

Ladbroke Square Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	105707
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspector	Helen Maria Steven
Setting Address	43 Ladbroke Square, London, W11 3ND
Telephone number	0207 229 0125
E-mail	lsmontessori@googlemail.com
Registered person	The Ladbroke Square Montessori School Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Ladbroke Square Montessori School is a privately owned nursery registered in October 1992. It operates from a four storey building in the Notting Hill area in Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It consists of eight classrooms, eight children's toilets, one adult toilet, a kitchen, office and enclosed rear garden and courtyard. The setting serves the local community.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 72 children at any one time. There are currently 102 children from two to five years old on roll, of which 77 receive Nursery Education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions, the afternoon sessions are mostly for younger children. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting open five days a week, all year around, from 09:00 - 15:15 hours. There are 12 staff members who work directly with the children all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications.

Montessori teaching methods and Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage are followed. In addition children are visited weekly by French teachers, a Ballet teacher, a computer club and a Pianist who accompanies them during their singing lessons.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have good opportunities to maintain and develop healthy bodies whilst at the nursery. They learn the importance of personal hygiene as practitioners talk about germs and children routinely wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Currently there are no visual signs such as posters to prompt children to hand wash. Children remind each other that they need to use the soap for at least 20 seconds and use only one paper towel per hand wash. Children who accidentally soil themselves are not currently afforded privacy when their clothes are changed and their bodies cleansed. Accurate records are maintained regarding accidents and permission is sought from parents prior to medication being administered. Practitioners have had training on how to administer invasive medication such as an 'epipen' to support children who have severe allergies.

Practitioners work in partnership with parents to ensure children are well nourished. Guidance is provided for parents regarding the nursery's healthy eating policy, for example, to include fruit and vegetables and not to bring chocolate. Practitioners sit with children and are good role models as they eat alongside them creating a social occasion. Some children bring food that requires heating; currently no practitioners hold food hygiene certificates. This problem has been identified by management who are arranging for their staff to receive appropriate training. Parents provide a wide choice of delicious fruit for the children's snack. Children discuss the different fruits and notice that some of the fruits are dried.

Children develop a positive attitude to exercise as they benefit from regular physical activities. They have regular opportunities to make good use of the gym equipment, climbing and balancing. In addition they enjoy regular dance and movement sessions. Children relish the freedom of running through the local community garden on their way to the playground. They take pleasure in climbing the steps and whizzing down the slide. They skilfully manipulate the large sit on 'digger' in the sandpit, lift and transporting sand using levers. There are many excellent opportunities for children to develop their small motor skills. For example, they use tools such as scissors, pencils and glue.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and learn within a warm, welcoming environment. Where the layout of the premises allows, children have free access to the toilet area which supports their independence. Children using basement rooms also enjoy the freedom of moving between the playrooms and outside courtyard. Those on other floors are accompanied to the bathroom and to the garden for their safety.

Children throughout the nursery independently access a good range of resources. Montessori equipment and activities are displayed on low level shelves to enable children to remove and replace them safely. Children gain an awareness of how to keep themselves safe through measures such as tidying away toys, thus reducing tripping hazards and emergency evacuation drills. Practitioners gently remind children to hold on to the banister as they move up and down the stairs. Young children are given age appropriate information to prevent accidents, such as, if your chair tips back and you bang your head it will hurt. Risk assessments are in place to reduce hazards. Children learn to hold onto the rope when walking between the nursery and

the subscription garden located in the square opposite the nursery. Children speculate which practitioner will wear the high visibility vest when they are out on their outings in order that they may cross the road safely. The managements report that the garden area is imminently undergoing a refurbishment which will eliminate the current hazards. The practice of changing children's soiled clothes on the landing is hazardous. Children are well protected as practitioners have a secure understanding of issues surrounding child protection. Practitioners have attended relevant courses in order to safeguard the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time spent at the nursery where they are supported by kind and caring practitioners. Children demonstrate an eagerness to learn as they actively occupy themselves throughout the session moving from one activity to another. Practitioners use questions effectively to stimulate children's thinking. They are interested in what the children have to say and are knowledgeable about the children's interests outside of nursery. A key worker system is in place to enable staff to develop key relationships with children and monitor their progress.

Young learners enjoy looking at books independently studying the pictures with interest. They access the resources themselves, carefully carrying the activity trays between the shelf and the table. Sometimes they do not persist at the activity but enjoy the freedom to put it away and choose something else. They watch in awe as they hold glue spreaders up high and observe the glue slowly dripping onto their collage. They carefully pour water between a glass jug and glass container using a funnel showing great control. They pour rice between containers taking pleasure from the sounds it makes. They learn to share, for example, dividing their dough and letting their peers use their tools. Children are engrossed in a circle time activity that is well prepared by the practitioners, they play 'two little dickie birds' and are mystified at where the 'dickie birds' have flown too and how they reappear behind children's ears.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good and children have a positive attitude to learning. The setting has devised a good system based on Montessori methods and Foundation Stage guidance. Practitioners have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and as a team competently put this into practice. Planning generally covers all areas of learning in the curriculum. There are suitable assessment records for each child, which show children's achievements, these assessments include some planning for the next steps in children's learning, although this is not always linked to activity plans. Practitioners are actively involved in children's activities, they ask questions and are interested in the children's play.

Children enjoy opportunities to enjoy books in a cosy quiet areas, where practitioners make themselves available to read and share books with them. Children are encouraged to write their own names on their creative work and have opportunities to see labels around the nursery, for example, they have labelled doors with 'stop' and 'watch out'. Practitioners encourage children to develop an appreciation of books by talking about the authors and illustrators and informing children of other books they have written or illustrated. Children make good progress in maths; there are opportunities for children to recognise numbers, count, weigh and measure. Children talk about numbers of pieces of fruit and are encouraged to calculate through everyday routines when practitioners ask 'How many children are missing?' when waiting for children to return from the bathroom. Children vote for specific activities by putting up their hands, they then

work out which activity has the most votes by counting. Children sort resources by size and colour.

Children ask to take magnifying glasses to the local gardens and they use them to observe the patterns in wood and hunt for bugs. Local outings and focused activities ensure that children are aware of the community they live in and respect each other's backgrounds and beliefs. They become aware of issues relating to the environment for example, when recycling paper. Some children are able to make good use of the computers, working independently or in pairs when they attend the computer club which is an additional activity organised by the provider. However, children unable to attend the sessions, as places are limited, currently have limited opportunities to develop their skills in information computer technology. Children's creativity is supported, they have opportunities to enjoy music and dance on a regular basis. They have access to a wide range of media and materials that enable them to make constructions, collages, paintings and drawings. However, displays around the nursery indicate that adult led art activities are carried out regularly which results in end products, but does not inspire children's creativity. Children have some opportunities to mix colours of paint to use for their own purpose. Children engage in imaginative role-play, for example, they fantasise about flying around the world on blankets which become flying carpets. They invite friends onto their carpet and into their role-play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their parents or carers are warmly greeted to make them feel welcome. They play a full part in the nursery as practitioners value the children as individuals. Children are extremely confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging. They cooperate with each other, for example, when stacking plates and cups after snack time. Children interact well with each other and with the practitioners. Children have made firm friendships and enjoy each other's company. They learn about the wider world through topics which include stories creative activities and information giving. However, sometimes the practitioners are not secure in the information they are forwarding and are directive in their presentation of art activities. For example, on St. Patrick's Day, children are told about shamrock, practitioners liken it to clover; however no samples or pictures are available to develop children understanding, especially as younger learners living in central London may not have had sight of clover. Children are given three circles and a stalk shape and are notified how to stick them on the paper to represent shamrock. Children enjoy hands on activities such as hunting for Easter eggs and taking part in a parade for their families. They take their baskets and excitedly hunt high and low looking for the eggs secretly hidden in the garden. Practitioners ensure that all children have the opportunity to take part, even those who are not present on the last day of term. Children develop a sense of responsibility as they are encouraged to recycle paper. Many children are well travelled and share their experiences of different food and cultures, for example, they talk about tasting coconut milk when in Barbados. The nursery has relevant policies in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and have links with outside agencies to meet children's needs. Practitioners appropriately foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children behave very well and have a good understanding of the 'golden' rules of the nursery, which are on display throughout the setting. They demonstrate an understanding of good manners as they politely ask to share a blanket. Practitioners act as positive role models by talking to each other and to the children calmly and with respect. The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are welcomed into the setting and are full of praise for the

practitioners and management; many came to the nursery because of recommendation from friends. Parents are well informed through notice boards and information letters. They are invited to meet regularly with their keyworkers to exchange information and have yearly reports on children's progress. Some parents have only become recently aware that they have access to their children's profiles. The nursery's complaints procedure is not currently on display to enable parents to access it easily.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well organised and effectively run provision. Practitioners are well deployed and are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. As a result, children are secure and well settled. Robust procedures are in place to ensure adults working with the children are suitably vetted. Required documentation is in place to support the welfare of children. Policies are reviewed and updated and summaries are given to parents with information on where to find the detailed versions. Currently the procedures are not positioned around the nursery to aid practitioners and some of the policies have small anomalies or omissions which the management are amending.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. Practitioners are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. They are lead by very supportive who are committed to the ongoing development of the team. The observation, assessments and teaching methods are continually monitored and evaluated by the managers. Practitioners meet daily and more formally for room and full team meetings. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three recommendations were set. The provider was asked to review hygiene procedures, ways of enabling children to have permanent access to resources that positively promote disability and the way in which parents are made aware of the nursery's policies.

Children routinely wash their hands prior to eating and after toileting to enable them to develop an understanding of personal hygiene. Children have the opportunity to access resources that positively promote disability at any time as they are stored on low level shelving. A summary of nursery policies are given to parents when they start; this includes a statement informing them of where the detailed policies are kept and an invitation for parents to view them. However, the summary does not include the complaints procedure and this policy is not on display for parents.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to ensure that plans identify learning intentions, improve the resources that reflect differing cultures and beliefs and develop a Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy. Long term plans include learning objectives and the provider has increased the reflective resources to enable children to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the wider society. A SEN statement is now in place.

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 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 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 the procedure for changing children's clothes, to offer them privacy and ensure their safety
- improve the way the complaints procedure is shared with parents

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):

- increase all children's opportunities to access information computer technology and develop children's creativity by reducing adult directed art activities
- continue to improve the link between observations and planning

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