

Little Tree Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	140435
Inspection date	01 March 2007
Inspector	Sandra Wickham
Setting Address	143 Ferme Park Road, HORNSEY, LONDON, N8 9SG
Telephone number	0208 342 9231
E-mail	
Registered person	Catherine Theresa Maria Twomey-Brenner
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Tree Montessori Nursery opened in 1991. The provision is owned by a private individual and located in Crouch End, in the London borough of Haringey. It operates from three playrooms in premises that are attached to a church and community centre. The areas used are the kitchen, toilets and an enclosed rear garden. The nursery serves the local community, with a number of children attending from neighbouring boroughs. The nursery operates week days during term time. Morning and afternoon sessions are from 9:00am to 12:00, and 12:30 to 3:30pm. Full day care is between the hours of 9:00am to 3:30pm.

There are currently 60 children on roll. This includes 30 funded three-year-olds and seven funded four-year-olds. The children attend a variety of sessions each week. The setting supports children with special educational needs.

The nursery employs eight staff, of these seven staff hold Montessori teaching qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher and a special educational needs mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The nursery follows a Montessori curriculum which reflects the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Children independently wash their hands after they have been to the toilet and use the soap to wash their hands, and dry their hands on the paper towels. Effective procedures are in place to prevent the spread of infection by ensuring the environment is clean. Staff are vigilant in their hygiene and cleaning practices and wipe the tables before and after snack times using a safe anti-bacterial cleaner. Children learn about keeping their bodies healthy through discussion and stories and visible images of posters displayed about healthy food options. Children freely engage in a wide range of physical activities that help keep them healthy and mobile. They have great fun in the garden, running, playing in the sand pit, riding on wheeled toys and pedal tricycles. Indoors children handle tools and construction equipment with good control. They build with bricks, complete puzzles and gain pen control as they draw and write.

Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet and they know which type of food is good to eat. They enjoy a range of healthy foods including fresh fruit and vegetables that meet their dietary needs, and are encouraged to take turns in the preparation of cutting up fruits to eat for their morning snacks. This helps children to develop healthy eating practices, in addition children are learning about different fruits in the songs they sing at story time. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and children are encouraged to help themselves. This encourages them to think about their personal needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a spacious well-organised environment. This allows them to move around freely and play safely. They enjoy and make full use of the different areas of the premises including a comfortable book area, creative area, carpeted floor play section and spacious outdoor playground. Children can safely access a wide range of good quality toys and resources which are appropriate to their age and stage of development, and enjoy the varied range of equipment available.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures in place. For example, smoke alarms are installed on the premises, a secure entry system and effective systems are in place for risk assessing the indoor and outdoor environment. Staff deployment ensures that children are supervised in all areas of the setting, although on one and two occasions staff did not ensure they were visible when monitoring children on the stairs as they went to and from the toilets. Children practise the emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis which helps children become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. Fire exits are clearly marked and kept free of obstruction.

Staff have attended child protection training and demonstrate a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures that they are able to quickly recognise when a child is in danger and can act in their best interest.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are provided with daily opportunities to take part in high quality activities throughout the sessions. Children independently select their own activities. They are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other. Children play happily together and are learning to take turns and respond to others as they use the wide range of equipment provided. Children are motivated and engrossed in a broad range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities. They enjoy exploring different textures and use a wide range of equipment in their play. Children communicate confidently as they share ideas in their play. Singing and musical activities are very popular with the group and support children's communication skills. Children enjoy regular use of a wide range of creative materials.

The younger and older children are confident and independent in accessing the Montessori resources. Children are motivated and engrossed in what they chose to do. Children communicate confidently as they share their ideas in play, for instance whilst rolling out the green coloured play dough with their friends. They have fun playing with the wet sand in the garden. Children take great pride in saying out loud the numbers on the big cards they recognise. Children can explore and be creative with activities they can readily access independently for themselves. For example, painting, cutting and sticking from the various craft materials on a daily basis. Younger and older children have great fun showing off their costumes to each other they came dressed to nursery dressed in, for 'World book day' at the fashion show .

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing very well, supported by practitioners' strong commitment to their early learning. They are developing an understanding of number, reading and writing through activities and equipment which build on what they know and support them as they explore and investigate. Children have appropriate opportunities to be considerate of others in their play and staff supports this learning in a positive manner, intervening only when necessary. Staff skilfully observe children's efforts and respond appropriately to them. For example, they sit with children on a one to one basis ensuring they can complete the tasks satisfactorily. There is also ongoing training for the assistants who work alongside teachers.

Practitioners have a clear understanding of how children learn and of the next possible steps in their development. They have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Assessments are thorough and observations are used effectively in order to guide future planning. For example, individual learning plan linked around particular life exercises. These are shared with parents to ensure children can be extended and supported both within the group and at home.

Children are engaged and motivated by a wide range of stimulating, practical activities related to their needs. Although staff acknowledge there are limited opportunities provided for children to access information technology. They access a variety of good quality resources, which supports their learning across the Foundation Stage. They independently enjoy selecting books for themselves to look at and with staff. They are aware of the order of the pages and turn them from front to back confidently. They listen enthusiastically to stories and talked about the different costumes that people were wearing, and participate well in group discussions, and knew it was 'World book day'. Some children came to nursery dressed as their favourite book character. For example, Harry and his bucketful of Dinosaurs, Smartest Giant in Town, Pippi long stocking. This helps to foster children's love of books and reading.

Children are learning to recognise their names as they read their names on their pegs, when hanging up their coats and belongings. They also read their names when putting work away in their individual trays, and practise their letters at the writing table. Children are learning to link sounds to letters when they sing songs with the alphabet, and read printed writing around the nursery in their daily routine. Children respond well to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. They become confident with numbers as they count at story time 'how many fruits are left in Handa's basket and singing counting songs. They recognise how many pink numbers are on each card lined up in a row. Children develop a clear understanding of shape as they participate in a vast range of activities.

Children gain opportunities to develop their physical skills as they participate in music and movement activities, move around the garden, practise balancing on beams, steer ride-on toys confidently and play with the home corner. Children have fun playing with the playdough, build with a variety of construction toys, use pens and pencils with control and pouring and tipping water into the salt and pepper shakers with a funnel. This develops their confidence and abilities. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them as they celebrate cultural festivals throughout the year and learn about the natural world. They talk together at group time about the weather, day and month, in the transformed book area made into an Igloo. They take part in planting bulbs and seeds in the tubs at the front of the nursery to watch them grow and flower.

Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help them achieve their full potential. They use appropriate systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements in line with the early learning goals. This enables them to plan experiences that help children progress to the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities. For example, children enjoy learning about how others live, with their theme projects on Iceland and Igloo's and how people fish for food. The staff ensure children have a role at the nursery by inviting them to come dressed, as their favourite book character for 'world book day.' They participate in purposeful activities relating to different cultures such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, Easter and Christmas. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children are welcomed because staff value and respect their individuality. The staff ensure children have a role at the nursery by including them in 'World book day' and giving them the option to come dressed as their favourite book character. Effective systems are in place to support children who have special needs. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are extremely well planned for. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff support younger children in sharing and turn taking. They have high expectations, and set consistent boundaries which helps children learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff increase children's understanding of right and wrong, they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment and each other.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the pre-school. Staff provide parents with substantial information relating to the Foundation Stage which helps them to know how their children are progressing and developing. This sharing of information between staff and parents enhances children's learning. Staff

actively seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there through informal discussion, and parent conference meetings. This enables working parents the opportunity to become more involved in their children's learning, gives them a greater insight in to what children are doing and develops strong, trusting relationships between staff and parents. Individual targets for children's learning are identified and shared with parents to enable them to support their child's learning further. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents, which contribute to their good health, safety, development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are effective recruitment procedures in place which ensures that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. Staff work well together as a team and are committed to developing effective deployment of staff, to ensure that children are not placed at risk. All policies and procedures are in place and are implemented well by staff. Records on children and staff are securely locked away.

Leadership and management of the nursery is good. There is a commitment to improve the provision by developing staff's knowledge and understanding of information technology. Overall, the staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to effectively plan activities. Staff are supported in their work through regular meetings. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last S122 inspection the provider was required to give consideration to providing more opportunities for children to develop skills in information and communication technology. The nursery has developed their systems to ensure children have access to a variety of remote control resources as part of their daily routine.

At the last care inspection the nursery was required to keep a record of children's daily attendance; ensure the premises were secure so strangers cannot gain easy access; provide information to parents so they are aware of Ofsted's role within the nursery complaints procedure and maintain children's toilets to ensure they are free from mould on the walls. The provider has developed their systems to ensure children's daily attendance is recorded, and security onto the premises has been improved with an intercom system operated to monitor visits. The complaints procedure has been developed to provide parents with more accurate information and Ofsted contact details. Areas used by children are maintained to a good condition in particular the children's toilets.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 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):

- ensure consistency is maintained when supervising children on the stairs

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 staff's knowledge and understanding in the area of information technology.

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