

The Dolphin Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100610
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Inspector	Moreen Johnson
Setting Address	Luther Tyndale Church Hall, Leighton Crescent, London, NW5 2QY
Telephone number	020 7267 3994
E-mail	climtouch@clara.co.uk
Registered person	Carole Limtouch
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Dolphin Montessori school is a privately owned provision that opened in 1989. It operates from the Luther Tyndale church hall in the London borough of Camden. Children have access to a hall, two activity rooms and a fully enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 during term time only.

There are currently 13 children on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

In addition to the provider/manager the nursery employs two members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, one holds an appropriate Early Years qualifications. The provider/ manager is currently working toward the Early Years Childhood Studies degree.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing a good understanding of personal hygiene. They are encouraged to wash their hands before eating food and to brush their teeth after having lunch. Some children use the toilet independently and automatically wash their hands afterwards. The premises is well maintained. Staff follow good practice by wiping the table and sweeping the floor after snack and lunch sessions.

Children receive good treatment when they have accidents. For example, when children fall and hurt themselves they are comforted and reassured, first aid is administered appropriately and the accidents are recorded. Although the manager is aware of how to administer first aid she does not hold a current certificate. There is a good medication system in place. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication which ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs.

Children receive a healthy snack of fruits. They confidently serve themselves and choose from a varied selection of fruits and pour their own water. Children learn the importance of a healthy diet for instance by doing projects about food and by discussing the benefits of eating a health diet.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Whilst playing in the garden, some children enjoy digging a large hole and use tables and chairs to build structures around it. Other children use forks and shovels skilfully to pick up the leaves. Children enjoy running about and control their movements well. Children have regular opportunities to visit the local park to use large equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises is clean, bright and well maintained. The use of displays and children's work make the nursery an attractive welcoming environment for children. There is ample space for children to move around safely to choose from a wide range of resources that are easily accessible to them.

The good deployment of staff ensures the safety of the children at all times. For example, children are closely supervised whilst playing indoors and outdoors. The group carry out daily and annual risk assessments which clearly identifies potential hazards and the steps that will be taken to eliminate risks to children. For example the group has fitted a secure fence in the garden and has made the stage area in the hall inaccessible to children. Children and staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire because these are regularly practised.

Children are protected from harm because staff are aware of their responsibility to ensure that any concerns regarding child protection are reported to the manager. However, children are not fully protected in the event of the need to check historical records because the register does not always record children's departure times. There is an appropriate policy in place but it does not include Ofsted's details.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are interested in the activities available and spend time concentrating on self-chosen activities. Staff ensure that resources are well organised so that children have access to a wide range of activities that provide them with stimulation and challenge. Younger children are well integrated into the group and have positive relationships with older children. For example at lunch time all children happily engage in conversations together and during outdoor play they make decisions together about how to build their structures. New children are well settled into the group and staff know when to support children and when to allow them to be independent.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Children are making good progress, they are confident, independent and eager to learn. Staff use the good information that they obtain from observations and assessments to promote children's learning in accordance with their individual interests. The recording of observations need improving to clearly state the next stage of children's learning. Staff have positive relationships with children and support them well. There are inconsistencies in the management of behaviour, although inappropriate behaviour is challenged, children are not always given an explanation why their behaviour is not acceptable.

Children are able to count in everyday situations, for instance, they identify numbers one, two, three and eight when reading and playing the marble game. More able children are set additional challenges to recognise a number beyond ten. Some children confidently use mathematical language such as 'under' 'over' and 'through' when they create a maze that they make from masking tape. Children are learning about the natural world. They are engrossed when listening to a story about dinosaurs. They actively participate in a discussion about meteorites and the ice age. Children are developing an understanding of growth by planting vegetables such as tomatoes and broad beans. Children demonstrate good hand eye co-ordination when they play with blocks to build and design. Children explore information technology by using a range of different equipment. For example, whilst playing in the home corner, children use the telephone correctly, they smile and laugh out loud as they pretend to have conversations with their parents.

Children are developing an appreciation of music and rhythm by taking part in music and dance sessions and by using instruments. Children are confident speakers, they happily converse with each other, they talk to adults about what they are doing and to request the toys that they wish to play with.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's self esteem is promoted well. They have good opportunities to choose the activities that interest them and freely initiate their own play. Children have positive relationships with each other and play well together. Children are developing an understanding of the wider world through topic work and looking at different festivals. They have access to a wide range of resources that reflect diversity. Children with learning difficulties receive good support. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met.

Children are encouraged to develop an understanding of right and wrong and respond to request for good behaviour. However, staff do not always make expectations clear by giving reasons for the request to ensure that children understand why certain behaviour is not acceptable.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. They are encouraged to develop an appreciation of music and movement and are learning about the natural world. Children are kind to one another and welcome others to join in their play. Children are beginning to learn about different faiths and cultures through resources and activities.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff provide parents with good written information about the group via the notice board and regular news letters. Parents receive formal and informal feedback about their children's progress. Parents are able to read about the Foundation Stage of learning in information which is displayed. Staff and parents meet at regular intervals to discuss children's progress towards the early learning goals and to identify the next stage of their learning. Parents' input is actively sought when placements start to establish what their children know and to plan how they will be supported to progress. There is a complaints procedure in place but there is no system in place for keeping a record of complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

An appropriate system is in place to ensure that staff are appropriately vetted. Children's details on medication and accident records are appropriately stored with an awareness of confidentiality. Staff work well together as a team and are deployed well to ensure that children are not placed at risk. Most policies and procedures are in place. However, the child protection policy does not include Ofsted's details. The group is in breach of regulations because there is no system in place for recording complaints and children's departure times are not always recorded.

Leadership and management of the nursery is good. The provider has a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation stage curriculum. There is a clear system in place to evaluate the quality of the nursery education and the provider is committed to improving the provision. Regular staff meetings are held to support staff in their own development and understanding of the curriculum. The provider is willing to address the weakness identified with regards to the issues relating to the breaches of regulations the recording of observations.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspections two recommendations were made to improve both education and care practices. The nursery has made good progress in addressing these. Older children now have access to separate activities that provides them with additional challenge. A high secure fence is fitted around the outside play area. This helps to ensure that children are cared for in a safe and suitable environment.

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):

- ensure that at least two staff members are appropriately trained in first aid and hold current certificates
- ensure that there is a system for recording complaints; that the child protection policy include Ofsted's and that children's departure times are always recorded

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 system for recording observations to ensure that the next stage of children's learning is clearly identified
- ensure that staff manage behaviour in a consistent manner

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