

Neasden Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137827
Inspection date	18 September 2007
Inspector	Bharti Vakil
Setting Address	St. Catherines Church Hall, St. Catherines Church, Dudden Hill Lane, London, NW2 7RX
Telephone number	020 8208 1631
E-mail	
Registered person	Jayasree Sen Gupta
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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Neasden Montessori School is a privately run provision. It opened in 1985 and operates from a church premises located in Neasden in the London borough of Brent. A maximum of 35 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09.30 to 15.00 during school term time. All children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. None of the children currently attending have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The staff team consists of six members, and three staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

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 fully promoted as the premises is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. There is a thorough daily cleaning routine in place and staff use protective clothing to minimise cross infection, for example, when changing nappies. Children learn about healthy hygiene practice through the daily routine because they are encouraged to wash their hands before handling food and after visiting the toilet. Older children independently wash their hands at appropriate times and speak about "getting rid of germs".

Children are protected from unnecessary illness as they do not attend when they are suffering from infections. Good systems and records effectively support children's care. Staff are aware of children's individual health needs, parents give signed permission guidance regarding the administration of medication which is clearly recorded and countersigned by staff. Children are protected in emergencies because three staff hold current first aid certificates appropriate for childcare.

Children and staff sit around tables together for snack and lunch time, which creates a social atmosphere and promotes social skills. Parents are required to provide snack and packed lunch for their child. Effective arrangements are in place to store and re-heat the food, for example, food is probed to ensure it is re-heated and served at the correct temperature. Children develop their independence as they happily find their own snack and lunch boxes and pour out drinks whenever they are thirsty. They have opportunities to handle and taste different food through planned activities, such as preparing fruit salad and cookies.

The outdoor play area provides sufficient room where children can bounce, jump and balance which help them develop control of their bodies and use their large muscle skills. Good alternative provision is made when the weather is not suitable for outdoor play. Children join in exercises to music enthusiastically and develop an awareness of the space around them. Children's fine muscle skills are developing well as they have access to many worthwhile activities. Older children are confident in using scissors, tongs and tweezers as they pick up and release various items.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, steps have been taken to ensure the areas used by children are free from obvious safety hazards. For example, staff are suitably deployed supervising and interacting with children and they follow good security measures relating to children's arrival and departure. However, not all risks have been minimised for children's safety. The large un-secured mirror and the raised area in the smaller room may pose a hazard to children. The risk assessments do not include actions to be taken to minimise any identified risks. This compromises children's safety.

Children move around freely and comfortably in a spacious hall that is free from obvious safety hazards. They are learning to take responsibility for their own safety, for example, they help tidy up and carefully carry their chairs to the table. Children practise the emergency escape plan on a regular basis to ensure quick and safe evacuation from the premises, should the need arise. Children's individual needs are met effectively because there is an appropriate range of

furniture, toys and equipment which is well maintained. Resources are stored within easy reach of the children which means that they are able to make independent choices.

Children are safeguarded because staff have suitable knowledge and understanding regarding child protection issues and the possible signs of abuse and neglect. They know the procedures they must follow should they have a concern about a child, and the necessary documentation is in place to support their practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the opportunity to engage in a range of interesting activities. There is a varied range of toys and Montessori equipment to support the development and learning of children of all ages. Children under three-years are supported by kind and caring staff that are able to respond to their individual care, learning and welfare needs. Children are happy and settle quickly into the routine as they move freely between activities, making choices about their play. They particularly enjoy imaginative play as they make good use of sand tray and the well-presented home corner. Children play with each other and are beginning to learn to share and take turns. The book corner is popular with children who regularly select books to look at by themselves or in a small group with a staff member.

The staff team has recently obtained knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and they are just beginning to implement this. Younger children are beginning to benefit from the implementation of the Birth to three matters framework. This framework is to support children's learning and development in their earliest years.

Nursery Education:

The quality and teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children have access to a range of activities which help them to make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use sound teaching methods such as open-ended questioning and demonstrating tasks which help children to achieve. However, the new systems for planning, observing and evaluating children's progress are in the early stages of implementation and therefore, some learning opportunities are missed. Staff are keen to improve the provision for early education.

Children are happy and motivated to learn as they persist at chosen activities, for example when cutting wavy lines with scissors. They are developing their ability to concentrate, take turns and share during small group activity times. Children have many opportunities to develop their independence such as finding their lunch box, pouring their own drink. Staff carefully consider the lay out of the main room and set out toys and resources to enable children to make choices independently. Children are confident and able to express their needs as they ask staff and other children for help in their activities. They have opportunities to recognise letters and words in the environment and enjoy drawing. Children enjoy looking at books and they are developing an understanding that print carries meaning. However, there are too few opportunities for children to write for a purpose.

Children use mathematical language freely and they recognise shapes and colours within their environment. They are learning to count and understand numbers through a range of practical experiences. They have opportunities to weigh, make patterns and compare size. They are beginning to add and subtract during counting rhymes such as 'Seven little Monkeys..' Children care for living things as they feed their fish 'Goldie' and 'Locket' and germinate beans. They

have opportunities to learn about their local environment and the wider world. Through use of photographs, children are able to recall past events. Awareness of customs and cultures is gained through planned projects and activities such as countries of the world. Children are able to build and construct using materials such as sand, wooden blocks and creative materials. For example, children have fun creating the 'Eiffel Tower' as they talk about Paris. Children's creativity is well supported, they enjoy using a variety of art mediums to express their thoughts and ideas and respond readily to a range of music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is good and appropriate for their ages. Older children are learning to be thoughtful and kind towards others and understand about taking turns and sharing. Younger children are beginning to learn the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in ways that they can understand. This is because, staff use age-appropriate and positive strategies to manage any difficulties that may arise. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children's home languages are valued and respected. Staff and children come from a wide variety of backgrounds. A number of staff are bi-lingual and readily move between languages to help children to understand and to offer support and comfort. Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their understanding of diversity. Children actively learn to celebrate their own and respect others cultures through taking part in world festivals. Staff recognise festivities as an opportunity to involve parents and the whole setting joins in. For example, for Eid, St. Patrick's Day, Chinese New Year and Divali parents help to explain significance and or customs, food is shared and music is played. At Christmas children learn the Christmas story by taking part in a nativity play.

The setting has a sufficient 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.

There are appropriate systems in place to share information with parents and carers, which contributes to children's well-being. Staff liaise with parents regarding the care of their children and their wishes are respected. Parents have access to information about the nursery including Montessori methods, routine and policies and procedures. Therefore, parents are clearly informed of the arrangements for the care of their children. Staff share daily verbal information with parents about children's care and activities.

The partnership with parents whose children receive nursery education is satisfactory. They receive written information on the Foundation Stage curriculum, therefore they are informed about the curriculum their children follow. Staff are available to discuss children's progress. Parents are welcome to see their child's profile of development at any time and planned meetings are held each term.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All of the required legal documents relating to the National Standards are in place. They are well organised and stored with an awareness of confidentiality. There are good recruitment

procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children and therefore children's welfare is safeguarded.

The organisation of space allows children to move around freely and comfortably. Staff are suitably deployed which ensures children are well supervised and engaging in play and learning. Overall, steps have been taken to keep children safe however not all risks have been minimised.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. Manager and staff are clear about their role and responsibilities and as a result, the day runs smoothly for the children. Appropriate communication systems are in place such as yearly staff appraisals and planning meetings. There is a commitment from the registered provider to ensuring staff have access to further training courses. The structure to monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage is being developed.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the quality of care was judged as inadequate. The setting has made sound progress in addressing the actions raised at the last inspection. The procedure to be followed in the event of a child being uncollected has been devised. The staff team has gained knowledge and understanding of the local Safeguarding Children procedures. They know the procedures they must follow should they have a concern about a child, and the necessary documentation is in place to support their practice. All these improvements help to promote children's welfare.

The last nursery education inspection was judged as satisfactory. Some improvements have been made by implementing recommendations. Parents are provided with written information on the Foundation stage curriculum. The new systems for planning, observing and evaluating children's progress are in the early stages of implementation and therefore, some learning opportunities are missed. Staff are keen to improve the provision for early education. The setting was asked to ensure that all staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and stepping stones. This is on-going the setting is working closely with the Local Authority's Early Years Services for support. This improves the 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):

- take further steps to minimise risks to children on the premises; ensure risk assessment includes an action plan with time scales to minimise identified risks
- continue to develop planning for Birth to three matters framework and implement this effectively

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):

- continue developing the systems to monitor, assess and evaluate children's progress along stepping stones and to inform future planning to ensure all children make progress
- further develop systems to monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum

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