

# Bethnal Green Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119550
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Carolyn Mary Hasler
<b>Setting Address</b>	68 Warner Place, London, E2 7DA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0207 739 4343
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Sidonie Winter
<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?

Bethnal Green Montessori School has been registered since 1999. It is a privately owned school run on a main site and an annex. The setting is situated in Bethnal Green, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The setting currently has 55 children on roll, 30 of which are funded three and four year olds. The setting operates 38 weeks of the year term time from 08.45 to 15:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Fridays they operate from 8:45 until 12:00. In addition they run a holiday summer school for five week's between 8:45 and 15:00. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

The school is able to support children with special educational needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

Staff hold appropriate early years qualifications with a majority holding Montessori teaching qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about personal hygiene. There are resources in place for younger children who need support in the toilet areas. Toilets are low level and children can reach these easily. Children take themselves to the toilet. Those that are able are encouraged to use the toilets and sinks independently, and children are very good at remembering to wash their hands. They each dry their hands on individual towels. The bathrooms are very well resourced. Washing and good hygiene is a theme that runs through the setting. Children learn when they have finished using their personally labelled glass, they wash and dry it up and hang it back on the wall. Similarly children do not have to enter the toilets to wash their hands, they have access to a jug and bowl of water and soap which they can use at any time, this is set up as an activity. Children understand that when they come in from the garden they must wash their hands, children have access to the setting pets and their enclosures, along with soil, nature and other resources which belong outside. Children have good examples of hygiene to follow, staff show children how to wash and take care of their environment, they encourage children to do all things independently. Children are asked which task they want to help with and children help wash down tables, clear their own plates, sweep the floors and put the tables and chairs back after lunch.

Children can access a quiet area and bedding when they become sick or if they are particularly tired. If children are involved with an accident they can access a first aider who will administer immediate treatment. The setting ensures that the first aid kit is close at hand and a first aider is on site at all times. The setting has appropriate systems in place to record accidents and the administration of medication, however these are not always consistently completed in detail. Young children feel special to someone, the setting operates a key worker system, however all staff are warm towards children offering comfort when they are hurt and ensuring that they feel included in activities.

Children learn about healthy eating, they see pictures on the walls of healthy foods, they collect freshly laid eggs from the hen house and can take these with them to cook at home, children also grow vegetables such as beans, they learn that plants grow when they are given water and fed. Children can help themselves to snacks of fresh fruit each day, water is readily available. Children who stay for lunch bring a packed lunch which is stored in a cool area. Parents are advised that they can use the setting's refrigerator to store perishable foods. The setting ensure that information is collected on children's dietary needs.

Children have access to the garden area and use this as a resource for learning. They are using all their muscle groups because they have frequent opportunities to learn and build on existing skills. For example older and more able children enjoy riding bikes without stabilizers, while less able children enjoy the trikes and scooters. All children enjoy gardening tasks, pushing wheel barrows around the garden and digging holes to plant flowers. Children sweep the path, fill and empty buckets of water and learn how to negotiate the hen house door while collecting eggs. Children frequently visit nearby parks to play on large apparatus where they learn to climb and balance. Children use fine manipulative muscle movement in a multitude of different ways while playing with child size objects, learning to screw and unscrew bottles, pour from one small container into another and build complicated structures from bricks.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The setting is split into two different sites, which are close in proximity to each other. Both main indoor areas are square and set out so that children can access resources from low level shelving around the edges of the rooms. Children play in a well lit environment, windows and doors ensures that natural light floods into the setting. The temperature is comfortable for children to play in because the setting ensure that they can regulate the temperature through the use of heating and over head fans. Children can access the outside area at all times, staff have ensured that shade has been provided. The garden is made up of mostly paved areas and flower beds, children have access to a hen house and guinea pig pen. The garden is secure and staff are able to supervise play and learning appropriately. Children feel welcomed because staff ensure that each child is welcomed upon entry. They quickly settle into play, helping themselves to resources.

The setting is very well resourced with some unusual play equipment. There is a holistic feel to resources which are made from a variety of different materials such as glass, china, metal, wood, plastic and natural substances such as water, soil, living things such as plants and domestic animals. Some resources are very intricate and demand great concentration from children, all have a practical use and children are encouraged to help themselves, explore their use extending their skills; and then place each piece carefully back in its place. Children are encouraged to care for equipment, when children misuse resources staff talk to children about the equipment's beauty, and explain that if children batter the equipment and it chips, it doesn't look beautiful any more. Children learn, if they drop a tray loaded with resources, they need to hold the tray more securely next time. Toys and play resources are age appropriate, of good quality and are stimulating. Children have access to child size furniture such as tables and chairs, they have comfortable areas to sit and rest or be quiet.

Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe, they learn to take care while they play, being careful of each other when riding their bikes in the garden, or when carrying trays and furniture. Staff remind children to be careful and children are supervised at all times. Children are learning to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire, most children have taken part in the evacuation procedure, however children who do not attend morning sessions have not had this experience. Although the setting ensures that fire safety equipment is provided and checked regularly and exits to the premises are clearly displayed, the fire safety procedure is not displayed prominently, leaving persons such as visitors and parents vulnerable to fire. This together with the lack of practise some children have received in evacuation, means that children are not sufficiently safeguarded in the event of a fire. The premise is secure and the setting has procedures to ensure that children leave the premises safely handed over to a responsible adult. There are procedures to monitor visitors to the premises, however, these are not consistently used.

Vulnerable children are sufficiently safeguarded from abuse. The setting has a nominated person who has appropriate knowledge of signs and symptoms, however staff knowledge is not consistent and as the setting is on two sites this leaves some children vulnerable. Staff have access to a comprehensive policy and procedure and know how to follow this if they have concerns about a child.

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

The provision is good.

Children's care is supported because staff are clear about their role in enabling children to grow emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually. Children grow in confidence when they are encouraged to be independent in all that they do. Children have high self esteem because they play in an environment where they feel warm and secure and where staff are friendly and approachable. They receive reassurance and praise for their actions. Children are respected and are valued for what they offer to their community. They feel confident trying new activities because staff have ensured they feel safe and supported. Activities are based on first hand experiences which enable children to make choices as they develop their knowledge skills and understanding. Children with English as an additional language are sufficiently supported, they receive one to one attention when learning new skills and staff ensure that both parents and children are happy with care arrangements, carrying out parents' wishes with regard to how to communicate. The staff team and children come from lots of different cultures, helping children feel accepted as individuals.

Young children grow in confidence because they are given time to watch others and also because staff encourage children to make their own choices or join in with group activities. They are skilful communicators, listening and taking turns in conversation, there is language all around them and more confident younger children begin to use the language that they hear. Children are competent learners, showing good attitudes to learning. They are interested in their environment and can access play resources freely. They engage in play, learning that they are responsible for their chosen play equipment until they put it away. Young children are engrossed in play concentrating on tasks because they are interesting and challenging, for example learning how to screw and unscrew miniature scent bottles and jewelled pill boxes or pour beans from one container to another.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practitioners know children well and work to their strengths, they have high expectations of children which children respond too. They work individually with each child, building secure relationships, showing children by example and allowing children to take control of their own learning. Practitioners, observe whether children are learning independently and monitor how much directives children receive, this enables them to build on children's existing knowledge and plan for future development. Practitioners are not afraid to explore children's interests and actively encourage children to explore their environment. The setting is well resourced and children choose independently. Practitioners understand the properties of resources and how they help children to extend their understanding. Resources are well planned, age appropriate and extending.

Children have very good attitudes to learning, They explore their environment with enthusiasm and interest, they are motivated to learn because learning is purposeful. They have good levels of concentration as they develop skills in problem solving. Children grow in confidence and have high levels of self esteem, this is because learning is seen as individual and children are independent in their choices, they learn to control their actions seeing activities through to the end while respecting and taking care of their environment. Children build strong relationships with practitioners and their peers because practitioners show children through example how to treat others with respect. They take part in group activities taking an active role within their community. Children show good levels of self control and manage their own behaviour well,

they learn that they are responsible for their own behaviour. Children's independence is encouraged in all areas, they have a well developed sense of themselves and others.

Children enjoy listening and respond through action and words, they take turns in conversation listening and responding appropriately. They enjoy listening to music and are able to distinguish between sounds, they take part in group activities such as rhymes and singing. Children speak clearly and audibly with confidence, they have good language skills and extensive vocabulary. Children interact with others well, they can explain what they are playing with and ask questions confidently. They are able to make themselves understood. Children explore language which makes them think and extends their understanding of activities. They enjoy looking at books and reading, learning to recognise visual images and sounds of key letters, they practise making letters in different materials such as sand. They are practising with phonic sounds and recognising the shapes of sounds, linking sounds and letters. Most children can write their own names. They see labels all around them and connect objects to labels but also learn that writing is for different purposes.

Children develop pre maths skills through a large range of interesting resources which they explore individually and in small groups, they learn about size, shape and volume through experimenting with both life size objects and objects in miniature. Older children can access resources which are designed to help children think in terms of units, tens, hundreds, thousands and square roots and children experience this in two dimensional and three dimensional, learning is both visual and tactile. Children are using mathematical terminology when working with materials. Children use numbers in every day routines, they count the number of children who will be remaining for lunch and set up for lunch with the right number of places and chairs. Children are learning about calculation through songs and rhymes, they are learning how many are left if one is taken away. Children are learning about different sorts of patterns including symmetry, they are confident problem solvers and more able children build Roman arches with small wooden bricks, using good levels of concentration. Children are matching solids to flat shapes, recognise small and large and can place in order of size.

Children investigate objects and materials by using all their senses. This is actively encouraged through the use of both activities indoors and outdoors and by offering children resources which are on both small and large scale. Resources are made of holistic materials such as metal, glass, wood and plastic, which resemble home activities and encourage life skills. When outdoors children are learning to care for and take care of the setting's pets, they collect eggs from the hen house and feed the chickens and guinea pigs pellets and leftovers from lunch. They are learning about life cycles while they watch for baby chicks to hatch in the hen house, plant and grow seeds and seedlings, watering plants each day to help them grow. Children are learning a sense of place, they are fascinated by the nature around them, they watch and talk about the snail which has visited their garden, watching it move across paper leaving a trail and talking about being quiet so that they do not frighten it. When they have finished observing the snail it is placed back on a leaf. Children are learning about technology, children watch the water flow through the system of the toilet, watching it empty and fill up again, they access the CD player independently, slotting in the CD, pressing the correct buttons to make it work. They plug in head phones and sit quietly listening to music. Children develop a sense of time, they talk about their recent trip to a park where the snails were orange not like the snails in their own garden. Children have a strong sense of their own culture and beliefs, staff encourage this by providing children with a variety of activities which encourage children to explore and investigate their own and others' life styles.

Children have opportunities to be creative. They explore sound through listening and recognising same and different and have access to a range of musical instruments which they use when listening and singing songs such as music man, together in small groups. Children match the name of the instrument with the sound it makes and phonic sound. Children can access different types of music on the CD player. Children explore glue, different textured and coloured paper, pencils, paints and chalks, creating their own work which they take home at the end of the day. Children have few opportunities to use their imagination in model making, designing, music, dance and imaginative role play and stories.

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

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show wonder and their attention is captivated when they find a snail in the garden area. They behave with consideration towards each other and towards the natural world and they care for the setting's pets. Children take part in grace and courtesy sessions designed to help children learn about right from wrong and treating each other with respect. They have opportunities to play independently but also in small and large groups learning to co operate and take turns. Children say grace before lunch and take part in conversation's while eating, they have very good social skills. Children celebrate a wide variety of interesting festivals from around the world including festivals from Mexico, Brazil, China, Bengali, Eastern European countries, they reflect the cultures, religions and interests for staff members and those of the children using the setting. The nursery has a "Wider World" corner where children can access resources such as cards, books, globes and pictures that look at other cultures and nations. Recently children found out about China, this covered lots of different aspects of the Chinese way of life and their celebrations. Parents take an active role in topics through news letters, they are encouraged to contribute to the resources with food, pictures and objects. Other cultures are reflected in the setting's play resources, children can access puzzle maps and flags, they enjoy playing with fragile jewelled boxes and glass bottles, they see images of Chinese patterns on trays and other objects which they use as every day objects.

Children with special needs are supported well, initial information from parents supports care arrangements, where initial information has not been available, a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) has been appointed and has undergone training in the assessment of children helping to identify children who may need additional support. The setting treats children's learning on an individual basis and plans activities accordingly and this is particularly suited to children who may need additional help. The setting works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that children feel included and meet their full potential. Reasonable adjustments are made to the premises.

Children play harmoniously together, they learn to share and take turns. Children learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour, staff establish from the very beginning their expectations through grace and courtesy group activities. When children are hurt as a result of another's actions, they learn that saying sorry does not take the hurt away and that it is better not to hurt each other at all. Parents are consulted and informed if persistent behaviour adversely affects others and often this results with parents working together with the setting to encourage more harmonious relationships within the peer group. Good behaviour and small achievements are acknowledged through gentle praise and encouragement. Children are very happy at the setting, noise levels are minimal because children are actively involved in play or engaged in activities. As a result children were very well behaved.

Children benefit when parents and the setting working together to support the care needs of children. New children settle quickly because the setting encourages a measured settling in period and collects relevant information on each child as a basis to care arrangements, which takes account of children's individual needs. Parents receive a prospectus and have access to policies and procedures. Parents work closely with staff on practical issues such as behaviour management but also help out on trips and outings. Parents' views were sought and they were very supportive of the setting, all shared that they were very happy with their care arrangement. Staff were very approachable should they have any concerns. They have access to a comprehensive complaints policy and procedure which is in line with recent changes in regulation. They stated that they felt the setting kept them sufficiently informed about their child both verbally, through parents staff evenings and news letters. Partnerships with parents and carers of children who receive Nursery Education funding is good. Parents stated that they feel involved with their children's education, they are asked through news letters to support project work such as celebrations of different cultures and festivals. Open evenings inform parents about Montessori principles and how the Foundation Stage curriculum fits together. Information on children's learning is displayed. Parents receive reports when children leave care arrangements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

A robust recruitment procedure coupled with staff who are highly qualified in childcare ensures that children receive a high quality service by staff who are suitable. The setting works within their registered numbers and high ratio's ensure that children receive individual attention. Children develop a strong sense of self and understand that they are independent individuals. The setting organises space and resources to meet children's needs effectively, they encourage children to be healthy because they organise routines and play situations which help children to understand how to keep themselves healthy. Children's safety is appropriately met because staff ensure that the premises have been risk assessed and children are learning to keep themselves safe. Children enjoy their time at the setting, they are motivated and challenged, achievements are acknowledged and celebrated. Children contribute to their own group and learn about the wider community.

Children benefit because records generally promote the welfare, care and learning of children, records about individual children are shared with parents on request. The setting makes provision for private consultations with parents and store records securely. Policies and procedures promote the welfare of children and underpin the setting's service

The leadership and management of Nursery Education is good. Children's care and learning is enhanced by practitioners who are very experienced and have strong links with the community. Management places high importance in giving practitioner's opportunities for professional development and the registered person actively encourages practitioners to attend courses, and build on existing training. The setting successfully balances their Montessori principles with the Foundation Stage curriculum, planning is simple, based on individual children through continual observation and assessment and is easy to follow. The Registered Person has a strong understanding in both Montessori and the Foundation stage curriculum, this ensures that staff are confident in their delivery.

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



## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the registered person agreed to devise and implement an effective fire safety plan and ensure that all children and staff are aware of the procedure. There is a clear fire evacuation procedure in place however this is not displayed at exits within the play rooms. Fire drills are conducted on a regular basis and all staff know how to evacuate the premises quickly and appropriately, however not all children have had the opportunity to be involved. This means that children are not sufficiently safeguarded.

## **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.

## **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):

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues
- ensure that all records are consistently completed
- display the fire safety procedure and ensure that all children have opportunities to practise evacuating the premises.

### **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):

- plan activities that help children develop imagination

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)