

Bothwell Montessori Nursery School Day Care of Children

53 Main Street
Bothwell
Glasgow
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 September 2024

Service provided by:
Nicola Hay trading as Bothwell
Montessori Nursery School

Service provider number:
SP2003001484

Service no:
CS2003006506

About the service

Bothwell Montessori Nursery School is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children aged over two years to under eight years, of whom no more than ten are under three years and no more than eight are attending primary school.

The service is provided from a detached building on the Main Street of Bothwell. There is one large playroom with two separate sections which can be freely accessed, kitchen area and toilets. The children have access to a fully enclosed rear outdoor area and access to local parks and woodland. The service is situated in walking distance of local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 18 September between 09:15 and 15:00 and 20 September 2024 between 09:15 and 13:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included, previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with and observed children using the service.
- Received written feedback from nine families.
- Spoke with the manager and staff.
- Observed practice and children's routines and experiences.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind, caring and warm nurturing approaches from staff.
- Children were happy, settled and motivated to play and learn.
- A homely, calm environment provided inviting spaces and experiences for children to play, learn and develop.
- A wide range of rich learning experiences were provided which helped to develop children's literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills.
- Sensitive and skilled interactions were used to expand children's play and learning.
- Children were supported by a strong, enthusiastic team who worked well together to get it right for children.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated different parts of this key question as very good and excellent, with an overall evaluation of very good where significant strengths in aspects of the care provided supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, confident, and engaged in play. They experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches from staff who knew them well. This helped children feel valued and loved. All parents who completed our online survey strongly agreed to the statement 'Overall, I am happy with the care and support my child receives in this service'. Comments we received included, "This little gem of a nursery is really the heart of the community" and "I truly feel my children are looked after very well".

Children's needs were supported by effective personal plans which ensured staff caring for children had a clear overview of their individual needs and preferences. Strong relationships had been developed between children and their families and this was a key strength to the effectiveness of the personal planning approach. Staff knew children very well and were confident in discussing their individual needs and any strategies in place. This ensured children received the care that was right for them. For example, the use of Makaton benefitted children who may be non-verbal, have not yet developed the language to express themselves or had English as a second language. Parents shared they reviewed personal plans with staff on a regular basis. This enabled them to be fully involved in their child's care.

Supporting children with additional support needs was having a positive impact on their progress and development. Staff worked with families and other professionals to identify appropriate strategies for children's individual needs. This promoted a supportive and inclusive environment to ensure all children received the right support to reach their full potential.

Mealtimes were a social occasion, and children were encouraged to make independent choices. We observed children demonstrating independence as they enjoyed being 'helpers' in preparing snack and in setting the lunch table. They enjoyed choosing from a range of fruit to prepare and chop for snack. This provided them with important life skills promoting self-confidence and responsibility. Staff sat with children during lunch encouraging healthy habits and facilitating conversation. Food choices were nutritious and reflected current guidance, and fresh water was available throughout the day. Children with dietary requirements were well catered for and suitable alternative menus were provided.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

A wide range of rich learning experiences were provided which helped to develop children's literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills. For example, throughout the day children were seen mark making, singing songs, and listening attentively to stories, showing a keen interest in books. Mathematical provocations were threaded throughout the environment as part of daily routines which children naturally led within the service.

In following the Montessori approach, focussed periods during the day meant children could self-select from a range of language and maths 'work cycle trays'. For example, one child was copying from a range of

alphabet cards with their finger using a small glass bottomed sand tray. They read out the letters as they copied them, telling us the ones which matched their own name. Another child was repeating patterns of colour using small pom poms, then mixed them up, showing us "It's a rainbow". As a result, children developed and enhanced their understanding of concepts at a time and pace that was right for them.

A particular strength of the service was the dedication and implementation of the Montessori approach of 'practical life.' We observed children's deep and prolonged concentration and engagement in activities that required a sequence of actions. For example, setting the lunch table, caring for the environment, and preparing food. Children were actively involved in these tasks, routines and experiences building their skills and capabilities as learners and effective contributors to the group. The children were respectful of each other and helped younger members of the group. This helped to develop independence, confidence, and self-worth.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in an environment rich with a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences. Resources and experiences reflected children's ongoing needs and interests and meant they could lead their own play and learning. As a result, their choices, natural curiosity, and independence were very well developed. The atmosphere within the service was one of calm with a sense of productiveness for all.

Planning approaches placed children at the centre of their learning and development, this ensured children experienced challenge, breadth, and depth. Detailed tracking, monitoring, language assessments and individual observations enabled staff to recognise and respond to what children needed in their play. Children's voice and active participation was embedded across the environment. This resulted in exceptional levels of engagement within children's play and learning. As a result, children were progressing at a pace that was right for them and were happy and confident.

Respectful and trusting relationships with families supported them to be meaningfully engaged in their child's learning. For example, learning journals captured significant events, observations, progress and achievements. Parents actively contributed by sharing experiences from home which influenced and informed future planning. This demonstrated value and respect for families in achieving a shared outcome.

Children's development and learning was deepened by connections to their own and wider communities. For example, visits to the community garden, sensory garden, and designated woodland area. Creating an edible garden of vegetables and herbs helped children understand the cycle of seeds to table, and the importance of sustainable food choices. Children harvested garlic and chives which were used to make homemade butter and was presented at the snack table. This promoted healthy choices, a sense of achievement and self-responsibility. Inviting community police officers into the nursery helped expand children's understanding of road safety. This positively impacted children by expanding their social experiences and building a sense of community. Children had also been involved in a local annual Scarecrow Festival having made their own scarecrows and reflecting on photographs taken. These opportunities extended and enriched children's experience, supporting them to achieve their potential. As a result, children were developing a wide range of life skills and a strong connection to their community and nature.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from a welcoming environment which was warm, well-furnished, and comfortable. There was also plenty of natural light and ventilation to support children's wellbeing. Children's safety was maintained by a secure entry system to the building and the garden was fully enclosed. Parents told us they liked the "Warm safe friendly environment" and "Very welcoming open-door policy".

The playroom was clean, tidy, and uncluttered. Children had access to a range of resources that were well-organised and encouraged exploration and fun. There was ample space for children to extend their learning and interests with their chosen activities. Books and print were spread throughout the play spaces and children were seen exploring these spaces with confidence. Free flow access to the outdoor space enabled children to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. Children were respectful of their environment and would tidy up after finishing activities, showing independence and self-responsibility.

Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of infection, prevention, and control procedures, including supervising children during hand washing. Children were encouraged and supported to do this independently before mealtimes and after toileting and personal care. This supported staff and children to minimise potential risks of infection and helped create a safe environment. Toilet and nappy changing areas were clean, with personal protective equipment (PPE) being stored appropriately to reduce the risk of infection spread.

The outdoor space provided a range of spaces for development of physical skills and exploration. There was a range of natural, loose parts and open-ended material that supported curiosity, creative thinking and problem solving. Children made effective use of these and were confident when using all areas of the outdoor space. Tarpaulins were used to create 'dens' as well as quiet and cosy areas for children.

Risk assessments were in place for indoor and outdoor environments which raised staff awareness of potential risks, benefits, and measures to support a safe environment. These were reviewed as changes occurred. This ensured they were current and adapted as needed.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The shared vision and values of the service positively informed staff practice. The strong ethos of the Montessori approach successfully created a caring, loving and trusting environment. The management team were friendly, approachable, and engaged well with the inspection process. Staff told us they felt well supported by the management team and found them supportive and approachable. Within our online survey, staff strongly agreed that their wellbeing needs were recognised and supported.

The service Improvement plan had priorities that were outcome focussed with realistic targets. These included nurture, attachment, language and literacy. The plan had been created in consultation with staff and was shared with parents. This helped staff and families feel involved in the development of the service.

It was informed by self-evaluation and staff told us they were included in reflecting on the quality of the service and planning for improvement.

Children and families were meaningfully involved and influenced change through genuine partnership. Display boards shared children's learning and interests for the day, along with monthly newsletters, online communication, and social media. This kept families informed of their children's daily activities and interests and ensured families were kept up to date and informed of changes.

Within the life of the nursery parents were also involved through the parent's committee. They told us they felt meaningfully involved and enjoyed meeting other parents, giving their views, being involved in celebrations, and supporting charity events within the community.

Parents told us "Bothwell Montessori is such a wonderful nursery, couldn't ask for a better start for our children's education. I couldn't say enough good things about them. They go above and beyond for the children, and they care so much about all of them".

Quality assurance systems were robust and well organised. They were regularly monitored by the management team and reflected upon by the whole team. Regular meetings gave staff opportunities to talk about any successes and achievements, discuss any individual children's needs or next steps and reflect on practice. Children's learning environments were reviewed regularly by staff who consulted with children, to ensure play and learning areas met their needs and interests.

Continuous improvement and self-evaluation were embedded within the service. Strong leadership supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support families reach their full potential. Staff were proactive in leading their own learning and taking forward their key areas of interest. Leadership opportunities across the team promoted leaders at all levels. For example, the eco green flag, music, literacy, STEM, recycling, and outdoor play. Staff spoke confidently and passionately about these leadership roles and how this had positively impacted outcomes for children, their families, and the wider community.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children benefitted from a nurturing, caring and dedicated staff team who were warm and responsive in their approach. Staff worked very well together, and they were respectful and considerate in their interactions with each other. Staff spoke positively about team working and that relationships in the team were strong. One staff member told us "If I feel I need support I am comfortable to talk with the management and know that I will be listened to.

Strong connections had been developed with families and this supported effective communication. All families who completed our online survey were very positive in their feedback of staff and comments included, "Staff are very caring, organised and communication is excellent". "The staff are all very caring towards the children and it feels like being part of a family" and "The staff go above and beyond to have a strong nurturing relationship with each individual child".

Staff were deployed effectively, and this ensured that children's experiences across their day were positive. Busier times of the day, such as staff lunches, did not impact on experiences for children as there was a high staff ratio. Staff were available to keep all areas of the setting accessible for children. Opportunities for staff were provided to be off the floor, and these times were used effectively for planning and professional development.

The team were knowledgeable and skilled. They were very motivated and were keen and committed to the continual development of the service. All practitioners have achieved childcare qualifications with some staff also studying for further advanced qualifications. All staff had completed inhouse Montessori training. Staff told us the training had been beneficial and had encouraged them to reflect on their practice and its impact. Further training included, Makaton, fire and tools outdoor learning and emotions training. Staff were skilled in questioning and extending children's thinking and problem solving. This meant children were challenged in their daily play and learning experiences.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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