

Playhouse Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY339849
Inspection date	22 March 2007
Inspector	Gillian Cubitt
Setting Address	1a Dunbar Avenue, London, SW16 4SB
Telephone number	0208 7642564
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Registered person	Mrs Nasreen Hudda and Mr Mahmood Hudda
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

At the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Playhouse Montessori opened in 2006 and changed the name in January 2007. It operates from a detached house in Norbury, situated in the London Borough of Croydon. Children have the use of three play rooms on the ground floor and a further two rooms on the first floor. There is an enclosed area for outside play. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year

There are currently 13 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, no children at present receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and further afield. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is a high priority. Staff maintain high standards of cleanliness within the nursery so that children are protected from germs; they play in a bright and clean environment. Children become aware of good hygiene habits. For example, they know why they need to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. Furthermore, children take pride in washing their faces and brushing their teeth after their main meals. Staff occasionally sing "this is the way we wash our hands" which children find fun as well as reinforcing their understanding of caring for their own personal needs. Good information is available for parents regarding infectious illnesses so that they know when children are not able to attend and, as a result, opportunities for cross-infection are minimised.

Children enjoy plenty of exercise during their day and get fresh air during their outside play periods. They know what clothes they need to wear in cold weather and that physical exercise keeps them warm. Inside, children have plenty of space to move around with ease and have set times for rest after lunch.

Children enjoy a healthy and balanced diet. Good quality snacks of fruit are provided, together with wholesome lunches, providing children with opportunities to taste a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Access to water is easy and children are encouraged to take regular drinks which constitutes to their good health. Staff who prepare meals are qualified in food and hygiene and they ensure children with special dietary needs are fully observed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe by staff who are alert to potential hazards and children begin to learn to keep themselves safe. Regular risk assessments are carried out and emergency evacuation of the premises is practised. Children enjoy bright secure and safe surroundings and rooms are generally well designed. There are prepared sleep areas for children to rest after lunch, although space where children can take time to relax in comfort and safety, when they feel the need, is not easily accessible.

Children benefit from the wide range of newly purchased quality toys and equipment that conforms to British Safety standards. All activities are easily accessible from low shelves within easy reach of children which develops their growing independence.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of their child protection responsibilities. They share their policies with parents to ensure they are aware of situations when outside agencies need to be involved.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and settled in the nursery. Staff are very attentive and caring which promotes children's developing confidence and self-esteem. Children show pride in their achievements and their work is attractively displayed. They enjoy a variety of activities that are planned by staff in line with the Birth to three matters guidance and the Curriculum Guidance

for the Foundation Stage which provides a sound basis for planning to aid children's development and stage of learning. Children have warm relationships with the staff and each other, although systems to settle new children are not fully established which means that some children become upset when they are first left. Children have opportunities to engage in activities that are appropriate to their age and level of understanding. They can access toys easily which promotes their early independence and confidence and they engage in opportunities to use their senses which forms the basis for their future learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection there were no funded children on roll. The manager however has a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. She has initiated activity plans to take effect from April 2007 to meet the needs of the children who will then be in receipt of funded nursery education. Long term planning demonstrates that children will follow activities in line with the stepping stones to help them develop the aptitudes and skills they need to achieve their early learning goals. The systems in place show staff will monitor children's progress, however, not all staff are confident in the stepping stones which are linked to children's early learning development. This is because staff have not yet had the opportunity to try the methods where they will monitor children's progress to establish their individual stages in learning. Two rooms are organised and ready for children to participate in activities in line with the Montessori method yet linked to the early learning goals. Children will be able to access a range of equipment that helps to develop their small and large movements. For example, children will use glue spreaders, scissors and dressing frames to practice fastening buttons and zips as well as using the outside play space to ride bikes and play on small apparatus. Through constructive relationships with staff, children will be encouraged and praised which will help develop their feeling of confidence. However, due to low numbers at present staff have not been organised to key work, making them responsible for the learning outcomes of individual children so every child makes consistent progress. Children's personal development is encouraged by having their own pegs to hang their coats and, as part of their growing independence, they will learn how to dress themselves and take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. There is a sufficient selection of books and the current systems in place demonstrate that children's early appreciation of writing and number work will be fostered. The Montessori materials and methods will help children understand the meaning of letters through making marks in play as well as using the 'sand paper letters'. Counting and number work will be encouraged by counting blocks, number rods and through singing nursery rhymes and songs. Children's creativity will be nurtured by using the role play area creatively, bringing children's home life experiences into the nursery. This will also widen children's understanding of the world about them through looking at how others live and different cultures. Children's knowledge of information technology will be helped with the aid of a computer which is already in place for children to use.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued as individuals and staff are sensitive to their personal backgrounds and specific needs. All children are included and, as a result, children develop positive self-esteem. They also learn to begin to understand and respect others by participating in group activities where they learn to share and co-operate with each other. Children celebrate festivals from their own cultures and those of others such as Eid, Christmas and Chinese New Year which helps children appreciate other cultures within their community. Children with disabilities are welcomed and fully included into the nursery activities with staff liaising with outside agencies

and parents to promote a consistent programme of care. However, staff have yet to establish systems to monitor children with special educational needs.

Children are gradually beginning to take responsibility for their own behaviour and know why there are rules. They learn good manners, waiting to be asked to leave the table after they have finished their meal. Staff have realistic expectations of children's behaviour according to their age and stage of development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory and contributes to children's well-being at the nursery. Staff warmly welcome parents into the nursery and provide them with a useful information pack. Systems are currently in place which enable parents to be informed of their children's achievements through regular meetings and progress reports. Parents can also see information displayed on the notice board although this is not regularly updated to inform parents about changes in staff and teaching programmes.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of the nursery provides a sound framework for the care of children. Staff are suitably experienced and qualified; they are committed to their work and take up opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills to improve the outcomes for children. Staff deploy themselves effectively to ensure children's care and learning is well catered for. This is further helped by the recent refurbishment of the whole building, where children's play areas are clearly defined for specific age groups, although areas where children can sit and relax are not fully developed.

All documentation required, including a clear operational plan, is in place which ensures the efficient organisation of the nursery. The provider has further employed the services of an independent company to implement health, safety, risk assessments and staff welfare so any concerns or hazards within the building can be immediately addressed.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The provider is very involved in the day to day running of the nursery and has recently employed a new manager who is the co-ordinator for nursery education. She has a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how to apply this in practise to support children in their learning and development. There is a clear vision for the future although at present staff's knowledge of the stepping stones is in its early stage. The manager is planning to increase staff skills and understanding of the stepping stones through prepared supervision and appraisal programmes.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

In November 2006 when the nursery came under new ownership concerns were raised regarding the high turnover of staff, staff qualifications and the adult to child ratios. These concerns related to National Standards 1 and 2. There was also a concern with regard to the communication with parents which related to National Standard 12. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit on 15 November to investigate these concerns. As a result of the investigation three actions and four recommendations were set. The provider responded to these in writing on 5 December confirming that all areas raised in Ofsted's letter had been addressed. The provider implemented an action plan to engage a manager and set out procedures for the recruitment and induction of new staff. There is now a system where parents are kept fully informed on their child's care including information about how to access the complaints procedure. Ofsted made a further unannounced visit on 19 December and established that all the actions and recommendations had been addressed. As a result of this visit no further action was taken. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- provide appropriate areas where children can relax and rest throughout the day
- develop effective strategies to settle new children into the nursery

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):

- improve the daily communication with parents by providing them with written details of children's care and updating the notice board with current information about staff and the teaching programme (also applies to care)
- ensure staff's understanding of the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage is improved through effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching
- develop a key working system for staff to monitor children's learning and progress in line with the stepping stones for the early learning goals
- develop the role of the special needs co-ordinator to support children with special educational needs

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