

# The Ark Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY102531
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Pamela Patricia Paisley
<b>Setting Address</b>	37 County Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 8HN
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<b>Registered person</b>	Almas Iqbal
<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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Ark Montessori Nursery opened December 2001. The nursery operates from a large hall within a sports club. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area and the nursery is situated in a residential area of Thornton Heath. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 during school term time.

There are currently 32 children aged two to under five years on roll. Of these 25 receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and the nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through their daily routine. They independently take themselves to the toilet and receive support from staff to help them remember to wash their hands after going to the toilet and doing messy activities. Children have good opportunities to use sit and ride toys, throw, catch and kick balls. They enjoy taking part in obstacle courses which involves them going down a slide, balancing on beams and blocks and throwing bean bags in a bucket. Children use a range of small tools such as paint brushes, glue sticks and peg boards with good control.

Children receive nutritious snacks that help them understand foods that are good for them. They eat a good variety of fresh fruits daily and help themselves to apples, oranges, bananas and have a choice of either milk or juice. Water is available throughout the day which encourages children to help themselves to a drink when they are thirsty. Children who stay for the whole day bring a packed lunch which is stored appropriately. Staff promote healthy eating by encouraging children to eat their sandwiches first and discuss the benefits of healthy foods for lunch boxes with parents. There are effective systems in place to record medicines given to children, including dietary requirements.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The safety of the children is monitored by staff on a daily basis. All areas of the nursery and the outdoor play area is checked by staff before the children arrive to make sure it is safe; although no written risk assessments are kept. Children learn to keep themselves safe through reminders from staff about not running indoors and are encouraged to pick up toys that have fallen on the floor to prevent other children from tripping up and hurting themselves. Children take part in regular fire drills to help them understand the procedures for emergency evacuation. Appropriate records are kept although entries lack details of how many children and staff took part during the drill.

There are suitable systems in place for managing access to the provision. Children are closely supervised by staff and a log is kept of visitors on the premises but is not done on a regular basis and arrival and departure times are not recorded. Children can independently reach resources from child height cupboards and storage units. Staff monitor children's individual use of equipment to ensure that they are age appropriate and in good condition. Children are protected because staff have a working knowledge of child protection issues. They are aware of what they should do if they have any concerns about a child in their care.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are broadly content and settled in the setting. They happily take part in a suitable range of developmentally appropriate activities and use Montessori equipment. They have opportunities to learn about different shapes and colours, using blocks, puzzles and pegs. Children are beginning to recognise names of some shapes and colours and enjoy stories told by staff and looking at their favourite books. During circle time they delight in singing action rhymes and are beginning to name days of the week. Children do a suitable variety of creative

activities such as collages, drawing and different types of paintings; however these activities are very often adult lead which means children do not have opportunities to select and explore media and materials independently.

Children have good relationships with each other and receive lots of attention and cuddles from staff, which helps them settle quickly. They benefit from stable relationships with consistent staff members who care for them. This fosters their emotional well being and helps them to achieve. Staff use the birth to three matters frame work to guide them in providing suitable experiences for children under three years, however observations are not always used appropriately to identify the next steps for each child's development.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the foundation stage and provide a sufficient range of activities and experiences. As a result Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Children have opportunities to take part in themed activities which satisfactorily cover areas of learning and mostly meet the needs of individual children. However assessments carried out by staff are not effectively used to plan the next steps of children's learning. This means that resources and activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for the more able and older children.

Children are developing close relationships with staff and each other. They are happy to sit in small groups and talk about their chosen activities. They can dress and undress themselves independently and manage their own personal hygiene. Children interact when playing games and take turns in conversation. They are beginning to link sounds to letters and name and sound letters of the alphabet. Some older children can recognise their name in print and attempt to write their name on their pictures or drawings but do not have opportunities to practise writing in all areas of play. Children enjoy looking at books and are starting to recognise words in familiar books.

Children can say and use number names in order. Older children can count up to 10 and beyond. They are becoming familiar with names of shapes and sizes and use language to describe them. Children can recall past events in their own lives and in those of their families and other people that they know. They explore living things and learn about planting and growing, sunflower seeds and watercress. Although children are learning how to use telephones and some electronic equipment there is limited access to programmable toys on a daily basis. Children explore with paint, play dough, sand and water but have limited access to creative activities where they can self select their own materials. The home corner is widely used and children enjoy dressing up in their favourite outfits; although there is a lack of role play equipment available for them to use on a daily basis to extend their imaginary play.

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

The provision is good.

Children have good access to resources that reflect diversity, such as books, dressing up clothes, currency, small world people and a world globe. They have good opportunities to learn about different cultures and beliefs through celebrating festivals. Parents are also included and invited to share their national dish and children enjoy dressing up in their national costumes. As a result children are developing a positive attitude to others and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered. Children's individual needs are met well because

staff use a sensitive approach to gain a good understanding of their family and cultural background.

The setting has effective arrangements for caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure all children take part at a level appropriate to their needs. Children behave well and benefit from consistent praise and encouragement from staff. Behaviour management strategies are appropriately used, taking into account children's ages and stages of development. Staff are good role models, which help children learn right from wrong.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff have regular meetings with parents to discuss their children's progress. Staff give daily feedback to parents about the children's time at the nursery. This helps to provide continuity of care between home and the nursery. The nursery's prospectus contains information regarding the foundation stage; although no written information about 'Birth to three matters' is available for parents.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is appropriately organised and staff have a sound understanding of their role and responsibilities. A key worker system is in place to make sure children receive adequate support during their time at the nursery.

Most policies and procedures are in place which contributes to children's health and welfare. However written records are not kept of risk assessments carried out on the premises and a log of visitors is not always kept. Details following a fire drill are recorded but information about how many children and staff took part is not kept. A register is kept of children's daily attendance; although an accurate record of their arrival and departure times are not recorded. Parents receive information about the foundation but no written details about 'Birth to three matters' is available.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff work well as a team and have a sound knowledge of child development. There are aims for the provision and staff discuss these during meetings. There are appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure children are cared for by staff who are suitably qualified. Activities are planned in advance so that children are offered a sufficient range of experiences. Children's assessments and the information gained from it are adequate but not always used effectively to identify children's next steps of learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The last inspection recommended that the setting devise and implement policies and procedures for children with special educational needs, outings and equal opportunities, and ensure that fire drill records are available for inspection at all times; ensure that children have access to fresh drinking water at all times and make sure that cleaning substances and electrical sockets are inaccessible to the children; plan a range of activities and play opportunities for children's creative and imaginative development and ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; provide parents with a written statement of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint including the regulators contact details; record arrival and departure times (in the daily register), and record any incident of physical restraint; request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment for all children.

The setting has improved most of their records and procedures. All necessary policies and are now in place and parents are given a copy. Children can help themselves to water throughout the day and cleaning substances and electrical sockets are inaccessible to the children. A suitable range of creative activities are provided; although there are a limited range of imaginary play materials available. All resources promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. All necessary written parental permission is in place and records kept of physical restraint. Although a record is kept of children's attendance, their arrival and departure times are not accurately recorded. This will be made a recommendation of this inspection to improve practice within the setting.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the setting needed to develop the use of assessments to identify next steps for children's development. Use the information gained to plan activities that will challenge and extend children's learning, especially older and more able children. Evaluate the organisation of large group activities in order to make sure that all children are interested and involved. Develop the use of assessments to identify next steps for children's development. Use the information gained to plan activities that will challenge and extend children's learning, especially older and more able children. Evaluate the organisation of large group activities in order to make sure that all children are interested and involved.

Circle time has been organised to ensure all the children can take part and be involved. Although assessments are now used to guide staff in planning and providing a suitable curriculum, monitoring procedures are not always used effectively to identify ways to improve teaching and extend children's learning.

### **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 improvements to documentation including; a written record of risk assessments, an accurate record of visitors on the premises and fire drills practised, information regarding 'Birth to three matters' is available for parents and the recording of arrival and departure times of children

## **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 staffs knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three Matters framework and the foundation stage
- improve the planning and evaluation of activities to ensure that children make good progress in their education and development (also applies to care)
- improve the range of role play and programmable equipment, ensure that children can access creative activities independently and have opportunities to practise writing in all areas of play (also applies to care)

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