

Halfmoon Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY251250
Inspection date	12 March 2007
Inspector	Silvia Richardson
Setting Address	Methodist Church Hall, 155 Half Moon Lane, London, SE24 9JY
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Registered person	Aisling Marion Meehan
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?

Halfmoon Montessori Nursery was registered in 2002. It operates from a church hall and has use of three classrooms and two outside play areas. The nursery opens five days a week during term-time. Sessions are from 9.00 to 15.30. The nursery is registered to provide care for 54 children aged from two years to under five years. There are currently 81 children aged from two to five years on roll. This includes 52 children in receipt of funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently children attending with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language. There are five full-time and three part-time staff who work with the children. More than half the staff, including the manager, have teaching or early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Staff have access to training courses and support services run by Southwark Early Years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in well maintained premises and have access to clean and hygienic facilities, promoting their welfare. Children's health is promoted by adults following some good routines, such as wiping tables with anti-bacterial spray before and after snack and meal times. Children are developing good personal hygiene habits, because they are encouraged to wash their hands before handling food and after using the bathroom. Children are becoming independent in the bathroom, because hand soap and paper towels are easily accessible. Children are learning to manage their personal health needs, such as how to use tissues effectively to wipe their nose and how to dispose of tissues appropriately in bins provided. Not all bins are covered, including those used to dispose of food waste, attracting flies and creating a potential health risk. Arrangements for changing children's underwear in the classroom setting are unhygienic, because wet items are placed directly on the floor while the child is being dressed.

Children enjoy a balanced range of nutritious snacks and drinks, helping them to be healthy. They know that fruit is good for them, because adults talk about the health benefits with the children, especially during activities linked to healthy eating topics. Children enjoy their lunch times and eat well, because adults create a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. Adults are vigilant and take appropriate precautions, ensuring children with food allergies are protected. Children have some excellent opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise, helping them to be healthy. Children are skilled in their active play outside, because for example, they have good opportunities to practise steering and peddling bikes, kicking, throwing and catching balls. The programme includes dance sessions with movement to music, helping children develop and acquire a wide range of physical skills, such as balance and co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in the setting, because a good range of measures are in place to keep children safe, such as heaters protected with suitable guards, electric sockets fitted with covers and a safety barrier fitted to the top of the stairs. Children use the stairs safely and appropriately, because adults talk to the children about how to stay safe on the stairs, ensuring they walk to one side and hold the hand rail on the way down. Children move around the premises in an orderly manner, forming lines and walking sensibly, helping them to stay safe. Children play and use outside equipment appropriately, because adults are vigilant and supervise children very closely, so that they stay safe. Children are aware of how to avoid tripping hazards, such as walking oppose to running inside and picking items up off the floor. Children are aware of their surroundings and of the whereabouts of others, because adults encourage children to look ahead and move into a space, such as when dancing.

Children are protected to some extent from an outbreak of fire, because adults practise drills routinely with the children, so that they know what to do. However, the evacuation procedure does not take account of variables in the routine, such as children not wearing shoes during dance sessions, reducing the speed of response in an emergency. Not practising for different scenarios, such as, exits used during drills not being available in an emergency, also have the potential to delay safe evacuation of the premises. Children are kept safe and protected should safeguarding concerns arise, because adults are appropriately trained and know how to respond to child protection issues. Health and safety risk assessments are effective in promoting safety

in the setting. Appropriate records are kept, for example, of any accidents that may occur, keeping parents informed and promoting children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled in the setting, because adults provide a warm and reassuring presence. They are readily available to the children, supporting their play and learning experiences, helping children develop confidence and independence. Children are thriving, because adults respond effectively to care needs, through a child centred routine. Active play times are well balanced with free-play and structured learning, together with opportunities to relax and look at books, so that children remain focussed and are always purposefully and constructively occupied. The schedule of activities affords children a good variety of play and learning experiences, with plenty of scope for exploration, so that they learn at their own pace. Children participate enthusiastically in group activities, such as dancing and story telling, because adults are skilled in leading these activities, sustaining children's interest. Children respond and relate extremely well to adults, because interaction is calm, caring and positive, helping children to feel good about their efforts and achievements.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Adults create an interesting and stimulating play and learning environment, encouraging children's natural curiosity and desire to explore, experiment and try out new things. A good range and variety of resources are available to the children, so that they have much choice and select items of specific interest to them. Adults have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning, so that the programme of activities thoroughly covers the six areas of learning, with the exception of information and communication technology. Opportunities are limited in this area, because children have no access to a computer, keyboard and mouse in the setting.

Children are particularly skilled in mark-making, early writing and drawing, with their pictures showing a well developed sense of composition. This is because a wide range of pencils, crayons, chinks and other mediums, are well presented, attracting regular and consistent use. Children are making good progress in maths, because adults talk about numbers, quantities, shapes and sizes across a wide range of activities. Children especially enjoy activities involving growing and living things, because these are practical 'hands on' activities, providing sensory experiences and evoking tender responses.

Children are competent and independent learners, because adults provide a secure framework from which children gain confidence and self assurance. Adults observe children well and use assessments of children's abilities effectively, to plan and prepare for the next steps in their learning. Activities are set up so that children approach them at different levels, providing challenge for more able children, while remaining achievable for slower learners. A good range of creative play activities afford inclusive play experiences, so that all children enjoy a sense of accomplishment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave exceptionally well and play extremely co-operatively, because adults create a warm, caring and nurturing environment. Their interaction with the children is consistently

positive, so that children feel good about themselves, their abilities and achievements. Children act responsibly, in thinking of others and taking care of their environment, such as lining up the bikes outside after using them and tucking their chair under the table before moving on to another activity. This is because adults create a strong sense of belonging, through a clear and achievable set of social rules for the group. Children show a strong desire to behave in an acceptable manner, because adults praise the children all the time. Children have a real sense of confidence and independence in activities such as, returning their packed lunch bags to the appropriate box and putting their coats on by themselves. Children thoroughly enjoy conversation with each other, looking at books together and joining in group activities, because adults support children in a manner that helps them feel relaxed and at ease.

Children with learning difficulties and children for whom English is a second language, are very well supported in the group, helping them to integrate effectively and take part in the full range of activities. Resources such as books in dual languages are available to help children communicate and feel good about their home language. Diversity is positively acknowledged and celebrated, helping children to learn about and appreciate differences in religion, culture and life style. Children participate in a broad range of practical activities, developing their knowledge and understanding in these areas. Parents are invited to contribute their experiences, valuing and enhancing children's learning opportunities. Children and their families are warmly welcomed and supported, so that each is able to make a positive contribution to the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of partnerships with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers receive some very good information about the setting, its aims and objectives, teaching methods and learning intentions, so that they make informed decisions about the groups suitability for their children. Several parents have placed their children having received recommendations from other parent users, both past and present. Parents express delight in their children's progress and achievements and enjoy a sense of involvement and inclusion in their children's learning. Parents have some good opportunities to meet with adults caring for their children, so that they can share and discuss how well children are getting along and plan for their next steps towards the early learning goals. Parents and carers receive a written report regarding children's attainments and are invited to contribute to the assessment process, drawing on their children's experiences in the home setting. Partnerships are well established, contributing effectively to children's welfare, well-being and learning experiences, both at home and in the nursery setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Adults are properly vetted ensuring their suitability to look after children. A good ratio of qualified and experienced staff are employed, so that children receive good levels of support and supervision. Records, policies and procedures are in place, ensuring the safe and efficient management of the setting and these are implemented effectively, so that the welfare, care and learning of all the children are actively promoted. The setting is exceptionally well organised, meeting children's individual needs. Children are well cared for in age and ability groups in classroom settings, with familiar adults, promoting their welfare and well-being. Arrangements are very effective in focussing on the developmental needs of each group, so that children make very good progress and thrive in their settings. Children receive a good deal of attention and support, because adults are well deployed, sitting, playing and talking to children throughout the session. Resources are especially well organised, sorted into sets and labelled, so that children can easily identify items and help themselves. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The registered provider manages the setting effectively, taking an active part in leading good practice. The staff team work extremely well together, providing consistent care, so that children experience security and stability through their routines. There is a strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development, so that they become confident and independent learners. The manager has a clear vision for the setting that includes strong partnerships with parents, so that children's care and learning needs are effectively addressed and met. The manager monitors and evaluates the provision of nursery education, ensuring the programme is tailored to individual and group needs. The schedule of activities is enhanced through visiting specialist teachers, such as for dance sessions, so that children enjoy a wide variety of experiences. The manager recruits and retains a skilled and experienced staff team, so that children's all round development is actively promoted. Adults are extremely good at engaging children and sustaining their interest, so that they make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection improvements have been made to the child protection policy, so that the provider is able to respond appropriately should concerns arise. Written permission is sought from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, so that proper consent is in place, promoting children's welfare, in the event of accident or illness.

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.

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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):

- make hygienic arrangements for changing children's wet clothes and protect children's health by ensuring all waste bins are appropriately covered
- improve fire safety precautions through reviewing the emergency escape plan, ensuring arrangements are flexible and adaptable to a range of situations

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 opportunities for children to practise and develop skills in information and communication 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