

St Mary's Summerstown Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY355698

Inspection date 24 September 2007

Inspector Patricia Ann Edward

Setting Address St Mary's Summerstown Montessori Nursery School, St Mary's Church Hall, 46 Wimbledon Road, London, SW17 0UQ

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Registered person Elizabeth Jean Maitland

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Mary's Summerstown Montessori Nursery School is one of two nurseries. It opened in April 2007 and operates from a church hall in Tooting, in the London Borough of Wandsworth. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.30, term time only. A lunch club runs from 12.00 to 13.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 10 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, three children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold an appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. Two staff members currently work on a part-time basis. The registered person spends time at both settings.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good personal hygiene through established daily routines to prevent the spread of infection. They understand the importance of washing their hands before snacks, lunch and after using the toilet. Effective standards of hygiene are maintained throughout the nursery and additional measures, such as children using anti-bacterial soap and individual paper towels, contribute to their good personal health. Staff wear colour coded disposable aprons and gloves to prevent cross contamination, ensuring that good standards of hygiene are sustained. Arrangements for medication and first aid meet requirements and protect children. A clear sickness management policy ensures that staff act in the best interests of children who are ill and protects others from cross infection.

Children enjoy wholesome, nutritious and balanced pack lunches, which are prepared by their parents. Meal and snack times are relaxed and social occasions because staff sit with children and discuss various topics. The nursery provides healthy snacks in the morning, which consists of fresh fruit. Staff are very aware of children's individual preferences and they work closely with parents to make sure individual dietary needs are met and respected. Fresh drinking water is made available throughout the day and well placed jugs and cups ensure that children access water independently.

Children have access to a spacious environment which is organised to allow them to move freely and independently. Effective use is made of the outdoor area and children enjoy a wide range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop confidence and co-ordination in their physical skills by walking and balancing on plastic crates and peddling wheeled vehicles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and stimulating environment. All areas are light, ventilated and well-maintained. Access to the building is only permitted through the front door, where staff are able to clearly identify visitors before allowing entry. Procedures, such as signing a visitor's book and verifying identification, are well implemented to promote children's safety.

Toys are stored at low level, which means that children are able to make choices and learn responsibility, by accessing and tidying up safely. All toys and equipment are of a good quality, are checked for safety and are appropriate for the age of the children, which ensures that they can be used safely.

Children play in a safe indoor area because staff follow effective procedures and have necessary safety equipment in place. Daily risk assessments are carried out on areas and equipment and children are well protected from any hazards. Fire drills are practised and recorded, to promote children's safety in the case of an emergency. All staff have an awareness of safeguarding children issues and have a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. Named person for safeguarding children is in place. They are aware of the correct procedures in case of a concern and what to do regarding allegations against staff, which promotes children's safety and well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and enjoy coming to the nursery. They have access to a good range of activities and opportunities on a daily basis, that are set up well in the large hall. Children's self-confidence is promoted by staff who have consistent expectations and clear routines. Staff demonstrate a caring attitude towards the children and encourage them to share and play together. Young children benefit from staff's knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. Staff plan interesting and stimulating activities that support and promote children's learning and development. Observations are completed on individual children, however, the Birth to three framework is not fully maximised.

Staff ask lots of open-ended questions to extend children's thinking and language, for example during sand and creative activities. All children become independent as they make decisions about what to play with. They select from a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities, such as painting, sand and water play, dressing up, play dough and constructing. Children are developing their imagination during role play, when dressing as they pretend to be nurses.

Children's care, learning and play are supported well by staff. Staff routinely monitor children's progress and use a variety of frameworks to provide for their individual needs, which also includes Montessori. This help children achieve in all areas of their development.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make progress because staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn and know the children in their care well. The planning encompasses all areas of learning and provides a balanced range of activities and experiences. Staff observe the children and plot their progress on Montessori development cards. However, the individual observations and assessments completed on children do not fully evaluate children's areas for improvement. The information obtained from the observations that are completed do not inform planning of the next steps for children's individual learning. This impacts on children's progress and opportunities for challenge.

Children are interested and motivated and play with a purpose, they have opportunities to learn whilst enjoying the activities. They develop positive attitudes to learning. Staff show interest and help children to learn and achieve by asking open ended questions. Children have a number of opportunities to be responsible for their own needs. They develop their independence when they attend to their needs in the bathroom and dress and undress when taking part in weekly ballet sessions. They sit and concentrate during discussion times and take responsibility for their behaviour when they share toys, resources and take turns. There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn about their community and to appreciate other cultures.

Children are beginning to understand and practise counting as they access a wide range of Montessori equipment to promote children's mathematical development, such as different sizes of knob cylinders, towers, spindles and number rods. Children use their exploration and investigation skills as they explore the mini beasts such as snails and complete pictures of them.

Children use their imagination skills as they play in the role-play area and pretend to be shop keepers and access the cash till to make basic calculations. They respond to what they see, hear, touch and feel as they play in sand and water, listen to stories and delight in making music. Children create their own self portraits, which positively develops sense of self. They learn about sounds and letters as staff clearly label storage boxes and art work. Children practise

their writing skills as they use their Jolly phonics book to develop their hand-eye coordination when they draw with pens and pencils. It is further promoted as they access paintbrushes and use their fingers in the sand.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued and included in all activities, staff are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all children and families who use the nursery. Children's individual needs are met effectively. Children benefit from activities and resources which help them to value diversity and promote a positive view of the wider world. Children are encouraged to develop a positive understanding of different cultures and religions through celebrating special events and festivals such as Diwali, harvest, Christmas and Chinese new year.

Children are confident and self-assured in the nursery. They feel a sense of belonging as their art work is valued and displayed attractively around the hall. Children enjoy mutually respectful relationships with staff and each other. They understand what constitutes good behaviour and know that it involves 'being good and sharing'. Children develop self-esteem as staff use positive reinforcement, such as praise and encouragement to endorse good behaviour such as kindness and helping. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents benefit from a good working relationship with staff and they work well together to promote early education. Staff generally recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and involve them in their child's education and the life of the setting. This is done through parents being asked to contributing items for the interest table. They are informed of the number, shape and colour of the week, so learning can be reinforced at home. Parents receive sufficient information about the provision, and the educational programme. They are kept informed about children's progress and achievements through twice yearly reports. Plans are displayed in the entrance of the nursery. There are a number of designated parents' notice boards that inform them of current issues alongside regular newsletters. Effective and robust procedures are in place to ensure new children settle into the nursery well. Staff are gentle and reassuring when working with the children and their parents. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Children's progress is monitored by staff, however, parents are not involved in their children's assessments nor receive information about their next steps for development, which affects opportunities for them to fully contribute to their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from effective organisation of the space and resources so that they can make choices and develop their play ideas. Staff support children well during activities and allow them time and space to initiate their play. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and attend short courses to update their knowledge and skills.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. A new management structure is in place and staff are beginning to work well together as a committed team. They work closely with parents to maintain communication in different ways. Communication across the staff team means that their contributions and ideas are shared. However planning and observation are not fully understood by the staff team and they are currently revising systems. Staff are managed and there are regular planning meetings to ensure that children's needs are met.

All the required documentation for the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place. Policies and procedures ensure staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- enhance observation's completed on children under three

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):

- ensure starting points are obtained from parents of children aged three and over
- ensure observations completed fully reflect children's areas of strength and areas for improvement and next steps clearly indicate children's progress through the stepping stones
- develop planning to ensure it is informed by observations and assessment and clearly details the aims and objectives for children's next steps and progress.

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