

# Phoenix Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	144633
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Gulnaz Hassan
<b>Setting Address</b>	27 Stamford Hill, London, N16 5TN
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8880 2550
<b>E-mail</b>	Phoenixn16@yahoo.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Trevor Lloyd Swaby
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Phoenix Montessori Nursery was registered in 1991 and is owned by a private individual. The provision operates from large three storey premises situated in Stamford Hill in the London borough of Hackney. Children have access to three group rooms and a secure outdoor area.

The provision is registered to care for 45 children from six months to five years. There are currently 38 children on roll including 12 children who receive funding for Nursery Education. The setting supports a number of children who speak an additional language. The group opens five days a week all year round from 08:00 until 18:00.

The setting employs nine full time staff, eight of whom hold recognised early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority development team. The nursery uses Montessori teaching methods.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious snacks and meals that are planned in consultation with parents and children. The provision ensures that most of the food served to children is homemade. Menus ensure that children receive fruit, vegetables and salads everyday. Children enjoy a breakfast of toast and a range of cereals. Children help to prepare the tables for lunch, they clean the tables and lay out the table cloths and two children help to serve the meals. Children enjoy lunch dishes such as, homemade pumpkin soup with bread, lasagne with salad, chicken curry with rice and fish fingers with potato wedges. For tea children are served cheesy mash potatoes, vegetarian hot dogs and cheese and tomato pizza. Babies have easy access to beakers of water at all times whilst the older children help themselves to drinks between meal and snack times from jugs of water.

There are good policies and procedures in place that ensure the health of children. Staff work well to ensure that hygiene standards are high. For instance, nappy changing, food storage and preparation are monitored and spot checks are carried out to ensure that procedures are complied with and that risks of cross infection and contamination are minimal. Children are familiar with cleaning and hygiene routines, they help themselves to tissues and hand towels for personal hygiene and help staff to clean and tidy up. Medication is administered appropriately and recording is rigorous. To ensure that children receive prompt and appropriate treatment and monitoring there are detailed accident, illness and emergency procedures in place.

Children are progressing well in all aspects of their physical development. Children frequently play outside in the garden. They have access to a well organised outdoor area with climbing apparatus, trampoline, outdoor mobile play equipment and an assortment of playground equipment such as swings and a parachute. Children engage in gardening activities such as, watering plants and collecting leaves.

### Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety and welfare is not sufficiently safeguarded as the systems in place, to ensure the recording of children's hours at the premises are not secure. The supervision of children and deployment of staff at certain times during the day is not sufficiently well organised to ensure the safety of children. However, the environment is safe, for instance risk assessments are carried out frequently to identify and remove potential hazards and risks. There are good security systems in place to protect children from intruders and to ensure that children cannot leave the premises. Children have regular opportunities to practise fire evacuations and to have the processes discussed with them.

Staff are very familiar with the procedures that are vital to safeguard children's welfare within the setting. The child protection policies and procedures are extensive and help to safeguard children and to inform staff and parents. Procedures to document incidents are clear, however on occasion the processes for recording and reporting incidents have been overlooked. The setting has taken immediate action to rectify this situation.

Parents and children are warmly welcomed to the provision. Children settle quickly on arrival and are happy to stay. A very good range of play and learning materials are available to meet

the needs of children in the baby and toddler rooms. The resources in the pre-school room are good, although some areas, such as the home corner are under resourced.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are welcomed into the setting at each session by key staff and other staff from their group room, this helps children to confidently separate from their parents. Children's specific individual needs, such as for feeding and sleeping are met exceedingly well by staff who meet children's needs so well that children are exceptionally well settled and secure. Children are very happy and cared for by a group of staff who are genuinely dedicated to the welfare of each child. The programme for care, learning and play for children under three years is excellent. Staff ensure that even the youngest children experience activities, such as mixing paint, making play dough and engaging in activities such as sticking and gluing, sand and water play. Play and learning for babies and young children is extremely well planned, interesting and stimulating. The planning of the learning programme of activities for children is clearly linked to each component of the Birth to three matters framework and stimulating activities are planned for each day. Children enjoy story and singing times immensely, listening and participating well, staff take their lead from the children often repeating favourite songs such as 'Wind the bobbin up' to the delight of the babies. Children are effectively challenged, in the baby room children engage in making cultural masks to celebrate International day with their parents. Babies sort through a collection of bricks supported by staff to identify different shapes, colours and textures. In the toddler room, children use their senses to identify the different tastes and smells of products such as marmite, lemon, mint sauce and orange. They make rice crispy cakes and explore the mixture with their mouths and fingers. Interaction, communication and language in the baby room is exceptionally good and staff relate to and engage with children wholeheartedly speaking and explaining to children what is happening during an activity, what they are going to do next and consistently encourage children's developing vocabulary and speech. Children have good opportunities to engage in adult led activities as well as being able to choose their own play materials and activities from the resources available. Observations and assessments for children under three are outstanding. Observations are assessed and evaluated and the next steps in children's learning and development are pertinent to each child's individual needs and reinforced several times over the following week. Children's progress is developing so well because staff also ensure that children are able to consolidate as well as extend their learning and new skills each day.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and its implementation and this is linked well to the Montessori principles. Although, staff are generally clear about the purpose of the activities available, the teaching and learning intentions of focus and adult led activities lack in-depth detail, such as relevant questions and vocabulary that are required to further enhance quality of learning. Staff plan and provide children with a good range of activities and experiences to help them move towards the early learning goals. Planning covers most aspects of the early learning goals and staff evaluate children's progress against the stepping stones. Assessment records and observations for each child show their approach to learning and their interests. Observation records consistently plan for the reinforcement of children's learning as well as the next steps in their learning. Staff spend time with each child consolidating and reinforcing learning from adult initiated group activities.

Certain areas of the provision are not fully resourced, for instance the home corner is low in accessories that help to promote children's imagination and role play. Presently children do not have access to information and communication technology and other programmable toys, which are important aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world and that support their developing skills and understanding of modern technology.

Children engage in adult planned creative activities, such as designing and creating ball gowns for their mummies and aunts and making necklaces with pasta shells. However, there are less opportunities for children to engage in ongoing creative free play, for instance with paint, water or sand alongside the more structured planned activities.

Children are making good progress in most aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world for instance children learn about and explore aspects of the natural world, such as caterpillars and insects. They learn about the environment they live in and about the different continents and their place in the world. Children learn about culture and beliefs, for instance children have been learning about China and have extended their understanding by visiting the library for books and by visiting a Chinese restaurant. Some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, for instance the aspects of time are less well developed in the curriculum. Children learn about science through investigating magnetic objects and torches to see how they work. In maths children are competent with counting, weighing and working with shapes, matching and sorting according to size. There is less evidence of children measuring, adding and subtracting.

Children make good progress in their language and communication skills. Most staff promote children's vocabulary well and initiating discussions about previous activities and about children's interests and home life.

Children experience a wide range of mark making and most children are able to write recognisable letters and draw figures of people. Children are able to sound out letters, for instance during a letter and object matching activity. Children competently use implements such as scissors and masking tape competently and independently, for instance to make models and creative objects, such as butterflies on sticks. Some of the teaching is very good and as a result children are motivated and become very excited and eager to learn. For instance, following story time, several children retold the story of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' and children enjoyed re-enacting the story to each other. Children have frequent opportunities to look at books independently and to engage in one to one story telling with staff. The book collections generally consist of simple fiction stories and do not include a full range of reading and learning materials, such as non fiction books, reference books and more challenging story books.

Children's personal social and emotion development is fostered well. Children are confident and have good social skills they are polite and courteous and are usually kind and considerate of each other. For instance when they hurt each other by accident they apologise immediately. They have secure supportive relationships with their key workers and other children and enjoy their company. Children engage in the experiences offered with interest and enthusiasm and are able to sustain good levels of concentration and finish activities. Children are developing very good levels of independence, they prepare themselves for outdoor play and access the bathrooms independently. Children help to clean and tidy up and they enjoy taking responsibility, for instance by being daily helpers and remembering to take the first aid kit into the garden.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. A basic complaints procedure, including information about Ofsted is in place. However, the procedure does not reflect guidance with regard to investigating complaints as stated in the 2005 amendment, in addition complaints received since 2005 have not been logged appropriately and the setting is not aware that parents can request to view the log of complaints. This is a breach of regulation. The key worker system, newsletters, project books, observations and assessments are used effectively to ensure that parents are involved with their children's daily routine and events at the setting. Satisfactory information about the Foundation Stage is available to parents enabling them to be informed about their children's learning. The setting has not implemented systems to obtain good quality information from parents about children's starting points and interests in order to support learning in the Foundation Stage. Monthly meetings ensure that most parents and carers are able to discuss their children's progress and development with key workers at the setting.

The setting has clear systems in place to support children in managing their own behaviour, for instance children are familiar with rules and are usually kind and courteous to each other. Staff are consistent in their practices, considerate of children and emphasis turn taking and sharing. However, at certain times of the day, when the minimum of staff are available to guide and supervise, behaviour of children deteriorates and this leads to incidents of children inadvertently hurting each other.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. All children are clearly valued and their individual needs are well met. The written information, available about children's needs, is well recorded and reflects the depth of information known by key workers about children's individual needs. For instance, key workers gather key words in children's home language in order to support individual children at the setting and they support children's wellbeing through their keen familiarity of the children. Children develop a positive attitude to others and a good understanding of the wider community. For example, they celebrate Black History Month, the Chinese New Year and Hanukah. This area is supported well by additional information to parents about children's learning for instance about aspects of Buddhism. Children use a range of resources and play materials which show positive images of diversity, although the representation of disability continues to be limited. Although the setting does not currently care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities there are effective procedures in place for the care of children. The provision is committed to obtaining additional support from outside agencies in order to support children with particular learning difficulties.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The systems in place to ensure that the hours of children's attendance are documented are not secure, for instance times of children's departure from the premises are not consistently recorded. This is a breach of regulation. The organisation and deployment of staff in the preschool room during the staff breaks means that the quality of care and supervision of children is not consistent and has an effect on children's safety and behaviour. The recruitment and vetting procedures for staff, students and volunteers are rigorous and this ensures that children are being cared for by staff who are suitable and well qualified. However, the systems to ensure that staff remain suitable over a period of time are less well developed. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management is good. The setting has a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and this has ensured that outcomes for children are good. The setting is led by a committed and dedicated manager who is in turn supported well by her team of staff and the provider. Staff are effectively supervised and appraised on a regular basis so that the manager has a strong understanding and awareness of the weaknesses and strengths amongst her team. There are good systems in place to ensure that monthly meetings support the quality of teaching and learning. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and have good access to training and professional development. The manager has correctly identified minor weaknesses in the educational provision, such as, the further detail required to support focus activities.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve their resources reflecting images of disability. This area continues to be an area requiring further improvement.

At the last inspection of nursery education, one key issue was raised to improve the educational programme. This was to identify the next stages of children's learning across the six areas of learning and to share this information with parents. The setting has improved observations and assessments of children so that the next steps in children's learning are clearly linked to areas of learning and this information is now effectively and regularly shared with parents.

### **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.

## **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 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 written procedure available to parents, provide details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint and keep a record of complaints relating to the national standards and any action taken
- ensure that staff comply with procedures for recording and reporting incidents
- develop systems to ensure that children's hours of attendance are promptly and accurately recorded

- develop systems to ensure that staff remain suitable.

### **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 to develop the planning and evaluation to ensure that every aspect of each area of learning is regularly planned and included in the curriculum for children
- ensure that the adult initiated activities and the focus activities are well planned to include learning and teaching intentions, open ended questions and vocabulary.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)