

## Hopes & Dreams Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 131700

**Inspection date** 15 February 2008

**Inspector** Tom Radcliffe

**Setting Address** 339-341 City Road, Islington, London, EC1V 1LJ

**Telephone number** 020 7833 9388

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**Registered person** Hopes And Dreams (City) Limited

**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](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 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?

Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery School is run by a company. It opened in 1997 and operates from five large rooms in a converted building. It is situated in a mixed use area in Angel in the London borough of Islington. A maximum of 123 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00 all year round. All children share access to a small secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 138 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 33 receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports one child with special needs and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 members of staff to work with children with 10 staff fulfilling other roles. Of the staff working with children over half hold appropriate early years qualifications and several are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Children Partnership and promotes the Montessori principles of teaching.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The nursery provides a very clean, well organised and hygienic learning and play environment. Staff within the setting undertake well defined responsibilities effectively to ensure that the nursery is ready for the children as they arrive. In addition to this staff and children actively ensure that high standards of cleanliness and hygiene are very well maintained during the day. The nursery has very effective procedures in place to ensure that any necessary medication is administered correctly and that any accidents are minimised and dealt with effectively. Staff have clear guidelines available that ensure that all written records are maintained to share with parents and used for purposes of self review in order to maintain a healthy environment for children. The nursery cares for children very well in the case of minor injuries as staff are well trained and qualified, they have access to appropriate equipment and a nominated member of staff oversees the effective implementation of the setting's policy. The nursery further promotes children's good health and wellbeing by excluding infectious children, obtaining parental permission to obtain emergency medical advice or treatment and by following hygienic practice during the day. As a result children wash their hands or brush their teeth at appropriate times and staff follow safe nappy changing or baby feeding practice.

Physical development is good. The children are given a very good range of opportunities indoors to develop their fine motor skills through the use of art and mark making equipment, musical instruments and the extensive use of practical mathematics equipment and everyday tasks, such as sorting and pouring. Children also can use some indoor play equipment to take more vigorous exercise and they regularly take part in dance and movement activities when they make good use of music or other stimuli. Staff support the children very well as they undertake activities that develop their physical skills, as a result children are confident and show steady and significant progress in this area of their development. The nursery has very limited outdoor space but the setting adds to its provision by using facilities within the locality. Though children enjoy using a play area close to the nursery and talk enthusiastically about walking to and from it they are given only limited opportunities to take part in vigorous and imaginative outdoor play. The setting meets the rest and sleep needs of all children very well as the individual needs are known and accommodated. The nursery provides children with a very good range of healthy, well balanced and nutritious meals and snacks. The setting's catering facilities and staff are excellent providing freshly prepared meals of, for example, fresh vegetables, pasta and fish and snacks of fruit and rice cakes. The setting ensures that children have sufficient food for the time that they spend in the nursery and use meal times as social events to be shared together by adults and children; for example, at breakfast time in a communal area or at tea time in their individual rooms. The youngest children in the nursery have their dietary needs very well met by staff who are aware of their needs and follow effective guidelines and practice to ensure that all of them are met. The setting allows children to have free access to fresh drinking water and ensures that all dietary information given by parents is acted upon to ensure that children's care needs are well met.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery has premises and uses procedures that provide an extremely secure and safe environment for all children. All external doors are securely locked and access to the building is only with the authorisation of staff. The setting is about to install a finger-print identification

access system for all users which will enhance the security of the children and staff and allow the nursery to have accurate arrival and departure times electronically. The nursery has very effective systems in place for the arrival and departure of children and monitors all adults and visitors when they are on site. Parents are welcomed into the nursery as they settle their children into the day's activities or share experiences with them; for example, at breakfast time. The nursery supervises this positive interaction very well which greatly enhances the welcoming atmosphere that it promotes so well. The setting has in place a clear written statement of its procedure to safeguard children. This is overseen very effectively by a nominated member of staff who ensures the highest possible standards of safety for all children. The setting underpins this level of provision with very good staff training and induction which ensures that all staff are able to act in the interests of children and work under the direction of an effective member of staff. Children are kept very safe in the case of an emergency as the setting regularly undertakes evacuation drills with well defined escape routes which are clearly sign posted and which use well maintained fire doors. Staff ensure the safety of children at all times and are well trained to maximise the children's safety. The setting has fire detection and control equipment which is regularly maintained and a very effective risk assessment policy in use throughout the setting. This ensures that children do not face unnecessary hazards and dangers, for example, all areas are made ready for the arrival of children, sleeping babies are monitored and finger guards are used where necessary. The setting uses the support of an external consultancy to ensure that its premises, policies and practices are as safe as possible, this together with good staff training and the lead of a nominated member of staff result in high standards of safety. The setting has scrupulously maintained toilet facilities which children can access independently and appropriately according to their ages, all children are well trained as they use these facilities and the high expectations which are placed upon them results in confident and trust worthy children. The setting has very well thought out storage facilities which both promotes independent access, as low storage areas can be accessed by children, and safety, as secure areas can be locked or made safe for children. All of these factors impact very positively upon the environment in which children play and learn; for example, free movement is promoted within individual rooms, self selection takes place and all areas remain uncluttered by a thoughtful use of storage. All children are supervised very well by staff who respond professionally to children's individual needs as they play, talk or take food or rest. The nursery has spacious accommodation which is maintained in an immaculate condition and which gives children access to a very good range of appropriate furniture, resources and equipment. All toys and resources are well maintained, clean and capable of promoting children's learning and development in all important areas. The nursery premises are light, child friendly and an extremely stimulating place for children. The visual impact of the nursery is excellent with numerous displays of children's work, information for parents and well planned, designed and equipped activity areas.

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

The provision is good.

Children are grouped within the nursery according to their age, each group undertakes a range of stimulating and challenging activities in rooms that are equipped and resourced to meet their specific development needs. Several rooms are in use by the children ranging from those used by the youngest children to three used by the oldest ones. The nursery has taken great care to populate these three rooms with a range of ages so that children can gain valuable shared experiences of working in a mixed age environment; for example, younger children in these rooms have extended opportunities to share valuable learning with older children. In some cases peer tutoring successfully enhances learning for children with minimal adult

intervention; for example, where children work in groups discussing ideas and events. The setting promotes free choice for all children as they work and play in the nursery, this is well managed as children stay on task and engage in activities for appropriate amounts of time. As children work, explore and play in this way staff guide them well ensuring that their time is used purposefully. Children's self-esteem is raised through the displays of their work, by staff engaging them in meaningful conversations and by the high level of choice that children are able to have. Children of all ages use this responsibility well as they decide on how they want to spend their time while in the nursery. As a result children spend their time in activities, such as, painting, role play games, sand play and the use of puzzles, jig saws and wheeled toys. The rooms used by the babies are bright, stimulating and well resourced. Staff ensure that all children in these rooms are well cared for and have the opportunity to undertake a range of activities that promotes their physical development and mobility and their understanding of themselves, their immediate environment and of spoken language. Babies' activities take place with background music, stimulating lights and bubble towers in a calm, secure environment where children's interests are of paramount importance. As children select activities there is a very good atmosphere in the nursery, staff and children of all ages engage in meaningful conversations where questions are asked, opinions are expressed and ideas shared. The children demonstrate very positive attitudes to their nursery as they help to tidy resources away and assist in the preparation of snack or meal time. Children enjoy good levels of resources in the nursery; for example, books occupy a position of high importance in the setting and children access them readily, sharing them with adults or listening with great interest as they are read to them. Children are assessed by staff throughout their time in the setting, this allows their achievements to be recorded and then shared with parents. The setting makes very good use of the Birth to three framework and has good ongoing development records which are used throughout the nursery. The setting makes very effective use of the Montessori methods of education which impacts positively on children of all ages within the nursery.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and of the value of play and free choice. In addition they have the ability to make accurate assessments and a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff use ongoing development records to ensure that children continue to develop as they move onto activities that are planned from the Foundation Stage curriculum. The nursery is making increasing use of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and intends to continue to develop its planning processes from this framework. The activities that the children undertake are either free choice or adult led, staff supervise all children well with appropriate interventions, guidance and support. Children respond well to this approach as they use the book corners, work with different shapes or think about the world's languages. Staff assess the children as they undertake their activities, careful observations form the basis of development records that are shared with parents and used for the basis of future plans.

The children show very positive relationships as they play together, share and take turns. Children are given many opportunities to be independent and they respond well to this challenge as they select activities, help arrange tea time in their rooms, play imaginatively in role play or deepen their understanding of number through the use of practical apparatus and games. The children are very confident speakers, they communicate well with appropriate vocabulary; for example, a group of children spoke about their favourite meal at tea time while others explained that they knew greetings in other languages. Children undertake a good range of mark making and early writing activities, they have very good access to written material and are accustomed to using and understanding labels. Children have a growing understanding of the conventions of spoken language and are comfortable in writing their name. Children freely use books and concentrate and listen to stories. The setting has a good range of mathematical equipment

that is used in a practical way for children to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts; for example, children regularly counted, worked with named shapes and worked with the idea of time and distance. Children explore simple technology through the use of everyday objects, such as DVD players and they have access to computers to support their learning. Children have access to a very good range of activities to develop their fine motor skills through the use of construction sets, art activities and shape games. Children's creative development is well catered for as they have access to a range of art activities and can work imaginatively and competently while painting, drawing, using clay and listening to or making music. The nursery supports children's learning very well in the Foundation Stage.

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

The provision is good.

The nursery has good systems in place to ensure that it obtains relevant background information from all parents before children join the setting. In addition the nursery regularly updates this information to ensure that it always acts in the interest of all parents and children. Staff are very familiar with the children in the setting as a result of this process and as a consequence of an effective key worker system. The nursery is very well placed to meet a range of children's needs; for example, devising individual settling in programmes depending upon need, working with parents where English is an additional language and having a full understanding of dietary, medical and cultural needs. The nursery is well placed to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Though the nursery's physical environment limits its ability to accommodate all children it has experienced staff in post who oversee and implement an effective special needs policy. Staff in the setting are committed to meeting the needs of all children and its inclusive practice and good resources allow the nursery to be able to develop all children with a variety of individual needs. The atmosphere in the nursery is very good, there is a positive environment of learning and play, children are very well supported by a highly professional staff who present children with challenge, interest and a sense of responsibility. Staff act as positive role models, they apply simple rules consistently in developmentally appropriate ways. Staff manage behaviour very well giving praise appropriately and ensuring that all children are involved and engaged in what they do. The nursery uses resources that reflect positive images of diversity; these include books, illustrations and a range of artefacts. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents work well with the nursery to support them in providing high standards of care for children; for example, when children use English as an additional language or have specific medical or dietary needs. Parents value the contact that they have with the setting both informally and through the very high standard of written information the setting makes available, this is very well supported by parents' contacts with key workers and regular parents' evenings. All parents consider that the nursery makes its work very easy to understand and that high quality literature is available so that they have a knowledge of their child's progress and of all policies and procedures. Parents value the settling in policy which can be tailored to individual need and the opportunity to start the day by sharing breakfast with their children. Parents also feel part of the setting as all staff exchange information that is useful in the child's home; for example, in relation to a specific learning activity or when supporting a joint approach to feeding or sleep patterns. Parents consider that the setting's use of questionnaires and evaluations of parents' evenings are very useful and adds to their sense of belonging to the setting. In addition many parents are very pleased with the development of their children, in particular their growing understanding of responsibility that takes place in a supportive and caring environment.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The provider has established very robust recruitment procedures, these help to ensure that all staff employed at the nursery are suitable to work with the children. Many of the staff are very experienced and well qualified and all staff have access to very good periods of induction, probation and ongoing training programmes. All staff have a very clear understanding of how young children learn and are committed to enabling children to learn through play and exploration. The setting has policies and procedures in place to ensure the effective and safe management of the nursery. Staff deployment is very good in spacious well designed accommodation with high quality resources and equipment. The nursery responds very well to children's needs and the wishes of parents. Children's wellbeing and care is given very good attention. Children have a growing sense of how to keep healthy and safe and achieve well. The nursery's organisation makes this possible, however children are only given limited opportunities to take part in imaginative and vigorous outdoor play.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The provider and manager have a clear understanding of the nursery's strengths and weaknesses and have seen the quality of the provision improve steadily since the last inspection. Both have a clear vision for the nursery and this has been very effectively communicated to a staff who show a very good team spirit and who share in the desire to offer the highest standard of provision possible. Each member of staff has a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the nursery and they carry out their duties conscientiously and effectively. The provider makes all communications with parents of the highest quality and ensures that the nursery asks for and reacts to feedback from parents. The setting greatly benefits from the training that is made available to all staff and from the processes of staff appraisal which are undertaken very regularly and effectively. There are very good and consistent planning and assessment strategies used by the nursery with the setting showing its commitment to improvement by devising its planning in line with newly available frameworks. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The last inspection report recommended that records and policies were updated and made available for inspection and that attendance records were maintained accurately. Since that time the setting has ensured that all policies are regularly updated and made available for various purposes, including for inspection, and that attendance records show accurate information.

## **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 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

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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):

- develop a greater range of opportunities for creative, imaginative and vigorous outdoor play.

#### **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 planning from the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

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)