

Learning Tree Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137819
Inspection date	18 September 2007
Inspector	Pauline Nazarkardeh

Setting Address	309 Preston Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 0QQ
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Registered person	Eileen Wilson
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?

Learning Tree Montessori Nursery School opened in 1995. It operates from the ground floor of a private house in the borough of Brent. The setting has access to three main classrooms, with additional access to smaller areas for arts and crafts activities and a separate lunch-hut. The nursery is open from 08.00 to 16.00 term-time only. There is a secure garden for outdoor play.

There are currently 36 children on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports a number of children who have English as an additional language and a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting currently employs five staff who work directly with the children, four of these staff hold a relevant child care qualification. One member of staff is working towards a childcare qualification.

The setting follows the Montessori ethos and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is being promoted as suitable hygiene policies and procedures are implemented by staff. Staff use appropriate practices such as washing the tables before and after meals. In the summer months parents provide sun cream, and their consent has been obtained to apply this. Suitable procedures are now in place for dealing with accidents. The majority of staff hold valid first aid certificates which enables them to confidently deal with any accidents or administer medication.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious meals which are provided by parents. Children's packed lunches are stored appropriately in the fridge and foods are no longer reheated on the premises. When the weather permits breakfast and lunch is eaten in the garden. The children enjoy eating outside and they sit in the company of their friends and the staff team. However, facilities for indoor eating needs to be developed to ensure that children have sufficient space, that they are well supervised and that their meal times are an enjoyable experience.

All children enjoy fresh air and exercise. They are making good progress in their physical development and have many opportunities during the day to develop these skills. Children have excellent hand eye coordination, they use their fingers and tools to pick up and release various small objects.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Most children arrive happily and are confident to separate from their parent/carer. Children develop a sense of belonging as they arrive into a child friendly environment. They are cared for in a warm and clean environment where space is organised to allow children to move around freely and comfortably. Toys and Montessori equipment are set out at low levels which means children's independence is promoted as they are able to make choices. Staff are well deployed ensuring that the children are supervised throughout the day.

Effective measures are now in place to protect children and to keep them safe. Children's access to hazards is prevented by such measures as effective risk assessments, electrical sockets being covered and cleaning materials being stored out of children's reach. Weaknesses identified in the safety of the garden have been addressed. There are sound security procedures in place and access to the premises is via a buzzer on the front door.

Children's wellbeing is safeguarded by staff who have sufficient understanding of the signs of possible abuse and who know the appropriate procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child. Other precautions are in place to protect children, for example, all visitors are required to sign in and out of the premises and unvetted staff are never left alone with the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have access to a range of Montessori equipment and resources that are stimulating, challenging and age appropriate. The children are warmly welcomed into the setting each morning, and most confidently separate from their parents. They seek out their friends on

entering the rooms and make choices in what activities or resources they wish to participate in. They chat to one another as they play with their chosen activities. For example, the children thoroughly enjoyed the activity where they practice brushing teeth. They discuss how to do the task, who will have the first go and the texture and smell of the toothpaste.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children in receipt of funding for early years education have very positive attitudes towards learning, they are engaged and motivated throughout their time at nursery. Staff plan a Montessori Curriculum which is closely linked to the Foundation Stage of learning and they plan and deliver stimulating activities for the children. Records are in place to monitor children's achievements, learning and development and these are used to plan for the next steps for their individual learning. Teaching methods are generally good as most staff give children time to express their own views and thoughts which develops their self-assurance and esteem. There are however some inconsistencies in teaching style when interaction between staff and children is very instructive and is carried out in order to meet the staff routine as opposed to the needs of the children.

Children talk confidently to adults and their peers. For example, one child eagerly spoke excitedly about her birthday, while holding up four fingers she said that she is four years old. Children practise their early writing skills and most children can recognise their own names; they are able to handle books confidently and carefully. Children understand that text reads from left to right and that print carries meaning. One child enthusiastically read his story to a friend in the book area, turning the pages and sharing the pictures.

Children develop their imagination as they engage in various role-play experiences, for example, in the sand play the children talk about making jelly, staff ask interesting questions about the smell and flavour of the jelly which delights the children and encourages their thinking.

Children are learning about living things, they have planted daffodil bulbs in the garden and they understand the need to water their plants. They have access to a good range of equipment which helps them to develop their understanding of technology, for example, magnifying glasses and binoculars.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very well behaved. They are encouraged to take turns, share and to have regard for others. Staff respect the children and this positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children have access to a range of meaningful resources and activities that promote a positive view of the wider world which increases their understanding of diversity. For example, a resource box is used by the children to talk about India, they look and talk about the postcards, money and other everyday items. Children are valued and their individual needs respected. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator present and written policies are in place to support practice.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Appropriate communication systems are now in place with parents which benefits the children's care. Parents/carers receive regular reports

and staff are available to speak to parents about their child at any time. Information is available to parents and carers about the Foundation Stage curriculum and notice boards hold information on planning for the Foundation Stage and Montessori Curriculum.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management for the nursery education is good. The manager has a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and has worked with the staff team in order to address the issues identified at the previous inspection. All staff are encouraged to attend training in order to update their childcare practice.

The nursery is well organised and good levels of communication means that day to day routines are effective. The staff team are well established and committed to provide continuity of care for the children which in turn helps them to feel safe and secure.

Good policies and procedures are in place and work to keep children healthy and safe. Robust recruitment procedures are carried out to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. All required records and documentation are now in place to support the smooth running of the nursery.

Overall the setting is meeting the needs of all the children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection actions were set in relation to documentation, safety, food preparation and the organisation of the premises. All these issues have been addressed and the necessary action has been taken, this ensures the safety and wellbeing of the children.

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):

- develop the arrangements and facilities for providing meals indoors

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):

- monitor the quality of teaching to ensure consistence of practice

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