



St Michael's Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509698
Inspection date	28 February 2007
Inspector	Rowena Ann Bentley
Setting Address	Elm Bank Gardens, Barnes, London, SW13 ONX
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Registered person	Deborah Lee Goldberg
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 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?

St. Michael's Nursery School was registered under the present owner in 2000. It operates from two rooms in a church hall in Barnes in the London borough of Richmond. The nursery school serves the local area.

The group are registered for 44 children aged between two and under five years. There are currently 40 children on roll. This includes 26 funded three-year-olds and 11 funded four-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The group currently supports one child who speaks English as an additional language. Children with disabilities are welcomed and supported and there are two children on roll.

The school opens five days a week during term time. Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:30.

Eleven staff are employed to work with the children; five staff are full time and six are part time. Of these, five hold early years and Montessori qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The school uses Montessori teaching methods alongside the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted as they play in a clean environment where staff follow good hygiene practices. Children take responsibility for their personal hygiene and learn the importance of washing hands after using the toilet. Pictures illustrating this routine are displayed in toilets at low level to remind children to wash their hands. Children's health is well maintained as staff work closely with parents and know children's individual health needs. A care plan is put in place to safeguard children who have allergies. The risk of infection to children is minimised by the sick children's policy. There are two members of staff who hold first aid certificates so children receive appropriate care if they have an accident.

Healthy snacks are provided and through activities such as sampling different fruits and growing vegetables children are learning what foods are good for them. Children can help themselves to a drink and snack at any time during the session. They competently pour their own drinks and wash and put away their beaker when they have finished.

Children enjoy regular physical activity indoors and outside which promotes good health. They are developing physical skills as they run, climb, use balancing equipment and manoeuvre bikes and buggies and have lots of fun in the outdoor area. In addition to this children have opportunities to participate in drama, yoga, music and movement sessions which add a different dimension to their physical development. Children are developing fine motor skills and good hand eye co-ordination as they draw, paint, roll and cut dough and create collage pictures. They confidently use a variety of resources such as tongs and tweezers, spoons, thread laces and fasten buckles, use magnets and mechanical equipment such as a coffee grinder.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised and spacious environment where they can move around freely and play safely. They are closely supervised by staff who regularly carry out risk assessments to minimise hazards and ensure children's safety. The door at the main entrance is secure and children are greeted as they arrive. The drop off and pick up policy is used effectively to keep children safe. Fire fighting equipment is in place and checked. Children and staff practise the emergency evacuation procedure which helps them to become familiar with the procedure in the event of an emergency.

Children benefit from a very good range of play materials and resources. These are set out to make them attractive to children and the environment is welcoming, for example, fresh flowers on the tables and an abundance of children's art work displayed. Equipment is stored using

open-fronted shelving so it is easily accessible to children and they can choose what they would like to do and this encourages independence.

Staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child in their care and some members of staff have attended child protection training. However, not all staff are familiar with child protection terminology and as a result children's safety is not fully supported in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at the school eagerly and with enthusiasm. They are encouraged to explore and experiment and consequently they are motivated and keen to learn. Staff effectively combine Montessori teaching with the Foundation Stage curriculum to provide a stimulating learning environment. A good range of activities appropriate for children's stage of development are planned daily. Staff work together to develop short, medium and long term plans. These are evaluated and observations of children's achievement used to help staff plan for the next stage of development.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress across the six areas of learning because staff effectively use the resources, and understand how to create an environment in which children are interested and want to learn. Planning and assessment of children's development clearly links to Early Learning Goals. Activity plans show that children are exposed to a very good range of experiences although outdoor play is only included during the summer term plan. Staff observe children daily and record their progress and achievements. Children and staff relate very well to one another. Children are encouraged to learn at their own pace as they select equipment, complete a task and tidy away. Children confidently approach staff for help and support. Staff respond with interest as children engage them in conversation and display good listening skills providing an excellent role model for children. Children have good relationships with one another. They show kindness and consideration as they play by taking turns and sharing fairly.

Children are learning to count confidently and reliably and recognise written numbers. Effective use of equipment enables children to learn early mathematical concepts of addition and subtraction. Children solve mathematical problems during their play as they regularly construct, pour, weigh and sort objects. They learn about size, shape, pattern and sequence as they use Montessori equipment and during creative activities. Children's writing and early reading skills are well promoted as children learn that sounds and letters form words. Children recognise their written names and many children can write their own name and independently label their work. Children enjoy stories in groups and the book corner is comfortable and inviting. Children are able to choose from a varied range of books and routinely select books for pleasure, turn pages with care and demonstrate that they understand that print carries meaning.

Children have opportunities to develop imaginative play through planned activities such as drama, acting out a story and dressing up for festival celebrations. They also use their

imagination during play, for example, three boys made a large construction with wooden bricks and described what they had made as 'the middle of the earth where there are volcanoes and lava'. Children's creativity is well promoted during art and craft sessions which are included in the curriculum planning. They have daily access to collage materials and pencils and pens for drawing. They create pictures using boxes, cloth, re-cycled materials and stick these together using glue, tape and staples. Art displays show the range of creative activities that children participate in.

Children are developing an understanding of the world in which they live through interesting and fulfilling activities. They conduct simple science experiments using magnets and learn about weather and temperature in different parts of the world that are hot or cold. Children learn how to care for living things as they handle snails and learn about the life cycle of the frog. The garden provides opportunities for children to plant seeds, grow flowers and vegetables and they learn they need water and sunshine to grow. Children enjoy harvesting potatoes, cooking and eating them. Children have access to some programmable toys and mechanical equipment but this is limited and so they do not have sufficient access to a range of information technology.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in an environment where they are valued and respected. Children develop confidence and self-esteem as they are encouraged to be independent and make choices about what they do. Children learn about other cultures and family traditions through well planned activities and have access to a variety of suitable resources. Festival celebrations take place throughout the year giving children a positive view of the wider world. Children with disabilities are welcomed in the school. Their needs are assessed and staff and parents work with other professionals to meet the child's needs.

Staff caring for the children set a very good example to them. They are polite and considerate and make codes of behaviour clear. As a result children are well behaved and co-operative. They effectively learn to take turns, share and work together in small groups. There is a behaviour policy which outlines how children's behaviour will be managed. This does not include instances of bullying and so the policy does not fully support children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from good relations between parents and staff which are friendly and supportive. Parents receive information about the school which includes details about the curriculum and planning. Parents are welcomed into the group and their skills utilised, for example, parents come into the school and lead topic activities. Parents are asked for their views using the comments book and through questionnaires and regular newsletters. Their suggestions are used to develop and improve practice. There is a system in place for sharing children's progress with parents and they are invited to parent's evenings and open days. Each child has a record book which details their progress in each Early Learning Goal and is illustrated with photographs. This offers a permanent record for each child of their time at the school. Parents approached during the inspection spoke with enthusiasm about the school and the dedicated and helpful staff team.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a well-organised environment in which they become familiar with the routine and know what is expected of them. As a result children are secure and have a sense of belonging. Staff work well as a team. They supervise children closely and make sure they are happily engaged in meaningful activities, and are monitored effectively when using equipment. Required documentation for the safe and effective management of the nursery school is in place. Policies and procedures are followed by staff which keep children safe, well cared for and promote their health and development.

The leadership and management is good. The staff team are led by a manager who provides an excellent role model and is committed to providing a stimulating educational environment for young children. She promotes good practice and is continually assessing the provision through evaluation and seeking parent's views. Staff have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and combine this with Montessori teaching methods to effectively support children's learning and development. Staff are encouraged to extend their knowledge through further training. Regular meetings where staff share ideas and discuss children's progress ensure good communication within the team.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last care inspection recommendations were made in relation to child protection information, equal opportunities policy and children's safety. The provider has addressed these recommendations and as a result children's care and welfare is safeguarded. Child protection information is available and the equal opportunities policy has been amended. Children's safety has improved as furniture is stored so it does not pose a hazard, cleaning materials are inaccessible and children are unable to lock themselves in the toilet.

Following the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to consider improving the information given to parents on the Early Learning Goals and their children's overall progress and development. The provider has addressed these points and parents receive information about the nursery curriculum, topic work and activities through regular newsletters. Children's progress is recorded through written observations and photographs and this is shared with parents.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order 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 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 staff are familiar with the terminology used for child protection
- include reference to bullying in the behaviour management 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):

- improve the provision of information and communication technology
- consider including outdoor play in the activity planning throughout the year.

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