



# Little Learners Montessori Nursery House

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY293529
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Christine Bonnett
<b>Setting Address</b>	45 Whitchurch Gardens, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 6PF
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<b>Registered person</b>	Neera Jhunjhunwala
<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?

Little Learners Montessori Nursery House is privately owned by Neera Jhunhunwala. It opened in 2004 and operates from one room within a large residential house in Edgware, in the London borough of Harrow. A maximum of nine children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 48 weeks of the year. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 14 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, five children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider community.

The nursery employs three staff including the manager. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery works within the Montessori framework.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted as they spend their time in an environment that is maintained to a high standard of hygiene and cleanliness. Children are adopting good self-care practices as they are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day, and understand why it is important to do so. Their good health is also promoted as they enjoy regular opportunities to play in the garden in the fresh air.

Children benefit from being provided with a wide range of freshly cooked meals and snacks. When planning menus, the nursery places emphasis on supplying a healthy and nutritious diet that takes account of children's individual dietary needs. The range of meals includes noodles, cottage pie, yogurts, fresh fruit and vegetables.

Children are often expected to sit at the meal table for long periods of time before the food arrives, while staff are busy with other tasks. Consequently, children tend to become bored, disengaged and leave the table. In addition, children's independence is not routinely fostered as they are not given the opportunity to serve themselves regularly. A relaxed, social time is not created as staff walk around serving children and therefore are not able to interact appropriately with them during this time.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the spacious nursery environment. There is ample room for children to play unhindered on the floor. They particularly enjoy spreading out collage materials and having the space to create their work freely. The nursery is light, bright and welcoming for children and their parents and carers.

Children's independence is promoted during play, as they are able to self-select items they wish to use from open fronted shelving. The extensive range of play and learning resources, which includes Montessori equipment, is attractively displayed for children and are clean and in good condition.

Children's safety is important to staff. Daily checks and regular risk assessments quickly identify any potential safety hazards, and steps are taken to minimize them quickly. Security of the premises is good. No one can enter the premises unchallenged, and children can not leave unobserved. Although fire drills are conducted, they are not held sufficiently regularly to ensure children remember what is required of them, and understand their purpose, to help aid their safe evacuation.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a good understanding and knowledge of child protection matters. They are aware of the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child was being abused, and the procedure for reporting such concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Children are becoming independent learners from a young age as they benefit from the opportunity to self-select what they wish to explore in their play. The available range of resources is stimulating, and enables children to make progress in all areas of development. Staff are close by to offer support and supervision when needed. Children enjoy interacting together for extended periods of time in role play situations. For example, discussing birthdays in a small group in the home corner, and blowing out imaginary candles on a cake.

Children benefit from the implementation of the Birth to three matters framework which is used effectively to support their learning in their earliest years. Children interact well with the staff, as warm, affectionate care is given. They develop a strong bond with staff as they laugh, have fun and receive plenty of individual attention. This helps to increase a child's sense of wellbeing. Consequently, children become confident, and begin to express their individual needs and wishes.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Planning is effective and children benefit from the staff's generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children's individual achievements are noted, and evaluated. This information is then used to plan the next step in their learning. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn, and provide a stimulating environment in which resources are used well to enable them to make good progress in all areas of learning.

Children show curiosity and a desire to learn as they explore activities enthusiastically. Story and music sessions are popular with the children, as they listen and participate with obvious pleasure. Vocabulary is developed as staff are skilled in asking open-ended questions to make children think and respond appropriately. Children benefit from having access to a large garden where they can develop their physical skills. They ride bikes, kick balls and play with hoops. However, the programme for physical development does not provide balancing, scrambling and climbing opportunities to challenge and dare the older and more able children.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is particularly well promoted. For example, the interesting range of available resources enables children to discover what magnets and magnifying glasses do. In addition children have plenty of opportunities to monitor the development of living things, such as growing cress and watching caterpillars change into butterflies.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals, and are given appropriate praise and encouragement to enhance self-esteem and confidence. Their individual needs are met well because staff find out from parents about the children's routine and development. Children also enjoy being with familiar and trusted adults within a secure environment.

Children are finding out about the world in which they live as they celebrate festivals such as Christmas and Diwali. There is a good range of toys and resources to promote children's understanding of diversity, for example books, posters and puzzles. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcome at the setting. Staff have had training in this area of work.

Children's behaviour is generally very good as the variety of play opportunities available each day ensures they are kept busy and interested. Any difficulties that may arise are managed using age-appropriate and positive strategies. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children benefit from the effective partnership that staff enjoy with parents. All relevant information is exchanged verbally each day to ensure the child's needs are met. Written information is given to parents of younger children to ensure they are aware of what their child has eaten and how long they have slept. Policies and procedures are available for all parents to consult. A range of relevant information is also displayed on a notice board. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with staff at parent's evenings, and the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are explained in detail. In addition, parents are informed about the topical themes the nursery is working on to enable them to reinforce the learning intentions at home. Regular news letters are also produced to ensure all parents are kept up-to-date regarding all relevant issues.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and as a result, the day runs smoothly for the children. The high staffing level ensures that children are well supervised at all times to safeguard their welfare. In addition, the robust recruitment procedure adopted by the nursery ensures that all adults who have routine contact with the children are suitable to do so. Staff are motivated, and focus upon the needs of the children. Good communication systems are in place between staff and management to ensure staff are given appropriate support. This includes daily verbal support and regular staff appraisals.

The premises are well organised and children are happy, secure and confident in their surroundings. Their individual needs are met effectively because staff have a good understanding of child care and development. Children also profit from the effective partnership staff have with parents.

Good policies and procedures are in place, and work well in practice to keep children healthy and safe. Children who receive funding for nursery education are making good progress in their development. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

Since the last inspection, safety in the nursery has been enhanced by installing a "fire exit" sign on the exit in the children's room. Safety has also been enhanced by the introduction of detailed risk assessments on all areas of the nursery to ensure any potential dangers are identified and rectified quickly.

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

Since April 2004 there has been one complaint relating to National Standard 1; Suitable Person, regarding a suitable person not being in charge at all times, National Standard 3; Care Learning and Play, regarding poor care practice, National Standard 7; Health, regarding poor hygiene standards and National Standard 11; Behaviour Management, regarding the inappropriate behaviour management of children. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to investigate, and raised an action in relation to National Standard 1, to ensure a suitable person was in charge at all times.

However, during the investigation evidence was found that National Standards 2; Organisation, 6; Safety and 14 Documentation had been breached. The provider agreed to carry out actions to ensure staffing ratios were met, safety standards were raised and that Ofsted is informed of significant changes. The registered person remains qualified to provide day care.

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):

- reorganise meal times to foster children's independence and create a positive and social occasion (applies to nursery education also)
- ensure fire drills are held sufficiently frequently to enable children to remember what is required of them and understand their purpose.

### **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 the programme for physical development by providing apparatus to challenge and dare the older and 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)