



MACE Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY303942
Inspection date	05 June 2006
Inspector	Arda Halls
Setting Address	Mace Montessori School, 38-42 Millman Street, London, WC1N 3EW
Telephone number	020 7242 5842
E-mail	macemontessori@hotmail.com
Registered person	Shahid Hamid
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?

The Mace Montessori Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Mace Montessori Schools. It opened in 2005 and operates from one room in low rise building in the London Borough of Camden. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8:00 to 18:00, for 47 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Mace Montessori Day Nursery is privately owned.

There are currently 20 children, aged from two years to under five years, on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider community. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery uses the Montessori teaching method.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children talk about how to keep their bodies healthy and they recognise the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet. They help themselves to drinking water at snack time, recognising when they are hot and thirsty, for example after physical play. They make their own decision about when they have their snack, as they freely access the snack table. Children confidently make choices from a range of fruits provided by staff, which helps develop their understanding of healthy eating. Various themed projects raise children's awareness of different foods, recognising that a variety of foods contribute to a healthy balanced diet.

They are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise, which is enjoyed on a daily basis. Children show great delight and excitement when playing outside in the garden; they are having fun and are becoming proficient at negotiating their own space and an awareness of others.

Children are well cared for due to the efficient procedures in place for first aid, accidents and medication, all of which are shared with parents. They are protected from unnecessary illness and are well cared for in emergencies, as the setting has good procedures in place for accidents. There is, however, poor ventilation in the nursery, particularly in the children's toilets.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. Access to the nursery is not completely satisfactory, as the entry phone is not working. Risks to children are minimised because of the procedures staff have in place, such as using their observational skills to monitor visitors to the children's playground and the building and keeping a detailed record of the time of arrival and departure of all visitors. Fire drills have not been practised since December 2005, however, the staff are developing their written risk assessments of the premises and planning more frequent emergency evacuation practices. Children's toilets do not provide sufficient privacy for children, are not adequately ventilated and the temperature of the hot water in the children's wash basins is not safe. The adult toilet is not satisfactorily inaccessible to children and has a broken toilet seat.

Children have independent access to a wide range of safe and suitable resources which are stored in low units, therefore children play and explore safely. There is limited storage for toys and equipment in the nursery and no outdoor equipment storage, which causes the nursery to be cluttered with equipment and resources that are not in use. Children are eager to help mop up any spillages as they play with water and understand that wet floors are slippery and could cause accidents. They know how to scrape their plates and organise their cutlery at lunch time and explain to one another the best practice to use when tidying up. Staff are at hand to reinforce the clearing up procedure. Children are developing their knowledge of keeping safe in the playground as they announce to the teachers the arrival of visitors. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as they play co-operatively with each other on wheeled toys, steering carefully to avoid accidents.

Children are protected because staff have a satisfactory knowledge of child protection issues. There are, however, some omissions to the child protection policy and a limited understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a concern in the nursery. There are plans in place to update staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection. Staff or visitors who are not suitably vetted are never left alone with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery and show they are extremely comfortable and familiar with routines and all staff members. They achieve very well because staff are highly skilled at understanding individual needs and meeting them exceptionally well. Two year olds are gently introduced to the routine and eagerly participate once established, as older children are excellent role models for them. Following the Montessori approach, children self select their resources from shelves and put them back when finished. In their excitement, children forget to put away equipment and are reminded by their peers of what to do. Activities are age appropriate and skilfully supported by very experienced staff, to ensure each child is challenged and extended. Children of all ages blossom in all areas of development due to the exceptional way staff engage with them, encourage independence and value their individuality.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children greatly benefit from the highly effective way the Montessori approach is skilfully linked to the foundation stage curriculum. Children are making rapid progress towards all of the early learning goals as they are experiencing a varied and exciting range of activities. Play is always child led with excellent staff deployment to support children as needed. Children explore and investigate all senses through well planned activities, which link all areas of learning from just one experience. For example, children observe the life cycle of a butterfly. They learn about maths with patterns, measurements and shapes. Their language is developed with the introduction of new words such as "sphere" by staff to support their learning. Children use excellent fine motor control to make the intricate

patterns, learn about the elasticity of rubber bands as they don't always do what they want them to do. The children are very creative with their design. Once finished, the children remove all the bands and replace the activity back on the shelf for the next child. This system incorporates excellent self care skills and shows an exemplary approach to their own behaviour management. Children show perseverance with all activities to an exceptional standard. Their concentration periods are excellent in everything they do. For example, very difficult layered jigsaw puzzles are completed after long periods of time trying at first on their own, then with peer or adult support. Children return to the same jigsaws and other taxing activities spontaneously, day after day to develop their skills.

Children thrive in the vibrant setting. There is a constant hub of activity, as children move from one activity to another relishing every opportunity. Everyone is busy achieving their own goals and clearly very proud of their ability to complete tasks from beginning to end. For example, children self select marbles and bowls or a selection of sea shells to examine. Staff are expertly deployed and on hand to respond to the children's questions when required. The children spontaneously explore the seashells using all of their senses. They have clearly used the equipment before, as the shells are discussed between the children with long pauses as they listen carefully, to see if they can hear the sea inside the shells. They comment on the lovely colours and the smell of the shells and talk about their experiences visiting the seaside. Independently, the shells are carefully picked up and put away on the tray and on the shelf for the next child. Children's achievements with the Montessori equipment are continually and rigorously recorded and transferred into their individual stepping stones records. This enables staff to maintain the high standards of teaching. Planned activities are evaluated to influence future planning to ensure individual children's needs are met. For example, staff identify which colour stepping stone children are currently on and areas they know need to be worked on, such as scissor control, language or social skills. Staff's relationships with and knowledge of individual children is excellent. The activities and experiences provided are exceptionally well matched to children's needs and interests. Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging for all children.

Children are very competent at recognising letters and words, they link sounds with letters. They routinely find their name cards and help each other to identify their names with ease, without any assistance of pictures. Children eagerly participate in bringing objects from home to link with the letter of the week for 'show and tell', which helps them to feel fully involved in the lessons. Children listen intently to stories and directions and develop these skills through meaningful listening games, where they show respect for others talking. Children learn new vocabulary and use excellent descriptive language to express their feelings. Children explore their voices through singing and talking, sometimes playing "whispering games". They enjoy a 'birthday walk' around their nursery as they act out their years in a live demonstration. They understand how many times they have travelled around the sun when they announce their age. They demonstrate the stages of their growth with photographs or hand drawn pictures of their previous birthdays. Staff interact with children in an adult way, which shows respect and is highly effective at promoting a positive role model for them, in their conversation with their peers.

Children are very knowledgeable about their community and those of others. They

explore different cultures and festivals, for example, Chinese New Year. Children spontaneously investigate objects near and far using magnifying glasses and binoculars. They learn about the weather through meaningful discussions. For example, children ask: "Is it cold outside?" Staff suggest they go outside to find out, explaining that although the sun is bright, it doesn't always mean it will be hot. Children's learning is expertly developed, they examine pictures and verse about the month of the year, they look carefully at what people are wearing in the pictures depicting the month, they are enchanted by the weather and the weather forecasts and are eager to share their knowledge with each other. Children enjoy doing exercises following the leader. They stretch and they learn about left and right and they move their bodies to warm up and get ready for riding their bikes.

Their knowledge of mathematical concepts is exceptional. Children relish problem solving activities using the Montessori equipment. They correctly organise rods, spindles, cylinders and cubes into steps of size. They use fantastic mathematical language. Children identify a cube as beginning with the letter 'c' and show it to the other children. Sandpaper letters and numerals introduce children to the shapes of each letter and number. Their learning is reinforced with visual aids wherever possible. Excellent resources are readily available for staff to use as required, to develop an aspect of learning the children show an interest in. Children rest or play whilst listening to classical music, which creates a calm learning environment. Their creativity is extended through all aspects of learning. For example, they look at an atlas of the world, they find the map they want and they discuss what is land and what is water. They discuss what goes on in that part of the world. They examine products from different parts of the world and they link where natural materials, such as wheat and cotton, come from with the children in the nursery. Activities and experiences are rich, varied and imaginative. This is a highly stimulating and welcoming environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who have a good understanding of individual children's needs. All cultural diversities are valued and promoted through the wide range of resources throughout the nursery. Children's details include personal information which enable staff to be prepared to meet each individual child's needs. They are familiar with the routine, which enables them to feel secure. Children enjoy being given responsibilities such as serving and laying the tables for lunch, thus helping to develop their self-esteem and boost their confidence.

There are suitable arrangements in place to meet children's special individual needs. Children benefit from the effective and sensitive manner in which they are treated. Staff have plans to increase their knowledge of Special Educational Needs through training with the local Early Years Partnership.

Children and staff work harmoniously together. Staff provide a calm environment and speak to children in soft voices at all times. Children approach staff with ease when needing help to complete their tasks. They make independent choices and take

decisions; if they are unsure they are guided by a member of staff to a range of activities to choose from. Staff use their observational skills, and intervene as necessary to promote responsible behaviour by reminding children of how we treat each other. Children know that they must put away resources before moving on to the next activity. They are becoming aware of the needs of others, as staff reinforce being kind to each other.

The nursery's positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are provided with information which explains the care and education that is provided for their children. They receive in-depth information about the Montessori methods of teaching and how it is promoted, as well as information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Consequently, they are able to fully support their children's development in all the six areas of learning. Parents are invited to come into the nursery at any time, where they receive information about the progress their children are making. Information is exchanged daily at the door and parents comment that they are very happy with the amount of information they receive and they are very pleased with the progress their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from good levels of supervision from an experienced and well-qualified staff, who form a strong team. Good use is made of space to provide a safe and stimulating environment. Leadership and management of the setting are good. The head teacher has effective recruitment procedures in place and informal systems of staff induction. Appraisals are not done, however, staff meet to discuss expectations and future training needs. Staff are generally supported and encouraged in taking up training opportunities, enabling the ongoing development and improvement of the group, however, training is needed for the named special needs officer. Strong enthusiastic leadership from the head teacher, with regular discussion between staff, ensures that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together. Together they constantly monitor practice and plan for development. Clear policies and procedures are in place to support children's welfare, but notification for the complaints procedure needs updating. The office is currently being used as a store room, which is soon to be re-organised. However, records are stored securely and staff give careful attention to confidentiality.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection of Mace Montessori. There are no improvements on which to comment.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to report 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.

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 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):

- conduct a risk assessment of the nursery to ensure all areas are safe for children
- practise fire drills at regular intervals
- provide updated details of the regulator's address and telephone number for the complaints procedure.
- provide adequate ventilation in the toilets
- ensure adequate child protection procedures are in place and staff gain sufficient understanding of what to do in case of a concern

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):

- ensure named special needs teacher receives appropriate training and support

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:

