



St Andrews Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY290026
Inspection date	18 July 2005
Inspector	Siobhan O'Callaghan

Setting Address	Garston Manor, High Elms Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 0JX
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Registered person	Marlin Montessori Schools
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Andrews Montessori Preparatory School and Elementary School opened in 1991, in the Royal Caledonian School, Bushey and later moved to Garston Manor, Watford in 1997. It operates from Garston Manor House in Garston. The school offers provision for children up to the age of 13 years. The full Day Care setting utilises a purpose built unit. 'The Nest' caters for children under the age of 3 and 'The Children's House' accommodates children aged from 3 years in a more formal Montessori setting. A maximum of 64 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years may attend the provision at any one time. The Day Care is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 48 weeks of the year. The out of school provision caters for

children after school until 18:00 and through the school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The out of school provision is located in the large manor house which offers independent school places to children up to 13 years. The scheme offers places to 16 children between the ages of 5 and 8 years. These children have access to a computer and study area, lounge, dining room and large hall. There are extensive grounds utilised for outdoor play opportunities.

There are currently 40 children from 7 months to 5 years on roll within the Day Care, the Out Of School provision has 10 children on roll. There are 8 children receiving funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The provision currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The provision employs seven full-time staff and two part-time staff. There are six members of staff which includes the manager holding appropriate early years qualifications. There are two members of staff working towards early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from the Local Authority. The school follows the Montessori method of teaching.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enthusiastically utilise the outside play areas and adjacent fields. They are keen to splash around in the paddling pool and confidently access the climbing resources on offer to them. Children enjoy parachute games, where their skills in coordination and control are developing. Impromptu trips to the local park give children opportunities to explore their local environment and further develop their physical skills through the use of alternative equipment in the park. Babies have their own secure garden with appropriate resources, they too have access to the playing fields.

Children are learning about the importance of personal hygiene through their daily routines. They brush their teeth after snacks and wash their hands after using the toilet, however washing hands before meals was forgotten. Secure procedures are in place to prevent the spread of infection within the baby rooms, staff wear gloves when changing nappies and there are separate wipes and creams in place for each child. The environment is kept clean, staff ensure that nappy bins are emptied twice a day. Appropriate measures are in place to protect children if they are unwell, and necessary records are shared with parents if their child has an accident. There is no written permission requested from parents at the time of placement to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future.

Children generally benefit from a healthy diet, the provision provides nutritious meals

throughout the school year, however during the holidays older children bring their own packed lunches. Parents are responsible for their contents, there is no guidance from the provision as to healthy options that parents could provide, and no information with regards to being sensitive to children with allergies. Babies enjoy wholesome meals, they are eager to eat their sausages, rice and vegetables. They sit at a comfortable height with appropriate child sized furniture, staff are close by to support them where necessary. Snack menus displayed confirm that children are on the whole offered a balance of healthy and sweet options such as fruit, bread sticks and cookies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment which has been purpose built with their needs in mind. All furniture and fittings are child sized and thus appropriate for their ages and stages of development. The environment is organised effectively to promote children's growing independence. There are a good range of safe and clean resources within the whole of the day care unit, these would enable children to make progress in all areas of their development. Resources within the outside play area were appropriate and challenging, although they were in need of a clean. The staff team are aware of potential safety issues and would take any concerns to the head teacher, however there are no daily risk assessments in place. Staff are well deployed thus supervise children well. There are regular fire drills to teach both staff and children of the most effective ways of evacuating the building, all staff have received health and safety training.

Children are learning about the importance of keeping themselves safe, they know how to use the bathroom facilities appropriately, and know why their lunches must be stored in the fridge. Older children are sensitive to the younger children's needs when they access the paddling pool together. In the warm weather children are encouraged to wear sun hats and parents are informed of the need to apply sun cream to their children before they come to the provision. This is not adequate as some children did not have hats and thus were not protected from the sun, there were no spare hats available within the provision.

Children's safety is given due emphasis, the majority of staff are qualified within early years and have been through vetting procedures. Staff have attended child protection training, they have an adequate knowledge and understanding of procedures to follow should they have concerns regarding children within their care. However incident records are not carefully monitored and concerns are not appropriately followed through. Staff are generally not confident to challenge parents, when they raise inappropriate remarks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and content within their environment. During the holiday

season routines are very flexible, hence staff take the lead from the children as to how they would like to spend their time. Older children confidently make their requests to go to the park. Staff are happy to honour their suggestions, as high staff ratios ensure they can be safely supervised on impromptu outings. Babies were also taken to the park within their buggies. Children's self-esteem is promoted through staff praise and encouragement as they achieve tasks, babies are delighted with the attention they receive when they confidently climb the small ramp and stairs within their classroom. Children's work is valued, this was evident within the displays of their work within the baby room, and their art folders which are shared with parents.

Children are eager to participate in activities, older children help to mix the ingredients for chocolate crispy cakes. They are patient in waiting for their turn, co-operating sensibly with their peers to ensure they are all involved. Children enthusiastically engage within parachute games out in the field. Older children enjoy explaining the rules to their younger peers. Staff enable children to take charge and show their initiative. Children relax and play co-operatively with their peers in the paddling pool, they are under the close supervision of staff. Children are excited to take part in creative art activities, they eagerly paint their feet to create footprint pictures.

Children have developed secure relationships with staff and are learning to work harmoniously with their peers, they confidently chat about their experiences of working at home during a relaxed lunch session. Children thrive on the child centred approach to routines, which is evident during the holidays. Adults are calm and patient with children thus positive role models contribute to their good behaviour. Children are on the whole enjoying and achieving individual goals within a relaxed environment with staff who are sensitive to their individual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed into the provision. Staff treat children with respect, they listen to their requests to do specific activities, for example to play in the pool or make cakes. On the whole these wishes are honoured. Staff are kind and caring with the children, they encourage babies to achieve tasks such as building a tower with bricks and learning how to help keep the environment tidy. Effective partnerships with parents ensures they are kept well-informed of their children's time spent within the provision, particularly for the babies. Comprehensive records are shared with parents informing them of how their children have eaten, how long they have slept and how many nappy changes they have had. Parents expressed their satisfaction with the care and attention their children receive, they find staff approachable and willing to discuss their child's needs. Children with special educational needs are fully included within the provision, there are appropriate procedures in place to support these children, however relevant documentation should be readily available for all staff to refer to.

Children are presented with an excellent range of multi-cultural resources that helps them to develop a positive attitude towards others within the community and the

wider world. Children are learning to work together, they wait their turn during cooking activities and when playing group games with the parachute. It is evident that older children are developing close peer friendships through their abilities to play and work co-operatively. Staff promote polite manners such as please and thank you at meal times. Children enjoy the social experience of lunch time with staff sitting close by and joining in with their conversations. This clearly boosts children's self-esteem. Staff set clear boundaries which supports children to behave in an appropriate way.

Children are becoming aware of their own needs and the needs of others, older children independently put rubbish in the bin and tidy away their things after lunch. They help themselves to drinks and snacks. Babies are also able to make their needs known, they point to their cups thus letting staff know that they are thirsty and need a drink. Older children show sensitivity to younger children and enjoy taking on this responsibility.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a qualified team of staff, the majority of whom have been through appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures. Thus children are on the whole well-protected and supported by staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. However the named person in charge of the older children during the holiday period is not suitably qualified to take on this role.

Children's individual needs are managed and monitored well through a key worker system, this ensures that all children have a designated member of staff who is responsible for their individual progress and achievements. Key workers also liaise with parents keeping them updated with relevant information. High staff ratios have a positive impact on children's experiences, they receive good support and attention which contributes towards their all round development. Staff present the children with an interesting range of activities that excites them, thus they are keen to participate. Children are becoming self-sufficient, this is fully promoted through the organisation of the environment and resources which are all easily accessible. During school terms the routines are more structured, and Montessori teaching forms a large part of the curriculum, hence there is a marked difference to the management of the setting during school holidays.

The majority of necessary documentation is in place to promote children's good health, enjoyment and achievement, although these could be enhanced further to improve children's safety. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

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):

- promote parents to provide healthier lunch options for their children, ensuring that they have clear guidance about the need to avoid certain foods such as nuts to protect children with allergies. Ensure that hygiene procedures for washing hands are enforced at appropriate times of the day
- improve safety within the provision through the development of risk assessments, these should include the maintenance of resources in the outside play areas. Improve children's safety within the sun, by ensuring that spare sun hats are always available
- develop staff's awareness of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, by ensuring this literature is readily available
- improve the deployment of staff, to ensure that children within all groups are managed by appropriately qualified adults. Improve the management of documentation to ensure the close monitoring of incident records, and the crucial following through of any concerns. Staff are to develop their confidence in dealing with child protection concerns and in particular liaising with parents.

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