

Cherry Tree Montessori Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	107631
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Pamela Patricia Paisley
Setting Address	3 Lacon Road, East Dulwich, London, SE22 9HE
Telephone number	020 8693 8174
E-mail	
Registered person	Shereen Hanwell-Raham
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Cherry Tree Montessori Playgroup opened in 1996 and operates from two rooms on the ground floor of a semi-detached house. It is situated in a residential area in Dulwich. A maximum of 16 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup opens each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round and some children attend on a sessional basis. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged two to under five years on roll, of these, 10 children receive funding for early education. Children mainly come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children who speaks English as an additional language. The setting incorporates the National Curriculum with the Montessori philosophy.

The playgroup employs six members of staff, including the manager who hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills. They enjoy playing outdoors with suitable play equipment such as balls, bikes and a climbing frame. They take part in regular dance sessions and move around to music, stretching their arms and legs and pointing their toes. They move around to action nursery rhymes and show good co-ordination when they point to their head shoulders, knees and toes. Children eat healthy snacks and enjoy a range of fresh fruits and vegetables such as apples, bananas, strawberries, carrots, cucumbers and tomatoes. The children take it turns to help to prepare the morning snack and fresh drinking water is available at all times and they confidently help themselves. This encourages children to think about their personal needs.

There are good systems in place for recording medicines administered to children and relevant information regarding each child's medical history. Detailed accident and incident records are in place but not organised appropriately to maintain confidentiality. Children have a clear understanding of the importance of good hygiene practice. They independently take themselves to the toilet and know they need to wash their hands before meals and cooking activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play with a broad range of good quality play materials, toys and equipment that are regularly checked by staff. They have easy access to play materials in child height storage units and shelves. Regular fire drills are practised so children become familiar with emergency evacuation. Children's welfare is protected as all staff have received training in how to safeguard children. They have good understanding of child protection procedures and there is comprehensive information available for reference.

Children are supervised well by staff and the front door kept locked to prevent unauthorised persons entering the playgroup. An accurate record is kept of visitors on the premises and the outdoor play area is checked before the children arrive to make sure all areas are safe. Children are reminded by staff not to run indoors and pick up toys that have been dropped on the floor so that other children do not trip and hurt themselves.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of play and learning experiences that stretch and develop them and help them to achieve. Children are relaxed and settled. This enables them to make good progress in their all round development. They are keen to learn and encouraged to try out new skills. This supports their developing independence and self-motivation. Children relate very well to staff and each other. Children confidently approach staff for support indicating good trusting relationships. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to guide them in planning and providing suitable activities for children under three years. Children's creative and imaginative development is encouraged through activities such as arts and crafts junk modelling and painting. They have good opportunities to play a variety of musical instruments, sing songs and listen to stories. They enjoy dressing up and taking part in role play. Children are interested in the activities available and spend time concentrating on self chosen activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They make regular observations and record children's achievements to help them identify the next steps for each child and ensure that appropriate activities or one to one work is included in the weekly activity plan. This ensures that children are moved on in their learning at a good pace. Written plans are linked to the six areas of learning and clearly demonstrate what children are expected to learn; although staff do not always provide enough opportunities for children to play and learn independently.

Many children are able to spell simple words, write recognisable letters and write their name. They use story cards well to tell stories about what happens to a snowman when the sun comes out and what happens when a candle burns. Children are beginning to learn phonic sounds to help them read books and are developing good listening skills and take turns when speaking in large or small groups and negotiate well during role play. Children have a good concept of numbers, many children can count up to 10 and beyond and can compare shape size and quantity. They have good access to number and shape puzzles and Montessori mathematical equipment is available for them to self select and use for problem solving. Children enjoy learning about the life cycle of butterflies and other mini beasts and are developing a good understanding of the growth of living things as they plant beans and watercress. They are confident in using everyday technology such as a computer, telephone and tape recorders so they can listen to music or stories.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management and use appropriate strategies to help children learn right from wrong. Children behave well and understand what is expected of them. Children benefit from lots praise and encouragement which helps to promote good self esteem. Children are valued as individuals and their needs met effectively through gathering information from parents when they first start the playgroup. This positive approach means that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Close liaisons with parents and outside agencies ensures that all children's needs are well planned for and met. Children learn about diversity as they celebrate festivals, use globes and puzzle maps. They have good access to resources that reflect positive images of culture, gender and disabilities. Partnership with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to get involved with every day events at the playgroup. They receive regular feed back about their children's progress through parent evenings and weekly plans are displayed on a notice board so parents know what their children are learning each week.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place to ensure that the welfare, care and learning of the children is promoted effectively. All records are up dated on a regular basis; although accident and incident records are not organised appropriately to maintain confidentiality. A key worker system is in operation which means staff know the children well. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are well protected.

Leadership and management is good. Staff work well as a team and support each other in providing a well balanced curriculum. The manager has a clear vision for the playgroup and works along side her staff team to monitor and evaluate the quality and teaching and focus on the personal development and achievement of the children. Activities provided are stimulating and provide good challenge for the children; although staff do not always provide enough opportunities for children to play and learn independently. 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 playgroup ensure arrival and departure times of staff and children are recorded; that the complaints procedure includes Ofsted's contact details and that written risk assessments are in place.

The playgroup have made improvements to their records and accurate information is kept of arrival and departure times of children and staff. The complaints procedures includes Ofsted's contact details and written risk assessments are kept.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the playgroup improve the evaluation of assessment recordings to ensure that these are linked to the six areas of learning and the dating of children's work particularly children's handwriting practice in order to track the range and level of progress made.

The playgroup have improved their planning to ensure that assessments are linked to the six areas of learning and all children's work is dated so that staff can evaluate children's progress effectively.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint relating to Standard 1: Suitable Person, National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 6: Safety, National Standard 7: Health and National Standard: 12 Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers. Concerns were that the nursery was in breach of the nursery's conditions of registration; that children were not adequately supervised; an injury to a child and that parents were not advised on children's activities during the day. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to the provider. As a result of the visit, two actions were raised under National Standard 1 and National Standard 2. In addition, a warning letter was sent to the provider in relation to the breach of the nursery's conditions of registration. The provider responded to the actions and Ofsted was satisfied that the provider met the requirements of the National Standards and took no further action. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 confidentiality is maintained when recording accidents and incidents

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):

- provide regular opportunities for children to play and learn independently

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