

**Mulberry Bush Montessori  
Glasgow  
21 April 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects centres in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their centre provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with centre staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the head of centre and staff about the strengths of the centre, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into playrooms and join other activities which children are involved in. We also gather the views of parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the centre. We describe how well children are doing, how good the centre is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the centre. We also comment on how well the centre works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the centre is led and how all staff help the centre achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the centre, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers and carers who are relatives or friends

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### **1. The centre**

Mulberry Bush Montessori was inspected in February 2010 by HMIE and the Care Commission as part of the integrated inspection programme. The centre caters for pre-school children aged six weeks to five years. It is registered for 97 children attending at any one session. The total roll was 123 at the time of the inspection. The nursery became a Montessori Accredited Centre in 2009.

## **2. Particular strengths of the centre**

- Confident children who are independent and achieving well in many areas.
- Skilful interactions of staff and their support for children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Very strong partnership with parents.
- Strong teamwork and the quality of staff training.
- The effective leadership of the management team.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

In all playrooms children are happy, settled and secure with the nursery routines. Children under three are curious and explore their surroundings using their senses. Children aged three to five choose from a wide range of Montessori activities. They are motivated and enthusiastic, and many persevere well on their chosen activities. They are becoming increasingly independent.

All children are achieving well. Children under three are developing good social skills and play confidently with a range of natural materials. They particularly enjoy playing outdoors and exploring sand and natural materials. Children aged three to five have very good social skills and are learning how to manage their emotions. They behave well and show consideration for others. They enjoy celebrating cultural festivals, learning about other countries and finding some of them on a world map. Children can slide, climb, balance and

use wheeled toys confidently. Almost all show skill in using their fingers and hands to thread, turn screws and use small tools and equipment. Most children listen well to staff's instructions. They show interest in stories and had made home-made books to share with their friends. Many can copy letters and words and almost all can recognise their name in print. Children can sort, match and count confidently. They can order objects by size and use mathematical language appropriately. Children enjoyed guessing which of two objects was heavier and checking their answer using balancing scales. Children need more opportunities to develop their skills in writing and mathematics in play contexts.

### **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff follow the Montessori curriculum and have made good progress in reviewing this, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The nursery provides a well-balanced range of experiences. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visiting specialists in music, dance and sport. Children under three have very good opportunities to use all of their senses. Children aged three to five use a range of high-quality games and puzzles which focus on developing particular skills. They now need more opportunities to investigate and use information communications technology (ICT). While children have opportunities to draw and paint, some art work is too adult directed. Children need more opportunities to express their own ideas and feelings creatively using a wide range of materials and techniques. The outdoor area has been improved to provide a wider range of activities for children to play with and explore. Staff use outings to the local community well to enhance children's learning.

Staff know children very well and respond sensitively to support and help them when they need encouragement. They observe children's learning during play and maintain profiles of children's achievements. Staff are beginning to use these observations to plan children's next steps in learning. Most activities provided are at the right level to help children make progress in their learning. A few children need more challenging activities. Children who attend all day have regular fresh

air and opportunities for rest and quiet. Staff work very effectively with a range of agencies to support children who need additional help with their learning.

#### **4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

Staff work well with the education authority to share ideas and improve children's learning. Parents are actively involved in the life and work of the nursery and share their ideas through questionnaires and regular meetings of the Parent Partnership Group. Parents are kept very well informed at parents' evenings, by e-mail contact, through daily discussions and by regular newsletters. The nursery has a very effective programme to help children to settle when they start nursery and provides good support to help children as they move on to school. The nursery provides valuable work-experience placements for local secondary school pupils.

#### **5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their centre community?**

Staff seek children's views on some aspects of nursery life by using picture questionnaires. They are aware of the need to extend this good practice to seek children's views on playroom activities and organisation, and to involve them in the improvement plan. Staff use parents' questionnaires to help inform and improve aspects of nursery practice. The owner and manager have introduced a monitoring programme to identify strengths and areas for development in the playrooms. The manager has worked with staff to carry out an annual evaluation of their work and develop an improvement plan. This has led to some improvements, for example, in children's profiles. Staff have worked hard to develop their understanding of self-evaluation. They are aware that they now need to develop their skills and confidence in using self-evaluation more in their day-to-day work in the

playrooms. The management team is working with staff to ensure that monitoring activities lead to improvements in playroom practice.

#### **6. Does the centre have high expectations of all children?**

The nursery has a very welcoming and supportive ethos with a strong sense of mutual respect between staff and children. Children respond well to staff's high expectations of behaviour. Staff have close relationships with children and their families. They promote good manners and consideration for others. All children are treated fairly and equally. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and know how to keep children safe and well. Children are provided with healthy snacks and are encouraged to be independent during this time. They wash their hands before handling food and pour their own milk or water.

#### **7. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?**

The owner, manager and depute manager work very effectively together and lead developments in the nursery well. They have a clear vision for the future development of the nursery which is shared with staff. They have established a strong and committed staff team who are enthusiastic about improving the nursery. The owner encourages staff to take on leadership roles and supports them in updating their knowledge and skills. Staff have very good opportunities for training and personal development. The management and staff are committed to ongoing improvement of the nursery and are very well placed to continue to improve further.

## **8. What happens next?**

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the centre, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the centre's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its centre.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the centre and education authority.

- Continue to develop the curriculum with a focus on art and design and ICT.
- Continue, as planned, to develop staff's skills in self-evaluation and ensure that monitoring activities lead to improvements in playroom practice.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the centre there were five recommendations. All recommendations have since been addressed.



Quality indicators help centres, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a centre. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each centre, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish centres are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Mulberry Bush Montessori.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the centre.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**HM Inspector:** May Geddes

**Care Commission:** Hilary Long

21 April 2010

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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