



Dawmouse Two, St. Peter's Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY311833
Inspection date	13 June 2006
Inspector	Martha Naa Ahimah Darkwah
Setting Address	St. Peter's Church Hall, St. Peter's Terrace, London, SW6 7JS
Telephone number	020 7835 5731
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Registered person	Dawmouse Montessori Nursery School Limited
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Dawmouse St Peter's Montessori Nursery School is one of two nurseries run by Dawmouse Nursery school limited. It opened in 2005 and operates from two rooms in a church hall. It is situated in Fulham in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery school at any one time. The nursery school is open each week day for 33 weeks in the year during term time. All

children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 41 children aged two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education. The nursery school currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language.

The nursery school employs seven members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualification and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and wellbeing is effectively promoted and given high priority by all staff. Children show a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. For example, they know the importance of hand washing and wash their hands after messy activities, using the toilet and before lunch. However, routines are not always effective to help reduce cross infection, as children consistently use a communal towel after washing their hands which puts them at risk of cross infection. Children spontaneously help themselves to tissues and dispose of them appropriately after use. They develop good self care skills in line with the Montessori approach. For example, children self-select individual aprons to wear for messy activities. They have easy access to a range of resources to promote independent learning.

Children's dietary requirements are met effectively through discussions with parents. Children enjoy a range of healthy nutritious foods and snacks. For example, trays of fresh fruit, vegetable pieces and dried fruit are available for self-selection and regularly replenished. However, children do not independently access small jugs of milk, water or diluted fruit juice to pour drinks for themselves. Children enjoy a wonderful social occasion during snack time when they talk about their food likes, dislikes and tastes.

Children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and enjoy daily outside play opportunities all year round. They eagerly play with a range of different sized balls. They organise games with their peers, throwing and catching as well as running after bouncy balls on their own. Children learn about spatial awareness through a variety of physical activities such as having individual carpet squares to find a space and move around with an awareness of others. Children use a wide variety of tools with skill. For example, tweezers, scissors and tongs. They practise and master fine motor control by means of regular access to a very good range of resources such as scissors and Montessori equipment. For example, children pour, use tongs and spoons to transfer objects from one container to another, thread and sort out materials.

Children benefit from most health records being in place for administering any medication and seeking emergency medical treatment or advice and accident records which helps with children's continuity of care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe within the setting as staff have identified and minimised risks. Staff are vigilant at monitoring the environment both inside and outside. For example, the gate is locked during outside play and the front door is securely locked as well as a security camera installed to monitor and prevent unauthorised people walking in.

Children are encouraged to learn about their own safety within a carefully controlled environment. Children use small china cups and plates, glass jugs and real tools and equipment. They are taught by the staff how to use these safely and how to move around the room with minimal risk. For example, children are routinely shown how to carry chairs and trays of fragile equipment. They are very well supervised at all times. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure children are well supported and safe in everything they do. Children understand they are not allowed into the kitchen and the door is kept closed at all times. Children are so engrossed in their play they do not wander. Children independently access a wide range of toys and resources which are safely displayed on low, open shelving around the room.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as key staff present at each session are knowledgeable about child protection issues and all staff are aware of the importance of passing on concerns to the supervisors. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child, in line with the Area Child Protection Committee.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thrive in the vibrant setting. They thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery school and show they are extremely comfortable and familiar with routines and all staff members. They achieve very well because staff are skilled at understanding individual needs and meeting them well. They are developing high levels of confidence and independence, as they start to move from room to room, making free choices in their play.

They have formed positive relationships with staff, whom they seek for support and comfort. The children's individual needs are met well. This is achieved through the staff's knowledge of individual children and their use of the Birth to three matters framework. Although younger children's learning is not specifically identified in the planning, staff are able to adapt activities to ensure that they receive appropriate levels of support and challenge. Their progress is recorded through links to the Montessori goals and the early learning goals. However, systems for recording young children's achievements do not reflect appropriate goals and progress made for their age and stage of development.

Younger children are gently introduced to the routine and eagerly participate once established, as older children are good role models for them. For example, following the Montessori approach where children self select their resources from shelves and

put them back when finished with, those who in their excitement forget, are reminded by their peers on 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 satisfactory.

Children's learning is supported well by staff who have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals and steps within. Staff work well together as a team. They have a positive and cheerful approach and interact easily with the children. They ask open-ended questions and make good use of the Montessori equipment to challenge the children's thinking, especially in their mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's individual learning needs are supported well through an effective key worker system and good communication amongst staff. Children benefit from daily 20 minute active learning sessions through a teaching method whereby they learn through physical activity. They reinforce project work as well as elements from all six areas covered by the early learning goals. Project themes include planets, solar system, oceans, mini beasts, festivals and dinosaurs.

Children's written records of assessment are maintained. However, although it shows progress within the Montessori method, they do not clearly identify the progress children are making through the stepping stones within the six areas of learning. Therefore, this limits how the records are used effectively to inform the next stage of planning to support children's individual development.

Children have good levels of confidence and personal independence. They have formed positive relationships with staff. They are forming good relationships with each other as they start to extend and contribute their thoughts and ideas in their play. Children make free choices in their play, accessing all areas within the setting. Children are well behaved and understand right from wrong, with consistent explanations from staff.

Play is always child led with good staff deployment to support children as needed. Children explore and investigate all senses through well planned projects with age and developmentally appropriate activities which link all areas of learning from just one experience. For example, children make creative work on oceans and discuss endangered animals, coral reef and talk about key words within regular active learning sessions. They learn about maths with patterns, measurements and shapes. Their language is developed with the introduction of new words by staff to support their learning.

Children show perseverance with all activities to an exceptional standard. Their concentration periods are good in everything they do. For example, children enjoy examining books. They re-tell familiar stories and answer questions about what they see and hear. They access mark making resources and tools independently, where they learn to form recognisable letters and many are able to write their own name.

Children have a good introduction to numbers and mathematical concepts through daily routines and challenges. They learn to solve simple number problems in planned activities, such as, identifying how many pegs are left if one is taken away. Children learn about comparisons, shape, size and measure through a range of activities using the Montessori equipment, such as pouring activities, using cut fruits, using 3-D towers and using rods.

There is a constant hub of activity as children move from one activity to another, relishing every opportunity. Every child is busy achieving their own goals and clearly very proud of their ability to complete tasks from beginning to the end. Children's achievements with the Montessori equipment are continually recorded, however, the record is not transferred into their individual stepping stones records. This limits staff ability to maintain the high standards of teaching and plan to meet children's progress through the stepping stones. Planned activities are not 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 their knowledge of individual children is sound. The activities and experiences provided are well matched to children's needs and interests.

Children eagerly participate in bringing objects from home to link with the letter of the week for 'show and tell'. For example, a three-year-old shows his quilt for the letter 'Q'. Children listen intently to stories, 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.

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 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. Sandpaper letters and numerals introduce children to the shapes of each. 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. 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 well behaved and gain a high level of self-control. They express their needs appropriately, learn to negotiate conflict and become sensitive and respectful in their interactions with others. For example, children show care for each other by asking if they would like help before stepping in to assist. Older children help younger ones to settle in the nursery through a well established buddy system.

Staff are extremely skilled and sensitive in their management of children and their behaviour. For example, when a child finds it difficult to express himself and raises

his voice, he looks to the staff who calmly defuse the situation by showing him the correct way to deal with his problem. They ask him to explain to them first what is making him angry and then to the other child, supporting him at every stage and checking out the learning process for both children involved. Children play a dynamic role in the setting. They are animated and enthusiastic as they make choices about their activities and care. They take responsibility for their actions and contribute to the development of the routines. Children are involved in clearing away and respond exceptionally well to both the staff and their peers direction to do so when they hear the music that signals end of free choice play. Staff give children notice verbally at least ten minutes before the end of free choice play. This enables children to complete the task on hand.

Children with special educational needs are well supported. The activities are well matched to the children's needs to help them gain in confidence and make very good progress. Staff constantly praise and encourage, reinforcing sounds and letters to develop their language skills. Children gain a well-developed respect for others and their beliefs, cultures and traditions. Staff provide a highly stimulating and welcoming environment which fully reflects the children's backgrounds and the wider community. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered well.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children greatly benefit from the sound working partnership between the staff, parents and external agencies to ensure children's individual needs are met. Parents are kept informed about current topics through newsletters. They show a commitment to their children's learning by encouraging satisfactory involvement in objects from home being brought in for 'show and tell'. Parents are really welcomed in to the group. The settling in process each morning is exceptional. Parents know the routine, they assist their child to self register, select an activity and those who wish, play for a while until they are ready to leave. There is an informal, yet valuable sharing of information between staff and parents. Children are so settled due to the effective, relaxed atmosphere created by the adults. Parents are kept very well informed about their individual children's progress through informal discussions and regular meetings with their key workers.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The setting is well organised and regular communication systems are in place, for example, staff meetings and planning meetings. Children benefit as the staff regularly update their knowledge in childcare. Staff intend to attend additional training such as the Birth to three matters and Foundation Stage training. The staff team work effectively together to deliver an interesting and exciting curriculum for the children. They have very high expectations for children's learning. However, the system to assess the quality of care and education children receive is not fully comprehensive to identify the gaps.

Children are developing their independence as staff make good use of the space provided and the resources are well organised. They develop self-esteem as they progress at their own pace with lots of positive encouragement from staff.

All of the required policies and procedures work in practice to safeguard the children's welfare, care and learning. They are reviewed regularly. Children's individual records are well maintained. However, although parents receive information highlighting what aspects of learning are being covered, children's developmental records are not regularly shared with parents. The setting meets the needs of the range of 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- review the hygiene procedure in relation to use of communal towels to reduce cross infection
- increase the selection of toys and resources which reflect positive images of diversity to help children gain a greater understanding of the wider world

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):

- develop the recording of children's progress in line with the stepping stones

and shared with parents on regular basis to the benefit of staff, parents and children

- make significant improvement to increase children's access and use information technology, programmable toys for children to explore as well as how things work and caring for living things.

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