



Living Spring Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY293804
Inspection date 26 April 2006
Inspector Deborah Wilkinson

Setting Address St. Michaels Church Hall, St. Michaels Road, London, NW2 6XG

Telephone number

E-mail

Registered person Living Spring Nursery Ltd

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Living Spring Montessori Nursery, which was registered in 2004, operates in a church hall in Cricklewood in the London Borough of Brent. The nursery serves the local and wider community.

The nursery provides 72 places for children aged under 5 years old. Currently there are 62 children on roll, 25 of whom receive nursery education funding. Children attend on a full-time or part-time basis for a variety of sessions. The nursery runs on

Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 48 weeks of the year.

The nursery follows Montessori and Early Years Foundation teaching methods. Fourteen staff work with the children, all have experience with the majority having relevant early years qualifications.

The nursery receives advice and support from the local Early Years advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and welcoming surroundings. They are well protected from the risk of infection because staff follow the clear written procedures in place and carry out effective hygiene practices. Children are encouraged to learn about the importance of hand washing and other aspects of personal care from an early age and are very familiar with daily routines.

There is access to a small sink in each room and many children use these independently.

Children's wellbeing is safeguarded by the thorough systems in place to deal with accidents and any medication given. Children who have accidents are given appropriate treatment by one of the five staff qualified in first aid. Records are kept and parents are informed of any action taken.

Children have a snack mid morning and parents bring a wide range of fruits which children share during this sociable time. Staff sit with the children and talk to them about how fruit is good for them. All children are able to have water to drink whenever they are thirsty. Staff monitor the needs in the younger classes while the older children are able to help themselves from the jug which is always available.

Children have a freshly cooked lunch each day. The menus are varied with a vegetarian option and vegetables always included. The children eat well and have second helpings if they want. Currently staff are considering ways of developing meal times to give the children greater independence.

The physical development of all children is very well fostered. The secure paved play area at the front of the building is well used. Here children use the climbing frame and slide, they ride bikes, dig in the large sand pit and play 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' They fill pots to plant their sunflower seeds and carry the watering can to water them into the soil. Weather permitting, daily trips are made to the local park. The children run and chase the pigeons, explore the large equipment and are delighted when they climb the steps of the slide or are pushed in the swing by a member of staff.

When inside children use the obstacle course set up by staff in the hall.

All children get plenty of exercise and are developing good co-ordination and balance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an attractive child-centred environment that is carefully assessed and checked by the staff each day. Children are able to explore their surroundings in comfort and safety because staff take good practical safety precautions to protect them.

Children's security is a high priority. Staff monitor arrivals and departures carefully by using the closed circuit cameras that are in place and signing in and out sheets are completed by parents.

Children enjoy playing with a range of safe, clean and well maintained toys and equipment. The well organised environment helps ensure they are able to freely help themselves from low level storage units.

The overall welfare of children is positively safeguarded. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues with up to date written procedures to follow. Parents are made aware that staff have a responsibility to report any concerns to the local authority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come into the nursery happily. Staff greet them and their parents warmly making them feel welcome and secure.

All children benefit from the effective key worker system which enables them to form trusting relationships with a known adult. Staff know the children well and use this knowledge to plan varied and interesting activities which are linked to themes. These often involve all the children going out into the local community, for example, during one project they visited a florist to buy flowers to look at, draw and decorate their rooms.

Babies and toddlers are happy, engaged and learning. They enjoy exploring a wide range of play materials that offer them interesting sensory experiences, these are imaginatively presented and suitable for their age and stage of development. Adults enhance children's experiences and encourage children's communication skills effectively by the role they play. Babies are delighted as they develop their physical skills when they climb in and out of the cushion filled cube and negotiate the shallow flight of steps in their room and staff share their pleasure. Both babies and toddlers enjoy fresh air when they play outside or go to the local park.

Staff are starting to plan specifically for younger children using the Birth to three

matters framework to support children as they grow and learn. Children's independence and self confidence are fostered by their free access to resources and they help themselves to construction toys and puzzles. However, they are less well engaged in pretend play as these areas are not so well equipped.

Nursery Education

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Children participate in interesting and worthwhile activities and are making progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Children are benefiting from staff working directly with the advisory teacher to develop the curriculum to support their learning. Using the guidance to the Foundation Stage staff are starting to develop plans which show clearly what children should achieve. Individual progress is monitored and documented in detailed portfolios which include observations, photographs and samples of work. Staff repeat activities if necessary to consolidate learning.

The daily programme incorporates a range of learning opportunities for children. They explore and refine their creative skills with a rich variety of art resources and modelling materials when they paint, create collages and build junk models. In the classroom a large cardboard box has been transformed into an elephant and children climb in and out of two other boxes in the outside area.

Children have opportunities to experiment with instruments during regular music sessions in the nursery. They visit the library each week for a rhyme session and enjoy experimenting with sound when a group of drummers visits.

Children can communicate well. They are able to listen to others and contribute their own ideas. Children ask questions and describe what they have done. Some know the names and sounds of some letters of the alphabet and they enjoy attempting to write their names by copying the letters to label their art work and sometimes that of others. They enjoy story times and looking at books both in a group and independently. Currently the displays in the room are limited and children see few examples of the different languages that reflect the diverse makeup of the group. There are also limited examples of children's free art work.

Children have many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Trips out allow them to explore their local community and learn about other people they meet. They are introduced to other's customs and lifestyles when they dress up and see the staff wearing national dress. They try different foods and eat them using unfamiliar implements such as chopsticks. Children plant seeds, grow vegetables which they later eat and carry out the fruit skins from snack time to add to the compost heap.

Children are starting to learn and experiment with technology when they use the cassette player, take photographs with a digital camera and see the results on the computer screen. They use torches and look at the shadows made and compare weights when using the scales. Staff have identified the need to develop this area.

Adults enhance children's experiences and encourage children's communication

skills effectively by the role they play

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. They join in, take responsibility and play a productive part in the nursery. They are confident within the classrooms and choose freely from the interesting selection of activities available.

Children's behaviour is good. They work well together and are able to co-operate and share. This is helped by the clear rules, simple explanations and the gentle encouragement of the staff. For example, when getting ready to go outside they respond well to staff who ask them to put on their shoes and coats and willingly help when asked to tidy up for lunch. Staff give sensitive support and do not over help children who want to do things themselves. Their positive attitude fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Children are developing self esteem and respect for others, they talk confidently about their home environments and learn about their history when making family trees. They listen to stories featuring lots of different cultures and environments and enjoy visitors to the nursery such as a group of musicians or the dental hygienist.

Children benefit from being cared for by a staff team from different backgrounds as they experience other cultures and attitudes which help promote an awareness of the community they live in.

There is a good range of toys and resources which promote positive images for example books reflect different cultures, genders and feelings, however, the displays within the rooms do not reflect the diverse nature of the group.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the close partnership developed between parents and staff and the value staff place on gaining parents' input. Staff obtain detailed information about each child's interests and individual needs. Twice yearly parents' evenings are held and staff are always available to discuss each child's progress. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and welcomed into the nursery to share their skills with the children. Notice boards keep them informed about the activities and themes the children are engaged in and the information sheets available allow them to continue these at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare and individual needs are met well by the nursery staff who have appropriate records in place to support their understanding of each child. Children enjoy the security provided by the group's ethos, policies and procedures.

Children's enjoyment is fostered by the good organisation of the premises and play

resources.

The leadership and management of the setting is good.

Children benefit from the way the rooms are organised into specific learning areas and the deployment of staff within these areas.

Staff have a commitment to develop their knowledge and skills and good use is made of local authority training and advice. There are opportunities to discuss their work at regular staff meetings and during individual appraisals. Staff have respect for the manager, stating that she is approachable and supportive in all areas.

Staff work well as a team. They are motivated and organised, support each other and are used to the routines. The comprehensive policies and procedures that are in place provide a sound framework and are effectively implemented by staff.

Overall, children are confident and enthusiastic because of the warmth and enthusiasm of the staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should

take account of the following recommendation(s):

- extend the opportunities for children to do free art work
- develop the provision for imaginative play

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop the range of resources for Information Technology

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk