



## Little Montessorians Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY343347
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jennifer Liverpool
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Scout Hut, Roding Lane South, Ilford, Essex, IG4 5PD
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<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 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?

Little Montessorians Pre-School was first registered in 2004 under the management of a partnership. The setting was registered again in 2006 and is owned by a private individual. It operates from a large scout hut and is situated at the entrance to the Roding Valley Park in Redbridge. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time, from 9.15 to 12.15 Monday and Friday and from 9.15 to 15.15 on Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday.

There are currently 35 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early years education. Children come from local and wider catchment areas and attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The group follows the Montessori method of education.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean environment and their health is generally well promoted. Staff follow daily procedures such as wiping down table surfaces, using table cloths during snack and lunch times and regularly checking the toilet area, all of which helps to minimise the spread of germs. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene and understand why they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating food. They are developing self care skills as they are provided with soapy water to wash their cups and plates after eating snacks. Most staff hold current first aid certificates. This means that children can receive appropriate care in the event of minor accidents. Staff obtain appropriate health consents from parents and follow instructions to meet children's needs. There are appropriate systems in place to keep accident and medication records, although they are not always well maintained.

Children's dietary needs are known by staff and their specific requirements are accommodated. Children benefit from eating a varied range of fresh and dried fruits and vegetables on a day to day basis. They routinely serve themselves each day. Younger children receive encouragement to develop their independence and simple explanation to help them share and consider others at snack time. Children help themselves to drinking water and juice when they are thirsty. They recognise the benefits of exercise and enjoy physical activities such as parachute games, music and movement and ring games. Staff ensure that children have daily opportunities to participate in physical activities and games. However, there is not enough emphasis on challenging the physical skills of older and more able children as the slide is fairly small and ball games do not regularly feature in curriculum plans.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have sufficient space to work and play. They move around freely and safely because safety measures such as stair gates and socket covers are in place. Overall, the premises are generally well maintained. Children cannot leave the premises unsupervised because door handles and locks are out of reach. They arrive and depart safely each day through staff closely monitoring the main entrance; obtaining permission from parents for people who are authorised to collect children in the event of an emergency and keeping up to date record of children's attendance. However, children would not be fully protected when out on trips because the procedures do not clearly guide staff in how to minimise the risk of children getting lost. Children and staff practise the emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis. This helps children to become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency.

The layout of the room promotes children's independence. Toys and equipment are appropriate for children's age and abilities and conform to safety standards. Children can freely access a

range of equipment and resources as storage facilities are at their level. However, some role-play equipment such as dolls, dressing up clothes and props are not always made available on a day to day basis and therefore are not best used for the purpose of encouraging children to create their own role-play situations.

Staff are aware of child protection policies and understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. This supports children's wellbeing.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well because staff are friendly, welcoming and give them lots of individual attention.

All children benefit from a good relationship with their key worker, which increases their sense of trust. They readily approach a wide range of activities that is set out for them on a day to day basis. Young children are developing self-confidence and assurance through the good support and positive interaction they receive from staff. For example, they are escorted to the bathroom and helped to become familiar with daily routines such as toilet, snacks and garden procedures. Young children are developing their independence as they are provided with steps to enable them to reach the wash basins for hand washing. They are gaining confidence in developing their self help skills such as pouring their drinks and learning social skills at snack times.

Children experiment with paints, play dough, chalk and water. They explore and enjoy the feel and texture of natural materials such as brushes, twig balls and sponges. Children have daily access to paint freely using the easel and paint pots. They enjoy drawing and mark making and they are provided with regular opportunities to bake cakes and biscuits and develop painting techniques. Children have daily access to an adequate range of equipment and utensils to help develop their personal independence. However, the full range of role-play equipment is not always readily available in order for children have frequent opportunities to create their own stories and role-play situations. Young children's language and communication skills are well supported through planned activities and practical routines. For example, children are encouraged to talk about their homes and their favourite rooms. They are beginning to learn the names of different rooms in the home with staff support. Staff value their comments and show interest in what they say. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to create their own stories and role-play situations.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress in all of the six areas of learning despite there being some inconsistency in the delivery of the programme for Knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are thriving in their learning because the staff team recognises the individual needs of all children, know how they learn and have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are grouped according to their age and abilities. This means that the curriculum is matched sufficiently to children's learning needs. Staff ensure that children who are more or less able receive one to

one teaching to support or extend their knowledge and skills. Planning of the curriculum clearly shows how children are given support and guidance to achieve their potential. Regular monitoring and assessments of children's abilities enable staff to know what they can do and identify the next steps in their learning.

Children are eager to learn and they enthusiastically participate in a wide range of activities. Children enjoy their learning because they are offered meaningful topics that help them to identify the features of their environment. All children participated in discussions about their homes. Children are able to play and learn independently as they freely select resources from low level cupboards and shelves. They concentrate and persevere well with their self chosen tasks and adult led activities. The procedure for collecting and returning of resources helps children to look after equipment and care for their environment. Children work and play well together with their peers as they negotiate whose turn it is to walk around wooden blocks, sharing resources, and applaud their peers on completing the tasks. Children are confident speakers and are able to hold meaningful conversations with adults and their peers. They listen attentively to stories, conversations and respond very well to instructions. Older children are beginning to recognise the sounds that alphabet letters make through practical activities. Children have access to a range of writing tools and are given good support to develop their early writing skills.

Children are developing skills in mathematical ideas and concepts. Children can accurately count beyond 20 and many can recognise numbers up to 10 at random. They are interested in number games and persevere well when selecting the correct numerals to represent one to six objects. There are good opportunities for children to sort, match, order and sequence using puzzles depicting the life cycle of creatures and sorting the correct cylinders. Children go out on occasional nature walks, they plant sunflower seeds and observe growth and they are supported to carry out investigative work when finding out about the different uses of water. They learn about continents and countries through topic work and use magnets and torches to explore and investigate. Children have insufficient opportunities to find out about every day technology and programmable toys and learn how to operate simple equipment. Although a tape cassette is available, it is only used for listening to music and sounds. Children are provided with a wide range of materials and sensations to respond and develop their ideas. The sensorial equipment and treasure basket are widely used by all children. Children explore paint; use collage to create their own pictures, sing songs and join in with ring games. Children have free access to the practical life equipment such as water jugs and dressing boards and some small world equipment that includes animal figures and play foods. However, not all role-play equipment is readily available to them.

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

The provision is good.

Children come from different backgrounds. Staff treat them as individuals and acknowledge their differences and preferences. Staff gather information before children are placed in the pre-school. This ensures that children receive individual care. Children learn about their own culture through planned activities and discussions and they celebrate festivals such as Diwali and Eid. Parents are invited to share their culture and customs with children, which help to

reinforce their understanding. Children are beginning to learn about the wider world as they are introduced to continents, countries and flags. However, there are few resources that reflect positive images of gender and disability.

All children are encouraged to participate in a range of activities that are appropriate for their level of ability. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with special educational needs. Children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and from basic ground rules that are consistently applied. Older children are familiar with the routine of the setting and are good role models to younger children as they show them what to do. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Working in partnership with parents is good. An informative booklet is available to parents, which includes useful and good practical information about the curriculum for their children. Parents are offered appointments to discuss their children's progress and share their observations from home. This enhances children's progress in their learning. Transitional procedures are in place and staff continue to offer support to children who have left to go to school. Parents make positive comments about the setting giving their children confidence and self belief to enable them to progress in life.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming, secure, comfortable and generally maintained. They are able to move freely and safely and the layout is appropriately organised in ways that promote their independence. With the exception of some role-play equipment, all other toys and materials are readily available. Children are grouped well throughout the session as they have opportunities to play independently and participate in small and whole group activities. Young children are progressing well in their development because they receive good support from staff who know them well and use the Birth to three guidance to monitor their abilities and promote early learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. There are satisfactory recruitment procedures in place, ensuring that suitable and experienced staff work with children. All documents that contribute to the welfare of children are in place, however, the accident records do not contain the times of events and parents are not encouraged to countersign entries in the accident and medication books.

The leadership and management is good. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team through sharing information and skills and respecting each other. Regular induction programmes, effective systems for the assessment and development of staff and the manager's commitment to staff training help to improve the quality of care and education for children. The manager recognises the strengths of the setting and monitors areas for development through looking at own practices and receiving feedback from parents. As a result of this, equipment for younger children has been improved and the system for monitoring children's progress has been developed. Apart from overlooking the need to challenge children's physical skills and promote their awareness of information technology, the curriculum and teaching methods enable children to progress well along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

### **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 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):

- review and update the procedures for lost children and make clear the steps taken to minimise potential hazards
- evaluate and improve the organisation of resources in order that children develop their own ideas, stories and role play situation and develop the range of toys to reflect positive images (also applies to nursery education)
- complete the written documentation of accident and medication with all required details and ensure parents sign to acknowledge entries.

#### **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):

- provide more opportunities for children to use information and communication technology
- increase opportunities to challenge the physical skills and abilities of more able children.

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)