



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Redhill Montessori Nursery**

**Redhill Preparatory School  
The Garth  
St David's Road  
Haverfordwest  
SA61 2UR**



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## **Description of the service**

Redhill Montessori Nursery is a full day care service and provides care for a maximum of 50 children, aged between birth and four years old. The service is open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. The service is provided mainly through the medium of English, although some Welsh is also used. The responsible individual, on behalf of the registered organisation, Redhill (Haverfordwest) Limited, is Meryl Lovegrove. The person in charge of the service is Karen Deluca.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children have inspiring and varied experiences and excellent learning opportunities at this nursery. Staff are very positive and support children well to develop their individual skills and independence. Leaders provide an excellent environment which encourages children's independence. Leaders have a clear ethos and excellent partnerships with parents and other organisations. However, improvements are needed regarding management of staff and record keeping.

### **2. Improvements**

Leaders have made improvements since the last CIW inspection, including the following:

- The introduction of digital cameras for children to give their views;
- supporting two members of staff to complete level three Elklan speech and language qualifications;
- the introduction of more 'real-life' and natural resources for younger children and
- more community links, such as partnerships with an allotment group and with a local care home.

Following our first visit, leaders updated the statement of purpose so that it fully met the regulations and national minimum standards.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

We notified the responsible individual that she was not compliant with the following regulations:

- staffing as there were not the sufficient number of staff caring for the children at all times and
- keeping of records because there were not full and accurate records of who was looking after the children at all times.

We also made recommendations in relation to hand washing, the child protection policy and ensuring that staff meet children's individual needs at all times. These recommendations are included at the back of this report.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children very confidently speak or express themselves and they know that they will receive a meaningful response. They are very settled and form exceptionally positive relationships with those around them. They feel extremely secure, happy and comfortable within their environment. The children effectively learn to manage their behaviour, co-operate and share and are fully engaged in their play and learning. They are able to follow their own interests regularly and they develop confidence in their abilities, with support when needed.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children make choices and decisions about their play, activities and how they spend their time.

Children confidently spoke and expressed their wants and choices. Each choice was respected and responded to positively, with a clear explanation or alternative if they were not able to have what they wanted. For example when the younger children wanted to climb on the tall slide they were told why they couldn't use it and offered an alternative slide. They had free choice regarding their activities and play and they controlled the order of their day. They could choose whether to join in with staff-led activities. Children's interests and opinions were highly valued and acted upon. For example the children chose the snack for the day and used a camera to help evaluate the service, taking photos of their favourite part of the nursery.

Children have a substantial voice.

### **1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?**

Children are settled, happy and secure at the service. They show positive relationships with staff and other children.

Children expressed enthusiasm and enjoyment and showed familiarity with routines at the service. They had strong bonds with staff, looking to them for reassurance and also excitedly sharing their experiences and thoughts with them. Children confidently spoke to others asking questions, giving help or sharing concerns. They relaxed and settled to sleep easily and listened to instructions when given. Parents told us that their children were extremely happy at the nursery.

Children feel extremely safe, happy and secure.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children play and explore together. They share, take turns and are developing friendships.

Children were highly motivated and fully engaged in their play and learning. Generally, they listened very well and behaved calmly during transitions and free play. Children listened to instructions, requests and questions, acting accordingly. They showed care and concern towards each other and the younger children happily played alongside each other, smiling and watching each other during play. Children shared resources with each other and waited patiently for their turn. They showed resilience when problem solving with one child calmly persisting to fit a mirror back on to a shelf and succeeding.

The children interact extremely well with children, staff and their environment.

#### **1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?**

Children are engaged in their play and learning and enjoy organised, free play and recreational activities.

Children enjoyed their play and learning, showing enthusiasm, perseverance and patience to solve problems, take part in activities or complete tasks. They listened to instructions, requests and to each other including tidying up when asked and planning who they would play with next. Children excitedly and safely explored the outdoor environment with support when needed. Most children took part in activities and engaged fully when listening to a story being read or taking part in a singing activity. The children showed pride in the tasks they were doing. For example, a child independently used an orange squeezer and initially could only manage to get a drop of juice to pour into a glass. However, they persisted with the task and proudly showed us when they had more in there.

Children enthusiastically enjoy their play and learning.

#### **1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?**

Children are developing with confidence and have ample opportunities to become independent.

Children explored and developed their skills and knowledge continuously through the wide range of exciting opportunities given to them. They had full access to the range of resources which followed the Montessori ethos. Children learned to recognize their name and to develop their language naturally in their play. For example when talking about squeezing fruit, the children used language such as 'big' and 'little' and they described the taste of the citrus fruit as 'sharp.' Children supported each other, discussing how to play games and explaining tasks to each other. They built on their independence skills consistently through play activities and the daily routine including choosing, preparing and serving snacks, hygiene routines, dressing themselves, planning their own activities, being responsible for their environment and disposing of waste. Parents were very positive about their children's progress at the nursery, saying for example that their children were 'thriving.'

Children comprehensively develop and become independent.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff are very nurturing and positive and they support children effectively to develop their skills and independence. They promote a healthy lifestyle and meet children's needs very well most of the time.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

Staff have relevant training and understand how to keep children safe. They actively promote a healthy lifestyle.

All staff had up to date training in paediatric first aid and they followed the nursery's policies in relation to giving medication and dealing with accidents. Staff also had regular training in child protection. When we spoke with staff about hypothetical child protection scenarios, the staff mostly knew the correct procedures to follow, although one member of staff suggested liaising with a member of the school staff in the absence of the person in charge and responsible individual. Leaders and staff provided home-cooked food for the children, made with fresh ingredients which included a good variety of fruit and vegetables and they shared the menu with parents. The person in charge told us that they had worked hard on the menu to ensure that they provided a healthy balanced diet and she was aware of the new Welsh Government nutritional guidance. Staff were aware of children's allergies and ensured that their dietary needs were met. They also ensured that where children had a particular dislike of a certain food, a suitable alternative was provided. Staff followed good hygiene procedures in relation to nappy changing and encouraged children to wash their hands regularly. However, a member of staff supported one group of children to wash their hands in a shared bowl of water. Staff encouraged children to be physically active in the outdoors on a regular basis. They supervised the children well and reminded children of boundaries and rules to keep themselves safe.

On the whole, staff effectively keep children safe and healthy.

#### **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff support children very positively to think about how they and others feel. They boost their self-esteem on a regular basis.

Staff gave children specific praise for their efforts, saying for example, "You're doing that very carefully." Staff regularly said, "Thank you" to the children for doing as they had asked and they shook children's hands across the nursery to congratulate them on their personal achievements. Staff made good eye contact and spoke to children at their level. For example, they crouched down to the children and spoke softly when they asked them to come and have their nappies changed. They also focused on children's feelings in specific activities and in the daily life of the nursery. For example, a member of staff asked a child if

he knew why he was feeling sad and helped him to find something to "...make you feel a bit happy." Staff worked with parents to put specific plans and strategies in place where there was a specific behavioural need.

Staff manage interactions very well.

### **2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?**

Staff plan stimulating activities to promote children's development. They support children sensitively to develop their independence and individual skills.

Staff observed children regularly and kept detailed records of their progress. They planned in detail and provided interesting and exciting activities to children which developed the whole range of skills. Recent activities included exploring salt dough, making pancakes and visits to a farm and riding centre. Specialists also came in to the nursery to deliver specific activities, such as yoga, singing and physical education. The staff placed a strong emphasis on children developing their independence and they supported children well so that they could succeed at developing their independence and exploring their skills. For example a child was independently carrying a tray with a number of items on it, which made it heavy and more difficult to carry. A member of staff said, "Let me carry the jug for you to make it a little easier," and then praised the child when she succeeded. The staff had a good understanding of the Montessori ethos of the nursery. Almost all staff had relevant qualifications and some members of staff had completed specialist Montessori training. Staff had also taken on additional training to improve their skills supporting the children, including two members of staff who completed level three Elklan speech and language training and were intending to train other staff in this also.

Staff were attentive and observant with children through the majority of the day and met their needs promptly. However, during the lunch time period, most of the staff were busy doing other tasks and children did not get the same level of attention. Staff did not always respond appropriately or promptly to children who were getting fractious or tired at this time. Staff were able to meet children's language needs as some were fluent Welsh speakers. We heard Welsh being used very regularly with children over the age of three, with staff using incidental Welsh such as 'Dere ma' (come here), 'Eistedd lawr' (sit down) and 'Ti di gorffen?' (have you finished?) and also reading Welsh books to children. Staff knew which children were from Welsh-speaking homes and also demonstrated that they were aware of children's specific medical, dietary and behavioural needs and could meet these needs.

Staff effectively promote children's play, learning and development and they meet their individual needs most of the time.



### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Leaders offer a dedicated and purposeful environment which is based on the Montessori ethos. They ensure it is very safe, secure and a welcoming environment for all children. The premises are very well maintained with robust processes in place to maintain a very high standard of safety, cleanliness and suitability of the toys and resources. Risks are minimised and leaders are committed to providing children with a stimulating, spacious and accessible environment.

#### **Our findings**

##### **3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?**

Leaders provide a safe environment for the children.

The environment is very well maintained and secure including a fenced outdoor area with supervised access to other areas within the school grounds. Risk assessments are completed and regularly reviewed and updated. Potential risks during outdoor play are recognised and the risks are minimised through the placement of staff during outdoor activities and regular reminders to children. For example, children were reminded to use the appropriate slide during outdoor activities. Leaders organise regular testing and checking of equipment including portable appliance (PAT) testing, smoke alarms tests, fire extinguisher checks and the fire alarm system tests.

The leaders ensure effective safety of the environment.

##### **3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?**

Leaders provide a space for children to grow, explore and develop, which is designed based on the Montessori ethos.

There is a large, clean and welcoming environment for the children to explore and use. The indoor and outdoor areas were spacious and facilities met the needs of a range of children. Children of all ages could access resources and toys independently as they were stored at children's level and were highly suitable for their needs and abilities. Bilingual signs were seen around the environment.

Leaders provide a stimulating and purposeful environment.

##### **3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?**

Leaders and staff ensure that children have access to purposeful resources, equipment and stimulating toys which are appropriate, extensive and of good quality.

A wide range of resources were stored on low-level, easily-accessible shelves. Every room had stimulating resources suited to their needs and developmentally appropriate, following

the Montessori ethos. They were clean, well maintained and safe, with risk assessments in place when giving children access to real life resources, for example glass or china objects. Nearly all resources were made from or contained natural materials including a range of wooden toys, feathers, leaves, sticks, musical instruments and pine cones. Leaders provided reusable materials, materials with different textures and educational resources including magnifying glasses, magnets, small world resources and coins. Leaders were committed to providing stimulating resources to promote children's natural curiosity and celebrate different cultures, starting on a global level with a room dedicated to this part of the children's learning and exploring the world around them. For example the children were learning and exploring the topic of food and were using home grown herbs to make flavoured butters and teas. The outdoor area was well-maintained and well-resourced including sand pits, picnic benches, tubs with compost and places to sit.

Leaders provide a substantial amount of inspiring resources and equipment.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Leaders have a clear ethos and staff feel well supported by them. They have a detailed system in place for reviewing and improving the service. Leaders have excellent partnerships with parents and other agencies. However, the management of staff and record keeping is not fully effective.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Leaders have a clear ethos and share this with others. They provide detailed information about their service and they are a visible presence.

The person in charge was clear and enthusiastic about the Montessori ethos of the nursery and this was demonstrated in publicly available information including the nursery's website and the statement of purpose. Leaders provided detailed information to parents in the statement of purpose and policies for the service. We inspected a sample of policies and found that these were detailed and child-centred. However, the child protection policy could be misinterpreted as it regularly referred to the head teacher of the school, who was not a leader of the nursery. It also did not contain clear information regarding the process if an allegation was made against the responsible individual or person in charge. Policies were regularly reviewed and updated and leaders kept abreast of developments in the child care sector. Leaders had registered the service with the Information Commissioner's Office. However, they do not meet all regulations.

Leadership is effective, on the whole.

#### **4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

Leaders review the service in detail and make ongoing improvements.

Leaders completed an annual quality of care review and report, as well as a detailed nursery development plan. The views of parents, children and staff were taken into account and progress towards targets was regularly reviewed. Staff confirmed that their views were listened to regularly and that they had been able to make improvements, such as extending the range and type of resources, with the support of the leaders. Leaders had made improvements such as developing the children's ability to voice their views through the use of digital cameras and supporting staff to complete Elklan qualifications.

Self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good.

#### **4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?**

Leaders have sound procedures in place for the recruitment and monitoring of staff. They keep appropriate records in most areas. However, improvements are needed to the management of staff to ensure that there are the appropriate number of staff working with the children at all times.

We inspected a sample of staff files and found that the appropriate recruitment checks had been completed on staff. Leaders had a system in place for the induction of new staff and they conducted regular appraisals and supervision meetings. Staff told us that they felt well supported in their roles. We inspected a sample of medication and accident records and found that all of the relevant information was recorded. We also inspected a sample of attendance registers. Whilst there were records of the arrival and departure of children and staff from the building, there was not a record of the times when staff were having their breaks and were therefore not working with the children. During our observations over the lunchtime period, there were not a sufficient number of staff caring for the children at all times. Attendance records also showed that the required ratios of staff to children were not maintained on one of the two days that we sampled. The person in charge informed us, following our visit, that the nursery had employed an extra member of staff during lunch times to help to address this situation.

The management of practitioners, staff and other resources is not fully effective.

#### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

Leaders make links with a wide variety of individuals and groups to provide rich experiences for the children. They work with parents to meet the needs of the children.

Leaders employed teachers and specialists from Redhill Preparatory School to provide specialist activities to the children, such as yoga, singing and gymnastics teachers. They worked in close partnership with the school staff on a daily basis. They also made links with groups in the community which resulted in valuable experiences for the children. For example, leaders had established a link with a local care home and they had arranged basic dementia training for children. The children recalled fondly how they had played ball with ladies when they had visited the care home. Leaders and staff had also arranged crockery painting activities together and they were intending making memory boxes for the residents of the home. Leaders had also established a link with a local allotment group and had established a shop which they opened on specific dates of the year where children could sell home-grown and home-made products. They had made some links with other Montessori nurseries and with other nurseries in the local area to share good practice, and they had welcomed a member of staff from a local nursery to visit.

The person in charge was available to talk with parents on a daily basis. Leaders had sought all relevant information from parents about children's needs and preferences. They worked closely with parents when a specific need was identified to ensure that the children's needs were met. All parents who had completed CIW questionnaires strongly agreed that the service was well run and that there was good communication with parents. Parents who we spoke to and who completed questionnaires also made very positive comments, such as, "I can't recommend it highly enough."

Partnerships are excellent.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

We recommended that the provider should:

- ensure that staff meet children's individual needs throughout the day;
- update the child protection policy and
- ensure that children wash their hands with liquid soap and running water.

## **6. How we undertook this inspection**

This was a full unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

Two inspectors visited the service on 26 March 2019 for approximately seven and a half hours. We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice and completed observations using the SOFI 2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided by staff;
- spoke with children, parents, staff and the person in charge and
- read three questionnaires from parents.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## About the service

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| Type of care provided  | Children's Day Care<br>Full Day Care   |
| Responsible Individual   | Meryl Lovegrove  |
| Person in charge   | Karen Deluca   |
| Registered maximum number of places  | 50   |
| Age range of children  | 0 to 4 years   |
| Opening hours  | 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.  |
| Operating Language of the service  | English  |
| Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection                            | 3 and 8 November 2016  |
| Dates of this inspection visit(s)  | 26 March 2019  |
| Is this a Flying Start service?  | No   |
| Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service? | Yes  |
| Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?                     | This is a service that is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and intends to become a bilingual service. |
| Additional Information:  |  |