



Montessori Infant Community

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337464
Inspection date	11 January 2007
Inspector	Linda Close
Setting Address	The Contact Centre, 60 Hambalt Road, Clapham, LONDON, SW4 9EH
Telephone number	0207 498 8324
E-mail	ros@bowlses.demon.co.uk
Registered person	Rosalind Bowles & Lucia Gomez-Santana
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Sessional 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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Montessori Infant Community was registered in 2006. It is situated in the contact centre in Clapham in the London borough of Lambeth. It is close to the open spaces of Clapham Common. It operates from a large hall with toilets and kitchen. There is no outdoor play area at the setting. Other groups use additional rooms within the premises. There are nine children on roll at the time of this inspection and all are present. The group currently opens two days a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, term time only. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00. The manager and two members of staff work with the children. The manager and one member of staff have appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children can be cared for appropriately if they have an accident because all staff have attended relevant training. Children's nappies are changed following a hygienic procedure in a well organised nappy change area. They learn about good hygiene when staff encourage them to wash their hands after using the toilet and after painting activities. The children also wipe their hands clean before eating their snacks. Children's snacks are served in clean surroundings. They play with toys that are bright, clean and new. Children do not attend if they are unwell or infectious which prevents the unnecessary spread of infection.

Children do not eat meals at the setting but they do eat healthy snacks with relish. They enjoy fresh fruit and breadsticks and have drinks of water or fruit juice. Children can have drinks of fresh water at any time. They are only given food that agrees with them and meets parental approval because staff consult parents at registration.

Children have good opportunities for healthy exercise. They play energetically with wheeled toys in the hall. They make good use of a wooden slide and a wooden bridge which they negotiate with growing ease. Children have a lot of fun using a scrambling tunnel. There is no outdoor play space at the hall but the children have ample space indoors to run and play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure hall. Staff ensure that the door connecting the hall to the rest of the building is kept locked to prevent children leaving unnoticed or strangers entering unobserved. Children play on a level, clean floor surface and the heating is maintained at a comfortable temperature. Children have ample space for play and a comfortable area for snacks. They can rest in an area where low mats are arranged and which is divided from the play space. Children do not benefit from having attractive pictures and art work displayed because the owners of the hall do not permit displays.

Children can sit comfortably on sturdy low chairs at low tables. They play with good quality Montessori resources that are carefully chosen to meet their age and stage of development. Their toys and resources are mostly new and in very good condition. Most of the Montessori equipment is made from natural materials and the children can choose freely from the range that is set out for them. However, children have limited access to resources for imaginative play and role play beyond the practical life equipment that is provided. Art and craft materials are also limited.

Children are safe in most respects in the setting. Their toys and resources are visually checked for cleanliness and safety at the beginning and end of every session. Electric sockets are covered and no trip hazards were observed. Children cannot access the stacks of tables and adult chairs around the hall because barriers prevent this. Safety gates prevent children from accessing the kitchen, the store cupboard and the steps to the toilet area. They are always escorted to

the toilet facilities to keep them safe. Notices are in place to indicate the fire exits and extinguishers are placed around the hall. However, records show that children and staff have not practised an emergency evacuation since the setting opened. In addition, there are no notices displayed in the setting to advise staff what procedure to follow in such a situation. This is a breach of regulation which is a potential risk to children's safety.

Children are safeguarded in relation to child protection issues because the manager and staff are appropriately informed. They are aware of the signs and symptoms that suggest ill-treatment and know what steps to take if they have concerns for the safety of the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's independence is nurtured very well in the setting. They enter a well prepared environment where they have free choice. They are encouraged to take and replace the toys and resources that attract their interest. Children learn to manage buttons and zips using the dressing frames designed for this purpose. They wipe their own hands and then peel and eat fruit and pour drinks at snack time with the minimum of assistance. Children look in a mirror to see if their faces are clean after snack time which encourages self-care.

Children can choose from a selection of books in the reading area. They share books individually and in small groups with a member of staff and learn to enjoy the company of others. Staff point to the pictures and help the children to learn new words. The children are encouraged to talk about what they see which helps to develop their oral communication skills. They chose shakers and castanets from a basket and explored the noises each one makes. Staff helped the children to name the instruments.

Children develop skills related to practical life including setting the table, pouring water and opening and closing drawers and boxes. In these activities they are, to some extent, able to take on the role of others. However, there are insufficient resources and opportunities for imaginative role play overall. Children have free access to an art easel and staff assist and encourage the children to make marks with paint. There are some planned tasks that involve the use of glue and paper. However, there is not enough opportunity for the children to develop their creativity in this setting. They are not involved in messy play or activities that enable them to handle and explore a wide enough range of materials. Staff are not fully secure in their knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework. They support some, but not all aspects of this framework in their work with the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Every child in the setting is assured of respect and understanding of his or her individual needs. Staff find out about children's home language, religion and cultural background at the time of registration. Children's individual likes, fears and dislikes are also discussed with parents so that staff can care take this information into account when they are caring for the children. The staff themselves and some of the children's books reflect positive images of diverse people

and cultures but few activities and other resources help children to understand and respect diversity.

There are no children currently attending the setting who have special needs. However, staff have some experience of caring for children with learning difficulties. They are aware of the importance of observing and making notes, discussions with parents, setting targets and ensuring that all children are included in everything that the setting has to offer.

Children respond well to the staff on occasions when two of them want the same toy. They listen to the staff who do not raise their voices and always speak kindly to the children. Staff get down to the children's level and explain that other people have feelings too and they must share and take turns with favourite toys. Most children are beginning to understand taking turns and they are easily distracted with other activities if they are too young to understand. The children are happy and well behaved in the setting.

Children are assured of continuity of care because the staff and their parents share their knowledge and observations of the children. Children's specific needs are discussed at registration and informal discussions take place between the adults on a regular basis. Staff make brief notes about children's progress and they share their observations with parents. In addition, the parents can take part in some activities. They are invited to join in with singing and rhymes at the end of each morning. They are welcome to talk with the staff on a daily basis if they wish. The adults work well together when children are potty training.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider and the manager work together well to ensure that children are cared for by properly qualified staff at all times. The provider carries out the necessary checks when staff join the setting to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. She conscientiously checks staff first aid qualifications and arranges for them to attend first aid refresher courses when necessary. Informal discussions have taken place amongst the staff and further training has been identified, although places on suitable courses have not yet been found. The provider ensures that the correct ratio of adults to children is maintained at all times. She checks the setting and the resources daily to ensure that children are safe. However, she has not arranged emergency evacuation practices nor has she displayed the relevant procedure as a guide for staff.

The required documentation is in place with almost all of the necessary details. Attendance is recorded each day but the time of each child's arrival and departure is not routinely noted. Medication and accident records are in place, although they have not been needed as yet. The provider keeps registration forms for each child on the premises so that important details such as emergency contact numbers are always to hand. A complete file of policies and procedures is maintained and made accessible to parents. Any notes made about individual children's progress are available for parents to share. 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

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents which they can see on request. The record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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):

- ensure that fire evacuation is practised regularly and that the fire evacuation procedure is displayed
- ensure that a record is kept of children's times of arrival and departure
- provide a better range of resources and activities that will nurture children's knowledge and understanding of diversity
- take steps to extend the provision for imaginative play, creative play and messy play.

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