment is the use of visual learning displays. And many good examples are provided to support children's learning about letters, shapes and the changing seasons. The setting's outdoor areas also provide good opportunities to present resources. Children have access to a paved area, and a well planted garden, with fruit trees where they learn about growing and nature.

Staff work confidently together to be inclusive in their practice. They provide well organised key working, which successfully supports children's individual learning. Staff also effectively encourage children to take part in group learning, and take care to promote individual children's progress and development. Particularly through the well focused application of the Montessori principle of 'follow the child'. The setting has experience of caring and supporting children with special educational needs, and provides a consistent multi-cultural ethos. Staff take care to ensure diversity is well reflected and positively promoted within the play environment, and planned play programme.

The pre-school's partnerships with other settings is well maintained. Staff have a close working relationship with the nearby junior school, and keep regular contact with local childminders; whose children attend the setting. Links with parents are successfully promoted, principally through regular contact with key workers, and well organised methods to provide information. For example, parents have access to 'home books', which include details of children's day-to-day care and welfare. The books also provide guidance on the setting's weekly learning themes, so that parents can continue their children's learning at home.

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

The promotion of children's enjoying and achieving is excellent. Children have the benefit of a highly organised and consistent planning system, that successfully combines Montessori tasks with a well presented range of play themes that fully meets the early years requirements. For example, the setting's current themes of Autumn and Harvest Festival, provide many excellent opportunities for children to explore colours, the seasons and learn about helping others. A comprehensive written plan for each half term also ensures the six areas of learning are thoroughly explored and included. Children's development is consistently well monitored through the use of an excellent assessment system. Detailed and well prepared observation records are kept for each child, which provide clear evidence of their early years progress and Montessori attainment. A highly systematic approach is also taken to identifying and promoting children's 'next-steps' in learning.

A significantly strong aspect of the provision is the highly consistent nature of staff skills with teaching and extending children's learning. Staff show considerable confidence during their work with children and have an excellent awareness of the need to encourage child led activities, as well as providing support for planned learning. Staff interact with children in a highly productive way. For example, they ask challenging questions, and make good use of prompts and reminders to support children's creative thinking and shared play. Staff also successfully use Montessori practice as part of their teaching. And this enriches children's learning, with continual reference to counting, and the promotion of self-reliance and independence.

Children are successfully helped to feel safe within the pre-school. Care is taken when settling new children, and staff make sure they engage early with children and parents to provide close support at these times. A highly organised and notable feature of the setting is the care that is taken to help children make a positive contribution. For example, children enjoy being daily helpers which encourages their confidence. Staff make excellent use of circle times and group teaching to establish relationships and enhance children's understanding of turn taking. Children spend long periods sharing their ideas during role play and working together to build with assembly sets. The overall highly consistent nature of children's ability to cooperate with each other demonstrates the setting's excellent support for personal and social development.

Children's health is consistently promoted. Close attention is paid to each child's welfare as they grow and develop. Children are encouraged to learn about healthy eating, through well organised cooking activities, and children learn about different types of foods. Children have the benefit of a rolling snack, so their play is not interrupted, and are encouraged to help themselves and use utensils independently. Children also successfully engage in a wide range of active games and physical play. Opportunities for throwing and catching and developing skills with balance are effectively included. Children also successfully develop their manipulative skills using the Montessori materials, and have the benefit of weekly

gym sessions.

The successful organisation of planning and teaching within the pre-school ensures the overall support for children's future skills is also excellent. To promote language and literacy children have individual mark making books where they can explore writing and letter forming. Children also have frequent one-to-one book reading, and staff take particular care to explore the sounds of letters with children. Problem solving and numeracy features significantly. Children enjoy a wide variety of assembly challenges and use resources to learn about sizes and sequences. Children's creative development is fully promoted. Children show a strong ability to be inventive with art and craft materials and greatly enjoy adapt play materials. For example, using play dough as part of role play. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is consistently included during many activities designed to promote their wider learning. For example, children learn to identify the shapes and textures of different fruits. They also enjoy using magnifiers to look closely at shells and other natural objects from the environment.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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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