

Square One Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 123098 |
| Inspection date | 05 March 2008 |
| Inspector | Linda Close |
| Setting Address | Lady North Hall,, Ravenna Road, Putney, SW15 6AW |
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| Registered person | Deirdre Newton King |
| 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?

Square One Nursery School originally opened 37 years ago and was registered in 1992. It operates from a single storey community hall in the Putney area of southwest London. The local authority is Wandsworth. The nursery serves the children and families who live in the local and surrounding areas. The premises include a main room and an additional room for nursery activities. There is a kitchen, an office, walk in store cupboards and toilet facilities. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play.

There are currently 45 children on roll who are aged from two to under five years. This includes 30 funded three and four-year-olds. There are no children on roll who have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Several children are learning English as an additional language or they hear other languages spoken at home.

The nursery opens during term time only from 09:30 to 12:15 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 09:30 to 15:00 on Tuesday and Thursday. The afternoon sessions are held according to the needs of the children attending. A maximum of 10 children can arrive at the

setting at 09:00 to meet the needs of their families. Places in this early morning group are by prior arrangement only.

The principal is also the proprietor and there are seven other full or part-time staff working with the children. A secretary and a housekeeper work in the setting. Over half of the staff team hold either a teaching qualification or a childcare qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level 2 or 3. There are four peripatetic specialist tutors for tennis, French, yoga and music. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy of education blended with a more traditional nursery approach.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children can be cared for appropriately if they have an accident because the provider ensures that there is a first aider on the premises at all times. First aid resources are kept to hand and they are checked and replenished on a regular basis. Details of any accidents are recorded well but they are three to a page which does not ensure confidentiality. Staff are very well aware of children's allergies and special dietary needs and they make sure that children only have food and drink that meets parental preferences.

The housekeeper works very hard to ensure that the floors, tables and resources are kept clean for the children throughout the day. Hand washing is encouraged and staff help the children to understand why this is necessary for good health although some children do not wash their hands before snack time which is not wholly consistent. Nappy change procedures are hygienic and all resources are neatly stored and clearly labelled. Children are protected from the unnecessary spread of infection because parents know that children should not attend if they are unwell. The provider puts up a sign in the entrance area to alert parents to chickenpox or other diseases that are prevalent in the nursery. Children can have emergency medical treatment without delay if there is a need because parents give their written permission for this at the time of registration.

The children can bring a packed lunch if they stay at the setting for a full day. Parents are asked to send healthy choices of food in insulated packs with cold packs if necessary to keep food fresh. They are made aware that there is no available refrigeration for packed lunches at the setting. Children manage their meals and use cutlery proficiently and with the minimum of assistance. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day and the children have water or milk at snack time. Children enjoy healthy snacks at the setting which include a plain biscuit and pieces of fresh fruit or raw carrot.

Children enjoy healthy exercise every day. They run about in the fresh air in the garden and they make good use of wheeled toys which they manoeuvre skilfully. Children climb and balance bravely on the helicopter climbing frame and the staff allow them to take sensible risks on this apparatus which is located over an impact absorbing surface. Children also enjoy short tennis, gymnastics and yoga which gives them further experiences of ways to take beneficial exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe in the nursery because the staff keep the outer door locked when children are indoors. A member of staff remains by the gate at all times when children are playing outside to ensure that strangers cannot enter unobserved. Posters, pictures and numerous examples of children's work are displayed around the setting which makes it welcoming for the children. Parents are greeted at the door and they can share important news with staff at this time. There is ample space in the setting for the children and the staff arrange the activities so that children have space to move about and play unhindered.

Furniture is the correct size for children to sit, play and eat in comfort. Montessori resources and toys are arranged on low shelving so that the children can select equipment independently. Staff set out a good selection of activities before the children arrive for free choice and planned tasks. The setting has ample toys and equipment for the children to engage in a suitable range of stimulating activities and storage is well organised. Staff check the resources for cleanliness and safety before children use them which contributes to their safety.

All members of staff take responsibility for keeping the children safe. Procedures for outings are sensible and thorough. Children's needs are carefully considered and first aid resources are packed and carried along to meet their individual requirements. Each child wears a 'Square One' top so that staff can identify them easily when they visit the theatre and other venues which helps to keep the children safe. The nursery takes place in a single storey building so there are no steps or stairs to negotiate. Fire evacuation is straightforward, practised often and recorded well so that staff can identify any delays and make sure they are not repeated.

Children are safeguarded in relation to child protection issues. The provider leads on child protection and she has attended recent training to keep her knowledge of procedures up to date. She has reviewed and renewed the setting's policy and procedure documents recently and she discusses child protection matters with the staff. She arranges a rolling programme of staff training in child protection to ensure they know what signs or symptoms suggest ill-treatment. Staff know that they must share any concerns with the provider without delay and parents are made aware of the setting's responsibilities in this respect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Younger members of the group benefit from sharing some activities with older children which successfully follows the Montessorian philosophy of enabling children of different ages to work together and learn from each other. Children of all ages enter the setting happily in the morning and the staff offer the little ones kindly support if they find it hard to part from their parent or carer. Children enjoy showing their growing independence when they find their own name card with appropriate assistance, and they post them in the box. Children join the group for greetings and circle time before going off to begin age lively activities with the staff. Children become fully involved in 'Fantasy Play' in an adjoining room at the end of the main hall. They go off to visit the secretary and other members of staff on imaginary trips that they devise themselves. They are dressed in a wide variety of clothing, hats and shoes which are a source of great pleasure to them. Staff join in their games and they extend the play very well. Children learn many new words as they play. Younger members of the group are free to play with the resources in the main hall and to join in with activities that are planned to help them to learn about counting, number recognition and shape. Staff adjust the majority of the activities to

meet the varying needs of the children. However, there are a few tasks that are a little too difficult for them involving the completion of worksheets with thin pencils that are not suitable for little hands.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Three and four-year-old children demonstrate their growing sense of independence at lunch time and at snack time when they take responsibility for collecting fruit, biscuits and drinks from the kitchen. They select activities from the shelves of Montessori resources and put them away neatly after use. Children are well behaved both indoors and outside in the play area. The staff are good role models. They treat the children with kindness and respect which promotes a pleasant atmosphere in the nursery. Children respond well when staff explain that they must take turns with favourite toys and equipment.

Children listen well to stories and discussions in small and large groups although their progress in this respect is not clearly recorded. They see many clearly printed labels around the nursery and numerous examples of familiar words which helps them to understand the use of writing. Staff have high expectations of the children in relation to early reading. Children begin with picture books without text and they learn through discussion with staff and their parents at home, that pictures carry meaning and stories have a sequence. They learn about the sounds that letters make through interesting activities that are often linked to art and craft. Some children have already progressed to forming simple sentences and reading text and many children can recognise their own names and the names of their friends. Mark making materials are freely available and children make good use of them. Many children write their own names on their work using well formed letters.

Children count aloud to 10 in several different languages which include German, English, French and Japanese. Their activities using Montessori apparatus give them many good opportunities to compare, match, sort and count. They use unifix cubes competently to show their understanding of number. Children gain a good sense of order through activities which include building towers with cubes that are graded for size. Staff are adept at weaving mathematical terms into activities and play to promote children's understanding in practical ways. They sing number songs including 'five little men in a flying saucer' which helps them to appreciate what happens when one is taken away. Matching games are also enjoyed by the children using two modern computers. They are gaining control of the computer mouse and they manage the software with growing competence although there is no record of which children benefit from using this resource. Children wind up glue sticks with ease. They manage scissors and paintbrushes well and their use of puzzles and sets of Montessori equipment promotes the development of small muscle control very well.

Children learn about the world beyond the nursery through topic work and nursery outings and from parents who visit to share their skills and their knowledge of cultural celebrations. Children recalled their outing to the Polka Theatre and they happily related what they enjoyed the most. Photographs provide a record of happy events which include parents and grandparents dressed up for Independence Day Celebrations where they sang Yankee Doodle Dandy to amuse the children. Others show parents and children involved in enjoyable activities centred around life in Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Children benefit from having a garden where they can see the changes in the seasons and they can plant seeds and watch flowers grow.

Displayed work and examples of children's art work filed for parents shows that they have many good opportunities to explore colour, shape and texture. Photographs show that they have enjoyed bubble printing and they have used plaster of paris to make models. Children's work appeals to their senses. They feel soft and hard materials and wet and dry media. They also use tissue, glitter, paint and glue in large quantities to create pictures and collages. Children have music sessions every week led by a visiting specialist music teacher who helps them to make and respond to music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from continuity of care because the provider and staff ensure that they are aware of children's individual needs. They find out from registration documents and from talking to parents at the beginning and end of the sessions that they know about children's health and dietary needs. Staff actively promote children's understanding and respect for diversity through planning a suitable range of activities. Their planning reflects the background of the children who attend. There are no children on roll who have identified learning difficulties at present. However, the provider is well informed about what steps to take to support individual children and she liaises with parents to discuss any concerns and to find ways to assist the children in their learning. Behaviour management is a strength in the nursery. Children respond favourably to positive methods that encourage good behaviour. They need only gentle reminders to say please and thank you at snack time. They know they must share and take turns and their behaviour is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents comment that they are very happy with the educational provision at the setting. They also say that they are content that their children are safe and well cared for. Newsletters, notices and daily discussions with the provider and staff ensure that parents and carers know about the day to day organisation in the nursery. Key staff are available to discuss children's development with parents on request and more formally arranged sessions are planned so that parents can see their child's records and discuss progress. Parents enjoy social events at the setting and they are welcome to call the provider at her home if they wish to speak to her in confidence outside nursery hours.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is well organised and provides a caring environment for the children. Staff and visiting teachers are all checked for their suitability to work with children at the time of their employment. They may not provide personal care for the children until clearance has been received which helps to keep children safe. Induction procedures help new staff to gain familiarity with policies and systems. The layout of the nursery ensures that more and less experienced staff work side by side and senior staff can supervise and assist to ensure that good standards are maintained for the children. The provider and her senior staff ensure that almost all of the activities meet the needs of older and younger children. Annual appraisals are conducted to help staff to identify their strengths and any areas for development. The provider encourages her staff to attend appropriate training to aid their professional development and in order to maintain good standards for the children. Three members of staff are currently working towards National Vocational Qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

Leadership and management is good in relation to nursery education. The provider and senior staff are clear about their lead roles for different areas of learning and about their responsibilities as keyworkers for groups of children. Regular staff meetings are held which ensures that the whole staff team is informed about day to day organisation. These meetings also give staff the opportunity to share their knowledge of children's progress, the impact of completed activities and to add their own ideas to future planning. The use of time, resources and the accommodation helps children to make good progress. Records of children's progress give a clear picture of their growing skills gained from using Montessori apparatus and in relation to reading and mathematics. These records show staff what children need to learn next in most respects. However, the provider has not noted that a few aspects of the early learning goals are missing from the records of progress currently in use.

The setting keeps suitable registers of attendance and a separate record for any children who arrive after the register is marked, although there is no record made if children leave early which does not fully meet requirements. Medication and accident records are kept and details of the children who attend are retained for inspection although the accident records are not written in a way that maintains confidentiality. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations for improvement were made at the time of the last inspection. The provider agreed to ensure that the provision for the disposal of nappies and for drying hands promotes good health and to provide parents with Ofsted's telephone number. The provider has installed a sealed bin for used nappies and paper towels are now used for hand drying which helps to promote children's good health. Parents can now find Ofsted's telephone number on the display board in the entrance area. Three key issues for improvement were made at the time of the last nursery inspection regarding the contents of the curriculum planning, information about the early learning goals for parents and the provision of opportunities for children to learn about the uses of writing and everyday technology. Staff have reviewed and improved the contents of curriculum plans although there are areas for further work. Children have good opportunities to learn about technology and they have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. The provider shares information with parents about the early learning goals.

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):

- review and improve attendance records and accident records to ensure that the hours of attendance are clear and that accident records are confidential
- ensure that all activities for the youngest children suit their age and stage of development
- ensure that children's hand washing routines are consistent.

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):

- review and improve record keeping to make sure that all aspects of the early learning goals are covered and that records show children's progress in the use of technology.

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