



Oliver's Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100545
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Catherine Greene
Setting Address	52 Belsize Square, London, NW3 4HN
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Registered person	Katherine Jane Johnston
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 satisfactory. 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?

Oliver's Montessori Nursery School opened in 1985 and operates from a purpose built building on the grounds of St. Peter's Church in the Belsize Park area. The premises consists of an activity room, kitchen, toilets and an office. There is also a fully enclosed outside play area. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open from 09:00 to 15:00, for 44 weeks a year. The hours of attendance vary to suit parents as the group also offers sessional care.

There are currently 26 children on roll. This includes funded three and four year olds. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently four staff that work with children, they all have Montessori qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are sufficiently protected from the risk of cross infection because hygiene throughout the nursery is of a satisfactory standard, areas are uncluttered and resources are well organised. However, there is no cleaner for the nursery meaning that staff have to take on this additional responsibility. This takes away valuable time for curriculum planning and meetings.

Children are being encouraged in their independence, they are reminded to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the session. They are provided with suitable healthy snacks such as fruit and homemade gingerbread men, they choose from milk or water to drink. Their lunch boxes, which parents provide, are suitably stored with ice packs within. Staff liaise well with parents, ensuring that any children's special dietary requirements are appropriately met.

Children's health and safety is promoted, there are procedures in place for first aid and emergency treatment. There are detailed recordings of any accidents or administration of medication ensuring the parents are kept informed as they are asked to sign all entries made.

Through topic work and daily discussion children learn well about healthy living and the importance of exercise. Each day children have good opportunities to enjoy physical activities and practise their co-ordination skills. For example, they climb and balance on the climbing frame, use wheeled toys and thoroughly enjoy the parachute activity inside during wet play. Children can rest according to their needs as the setting provides comfortable seating in the book corner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled they are familiar with the routines and environment. The hall used is spacious, allowing children to move and play freely. Children's work and photographs of their activities are displayed, this makes the environment friendly and welcoming to children and their families. Staff are aware of any hazards in the setting such as the flooring in the hallway that is warped following a flood, they take appropriate measures, including regular risk assessments, to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

Children's safety is well maintained within the setting because they are in a secure premises. The staff monitor security at the front door by greeting parents and callers and asking visitors to sign the visitors' book.

Children are confident and secure as they discuss routines, activities and topics. They talk about being healthy and staying safe and are aware of the rules and boundaries. Children have access to a range of equipment, resources and materials which are safe and suitable for their use. The furniture and storage units are of child height and size and are organised so children can access them easily. This enables them to develop independence in their play and daily activities. Children are protected through staff's secure knowledge and understanding of health and

safety issues. The deputy manager has recently attended training in child protection and is the designated person for any concerns. Newly appointed staff are due to attend child protection training to update their skills and knowledge.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy their time spent at the nursery, they are encouraged to have fun. The topics and activities provided inspire their learning and they spend their time purposefully. Staff relate very well with the children and all areas of their learning are well promoted. Children are interested in the natural world around them and are excited as they hear thunder outside and the sky becomes dark. Staff make use of this opportunity, expertly, to encourage some discussion about the weather, children use their imaginations and staff extend this by telling comforting stories, when some children verbalise that they are scared.

Staff are given key roles in the group; for example, for settling in new children and working closely with children and parents. This helps ensure each child's progress is monitored and their learning is encouraged on an individual basis. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage which they have translated very well, in planning and providing a thorough Montessori curriculum.

Children take part in a wide range of interesting and worthwhile activities that engage the children's attention. The planning used shows what children should learn through their activities and includes how to challenge children appropriately according to their stage of development. This planning is shared with parents so they can be involved in their children's learning. Children are encouraged to think and put their thoughts into words through the adult's good use of questioning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good individual progress because staff have a secure understanding of how children learn effectively and use their self-chosen play to extend their learning. They adapt their questioning techniques, according to the age and ability of the child, and implement Montessori teaching methods to introduce an exciting range of activities and experiences to all children. Teachers encourage children to lead their own learning and this is successfully achieved by a well developed routine, with a good balance of child and adult initiated activities. Staff observe and monitor children's progress regularly and this is used to identify individual targets for children to work towards each term. Realistic expectations of children and good individual knowledge helps them to consolidate their learning before moving onto the next stage. As a result, the curriculum is tailored to individual children's needs and abilities, which ensures effective support and sufficient challenges are provided to help children achieve their individual potential.

Children are confident in the setting and understand when they should concentrate and listen. They enjoy their discussion times and are very attentive during story times and enjoy books and rhymes. Staff plan interesting activities in small group work, that encourages children's language and communication skills and mathematical development. In their daily play children

use number rods in various ways, they count the number of children present each day and discuss the date of their birthdays. They enjoy recognising numerals during counting and memory games.

They have many opportunities to develop their creativity; for example, they can paint and draw freely and have access to a variety of tools and craft materials, they are very proud of their Christmas mobiles that they have made to take home. The children love to perform and have been busy rehearsing their Christmas concert which will be presented for parents and staff. They are very confident when singing and learning their lines and delight in the praise and encouragement that they receive from staff.

Children learn about their lives, the environment and about others lives through interesting topic work and themes. The recent topic of seasons has been used to enable the children to collect Autumn leaves that they have made into attractive collages. They learn about themselves and their families through discussion and topic work and talk about their local community and the wider world. There are interesting resources in the setting that help children to begin to learn about their own and others different cultures and beliefs.

Children are eager to learn and concentrate well showing good perseverance with activities. Children listen with great excitement to 'Pingu' the puppet as he tells stories and 'forgets' his sounds. They confidently search for items beginning with the same sound and notice letters in familiar words around the room. Children independently use a range of tools and materials and freely access a variety of resources from the different presentations being worked on in the room.

Effective use is made of time and resources to provide children with opportunities to engage in physical activities, they thoroughly enjoy the parachute as they hide under and throw it into the air. There are limited opportunities for children to experience new technology. However there are plans to re-introduce the computer and further develop this area later in the term.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very confident and show good self-esteem responding well to continual praise and encouragement. They work well together and individually, for example, they are always busy and purposefully occupied. Children co-operate and take turns with the activities and during circle time. They take turns to help pour drinks and clear up their cups after snack time.

Children behave very well, their positive behaviour is encouraged by the staff, who offer continuous encouragement, praise and act as good role models. They have clear boundaries that they understand because they are involved in setting their own ground rules. Children are invited to make choices and decisions regarding which activity they like to do. There are good procedures for recording children's individual needs and they receive appropriate support and encouragement from staff when learning new skills.

Children learn about themselves and the wider world through planned activities and discussions; for example, around a variety of cultural festivals, helping them to understand and value the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

There is a designated member of staff responsible for children with learning difficulties or disabilities. This ensures that all children are able to learn and develop appropriately in the setting. Good methods of communication are fundamental for children and staff are skilled at ensuring appropriate measures are in place. Children learn that others have different needs and have good relationships with each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are very involved in the activities of the nursery and are welcomed into the setting. They help on occasions and take part in fundraising, contribute to topic work and share their skills. Children benefit from this open and close partnership. Staff are always available to talk to parents ensuring children's individual needs are met. There is a parents' handbook giving information about the curriculum offered, about the topics for the term and the planned learning objectives. Parents are invited to spend time in the pre-school observing their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff use the premises well to provide children with a range of activities. Children receive support through good adult to child ratios at all times during the session. Staff are well deployed and are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. As a result of this the children are secure and settled. Staff are experienced in childcare, they receive good induction when joining the setting and are encouraged to train and attend short courses to develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding of childcare and education.

The provider has developed an effective operational plan, including a good range of policies and procedures. These are currently being reviewed to ensure they are in line with current legislation and guidance for example the child protection procedure does not currently contain details of the regulator. The setting is in the process of appointing a new day to day manager who is committed to making continuous improvements for the nursery.

Staff are suitably checked to work with the children and the daily registration systems used are suitable with the times of adults and children's attendance adequately recorded for overall safety. The setting ensures satisfactory adult to child ratios are maintained, this allows staff to continuously support children's play and activities and provide individual care and attention.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The deputy manager and staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals. They have a strong vision for the future and development of the nursery. Plans are in place to ensure staff receive regular appraisals and weekly staff meetings are used to help build a strong team. Staff meetings are used for staff training, to evaluate the provision offered, to plan activities based on the Montessori curriculum and to discuss children's progress and individual needs.

The nursery has fostered strong links with the local community and have received very good support from parents using the service. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was required to make sure that a suitable manager responsible for the day to day running of the nursery was in post. As a result they are currently in the process of appointing a suitably qualified manager. In addition they were asked to replace some items of furniture and ensure floors were thoroughly cleaned. Furniture has been replaced and flooring has been cleaned. Repairs are on going as a result of recent flood damage. They were also required to maintain a visitors record that is now in place and complete.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received a complaint in October 2006 relating to Standard 1: Suitable Person. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit on 12/10/2006 to discuss concerns. An action was set. Ofsted was satisfied that the provider's response was appropriate and the provider remains qualified for 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):

- ensure additional staff are available to carry out domestic tasks and maintain premises and equipment
- update staff knowledge and understanding regarding child protection and include details of the regulator on the child protection policy.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to find out about information and technology and increase opportunities for role and imaginative play
- continue to develop training opportunities to enable all staff to support children in making progress towards the early learning goals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk