



## Sitara Toto Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY284043
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Anneliese Fox-Jones
<b>Setting Address</b>	Scout Activity Centre, Well End Road, Well End, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 5PR
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Shital Shah
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Sitara Toto Montessori opened in 2004. The nursery operates from two rooms situated on the site of Well End Activity Centre, in a secluded wooded area. The site is within easy access of Borehamwood, Shenley and close to the A1(M). The group has a wide catchment area. The hall is well utilised by other groups. The nursery children mainly have access to one large hall. The building is set within a large wooded area which is used for walks and rambles. The group also has access to an enclosed outdoor play area adjacent to the building.

There are currently 20 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for nursery education. The group opens Monday to Friday from 09:15 to 15:15 during term time and children can either attend for a variety of sessions or all day. The group also offers a breakfast club from 08:45 to 09:15.

There are two full time and two part time staff working with the children. Three members of staff have early years qualifications. One member of staff is currently working towards an early years degree and another is working towards a level 3 pre-school qualification. All members of staff are Montessori qualified. The group applies the Montessori method of teaching and the leader is a qualified teacher, has a Diploma in Montessori teaching and has gained Early Years Professional Status.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children lead healthy and active lifestyles at nursery. They become aware of their own health and hygiene needs as they become independent in dressing, managing the toilet and blowing their noses. They understand the importance of washing their hands and this is reinforced carefully by staff. Children are further protected by the effective hygiene and cleaning routines that are followed by the group. Children are protected from the spread of infection as a clear sickness policy is provided for parents highlighting the excluded periods for contagious or infectious illnesses. Appropriate action is taken in the event of accidents as staff ensure their first aid training is up-to-date. There are good standards of hygiene generally maintained within the setting, however, there is a minor weakness with regards to hand washing. Further improvement has the potential to further enhance the good standards and avoid cross contamination amongst staff and children.

Children have healthy appetites for the meals that are organic and freshly prepared on site. They enjoy a variety of fresh fruits for snack and water or juice is readily available to drink throughout the day. Children make healthy choices and are encouraged to try new foods. Mealtimes are sociable and relaxed occasions when children talk about their favourite foods and staff emphasise the goodness in fruit and vegetables. Children's individual dietary needs are respected and systems are in place to ensure that they do not eat foods to which they may be allergic or not allowed.

Children become aware of the impact of healthy living on their bodies through opportunities for regular fresh air, free access to physical activity in the garden and weekly walks around the secluded wooden area. They explore physical skills in daily experiences. Inside children take part in music and movement sessions, yoga and many opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, as they manipulate pencils, paint brushes, pouring various materials and confidently use cutlery. Montessori style activities are also set up for children to take part in washing up, hand washing or scrubbing and sweeping the floor. These play opportunities promote good health and keep children active, fit and healthy. Children are able to rest in accordance with their own needs, a comfortable book area is available should they get tired or need a less active or quieter activity.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. Attractive displays of photographs of the children busy at work and appropriate posters make it inviting for children and parents. Children have regular and free access to a secure outdoor play area. Security is effectively managed as the group follows strict policies and procedures that promote the children's safety. These include regular safety checks, fire drills and close monitoring of visitors. All areas are laid out to offer an extensive range of activities where children can freely access their resources. Children have independent access to a wide range of resources which are safe, well-maintained and in good condition. The broad range of resources provide appropriate challenge and encourage development in all areas.

Staff have a high regard for children's safety and conduct regular risk assessments. Any issues are highlighted and addressed immediately. All other procedures and resources to ensure children are safe are in place. Children develop a good understanding of staying safe and avoiding accidents because staff sensitively reinforce safety rules. They teach children how to handle and store tools safely during grace and courtesy group times. For example, children learn how to carry scissors correctly and walk around the group to demonstrate their understanding. Staff carry out risk assessments prior to taking children on outings and extend children's understanding of road safety as they walk past the car park. Staff are well deployed so that children are supervised at all times. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children. Good procedures to protect children are in place and these are effectively shared with parents. Consequently, children's safety and welfare is effectively monitored and protected.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy in a supportive and caring environment. They quickly settle into the well-organised daily routine. Children enjoy their time at the nursery and take part in a range of age-appropriate activities. Children are offered a good balance of play both indoors and out. This is facilitated by the organisation of the nursery which is attractively arranged and welcoming. Indoor resources are stored by traditional Montessori methods in low-level units so that children can make choices and initiate their own play. Children are given sufficient opportunity to complete or re-visit an activity, which valuably allows them time to consolidate their learning and experiences according to their own needs. Children benefit from the presence of experienced and qualified staff, who take a genuine interest in their happiness and development. As a result, they form positive relationships, play together well and make friends.

Children are encouraged to be polite to others. They can regularly be heard saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Younger children's abilities and independence skills are fostered well, as staff implement aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework well. This is supported by relevant assessment and planning which is conscientiously undertaken and followed by all staff. Children are helped to manage their own behaviour, as staff have a good understanding of how to support their emotional development. As a result, children are settled and thrive.

## **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure that planning is effective, takes account of children's interests and starting points and provides some exciting learning opportunities. Evaluations of planned activities and observations of children's participation are used effectively to inform and monitor their progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use a range of useful strategies to involve and challenge all children that include careful questioning and the use of focussed Montessori style demonstrations and activities to capture children's interest and attention.

Children are making good progress in all areas of learning. They are purposefully engaged and busy throughout the day. They show enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning as they sit well, listen to stories and take part in discussions or activities. They concentrate well and show growing independence as they select resources and make decisions about what to do. Children communicate and express themselves with confidence. They participate eagerly in singing familiar songs and some children are already progressing onto formal reading books. Children explore with a range of mark making and early writing, including using chalk, paint and practising writing their names. Consequently, children are acquiring useful skills in early literacy.

Children develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts as many planned and spontaneous activities focus on shape, measure, number and patterns. They show an interest in number problems when listening and predicting the number of tadpoles left in the story 'Ten Tiny Tadpoles'. Children have many opportunities to explore and investigate how things work. For example, they learn how air and bubbles are made as they blow water through a straw. They use different materials to build and construct, explore tastes, smells and texture using their senses; and observe changes in their environment. Children have sufficient opportunities to use information communication and technology to aid their learning as they operate a compact disc player, a dictaphone and toy telephones or tills in their imaginative play. Children benefit from fresh air and exercise as they practise and refine skills of kicking balls, rolling small hoops and throwing over and under. However, there are limited resources and physical activity that encourage children to operate large scale equipment to explore the skills of control, co-ordination, and changing speed or direction.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children become aware of the wider society through using appropriate resources, seeing positive images around them and taking part in planned activities that reflect diversity. They celebrate festivals from a range of faiths including Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Learning is made fun and interesting, for example, children benefit from a strong involvement of parents during various festivals. They become aware of different languages as they take part in French sessions. Children's individual needs and family backgrounds are respected, with all children being warmly welcomed and fully included in the life of the setting. Parents' comment positively about the care their children receive and particularly value the care and attention given to each individual, as well as the easily accessible environment and surroundings of the setting. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of working with children with particular learning difficulties or disabilities. Systems are in place to work with parents and other professionals as required.

Children understand responsible behaviour and respect boundaries as these are consistently and sensitively reinforced by all staff. Expectations are high and staff manage children's behaviour appropriately to their stage of development, with firm foundations for positive behaviour being established from the moment children start. Children play in a calm and relaxed atmosphere. They show consideration to others and take responsibility for their environment as they tidy up, sweep and mop the floor. Children work harmoniously within their peer group and with adults. Staff provide a supportive and constructive environment where children are eager to help. The group works in close partnership with parents, which significantly contributes to the children's well-being. There is an effective exchange of information between staff and parents, which ensures that children receive appropriate care and support. Annual questionnaires, seeking parents' views about the services provided are also conducted and taken into account to bring about any change. The group has a clear complaints policy and procedure and staff demonstrate a good understanding of how these should be logged.

The partnership with parents who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage and the Montessori curriculum. Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters, a notice board and daily communication as staff make themselves available to speak to parents. Parents are invited to consultation evenings where they receive information about the progress their children are making as well as informative interactive learning talks where they gain experience of the Montessori curriculum their children are following and how they learn.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have a good awareness of the codes of behaviour and are very aware of belonging to a group. They enjoy the social occasions of coming together for meals and have tranquil moments to look at books or listen to a wide variety of music. Children develop awareness of their own customs and those of others through a broad range of experiences.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Good organisation ensures that the nursery runs effectively. All policies and procedures actively promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Staff support each other and work well together. Staff meetings regularly take place to evaluate and monitor practice. Clear induction and appraisal systems are in place. Staff are well informed about the policies and procedures. The majority of staff hold an early years qualification with some at degree level, while others are working towards relevant qualifications, thus ensuring that all staff have a good understanding of child development. Children benefit from the staff's commitment and ability to update their skills which they implement into their practice. The adult to child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. Documents to support the National Standards are effectively organised and in place.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The owner and deputy managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and this underpins the smooth running of the group. The whole team successfully reflect and identify areas for development in order to further improve or implement changes to ways of working. They are aware of the benefits of monitoring the quality of education and are well qualified and experienced to do this effectively.

Consequently, the provision is pro-active in monitoring and evaluating their practice. Staff take responsibility for different areas of the curriculum, which helps motivate them and build a strong team. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to ensure an accurate attendance record is maintained. Children's welfare is further safeguarded as the group now keep an accurate daily record of children's arrival and departure times.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required 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.

## **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 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):

- improve the standards of hygiene by providing suitable hand washing provisions to prevent the spread of infection

#### **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 physical play opportunities that offer children a range of challenging experiences, with regards to increasing their control and co-ordination by operating equipment and changing direction or speed.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)