

ISLAMIC MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 509007

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Inspector Victoria Vasiliadis

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Registered person Islamic Montessori School

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Sessional 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?

The Islamic Montessori School opened in 1989 and operates from five rooms in a building that is owned by the Hussaini Shia Islamic Community situated in Stanmore. The school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 13.00, term time only.

A maximum of 35 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 19 children aged from two to five years on roll, of these 16 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six staff employed who work directly with the children. All staff are qualified, including the manager who holds an appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting operates Montessori teaching methods. They are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receive support for the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's wellbeing is supported within the setting, they are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. There are written health and hygiene policies and procedures in place which staff implement efficiently to ensure the safety and welfare of the children. For example, tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial solution before mealtimes and children are encouraged to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating their lunch. Appropriate procedures are in place for administering medication and managing accidents. In addition, over half the staff hold valid first aid certificates, this ensures appropriate steps can be taken in the event of an accident.

Meal times are well organised and a sociable event, children are able to independently access drinks throughout the session. The children enjoy talking to their friends and taking responsibility for looking after the younger children at this time. Staff are working with parents and carers in order to try to improve the lunches that are offered to the children. For example, some of the lunches offered are not healthy as they are fried in the deep fat fryer such as fish fingers and chips. However, the children are offered healthy snacks such as seasonal fruits and vegetables. The staff have devised new healthier menus and have purchased an oven in which they can now offer children healthier options such as jacket potatoes with a variety of fillings.

Children's knowledge and understanding of healthy foods and where the different foods come from is improved due to the staff, who work well with the children. For example, the children learn which countries the food comes from and also that particular foods gives them energy which helps to make them grow 'big and strong'.

All children have daily use of the indoor 'gym' area, where they thoroughly enjoy playing with the bats, balls and the mini-climbing frame and slide. The older children have access to balancing beams, hoops, bats and balls, a small climbing frame and slide and games which develop their hand and eye co-ordination. These activities help the children to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have access to a range of safe, good quality resources. The well-organised child-height furniture encourages children to have independent access to resources. Staff ensure that children have access to toys and equipment that are safe, in good condition and are regularly checked.

Children move freely around the environment as staff are vigilant in ensuring risks and hazards are minimised. For example, risk assessments are carried out on a daily basis. This ensures all areas used by children are safe and free from potential hazards. Clear fire evacuation procedures are in place and regular drills are carried out, fire fighting equipment is in place and exits clearly identified and kept free of obstructions. This ensures children and staff can leave the premises safely in the event of an emergency.

Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff have a clear understanding of the settings child protection policy and local Safeguarding Children procedures. They are aware of the reporting procedures to follow if abuse is suspected, and the necessary documentation is

in place to support their practice. Staff have familiarised themselves with the settings policy, this ensures the safety of the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and eager to participate. Those who are new to the setting are helped to settle by staff, who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Close and caring relationships increase the children's sense of trust and develop a strong sense of self.

Early communication skills are supported well through good quality adult-child interactions. A rich, stimulating environment and a varied range of activities promote the children's interest and imagination. For example, children enjoy taking the babies for walks and they utilise the kitchen unit and utensils with great enthusiasm.

The children aged three years and under are well supported in their play and development, this is due to the staff's clear understanding of the Birth to three matters framework which is used to guide their planning. Activities are evaluated and adjusted to take account of the children's level of understanding and interests. Children's art work and photographs are displayed well. This contributes to their sense of belonging and a feeling of self worth.

NURSERY EDUCATION:

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Planning is thorough and the children benefit from the staff's clear knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. A stimulating programme is delivered for the children who show great enthusiasm and enjoyment. The room is set up to encourage children to be independent and involved in a variety of stimulating and challenging activities. The staff extend children's vocabulary and thinking by asking open-ended questions.

Staff have good relationships with the children and high expectations of their behaviour and achievements. The children's individual involvement and interests in activities are observed and the information gained is used to plan the next step in the child's development.

Children are confident speakers and engage in conversations with each other and adults. Some children share the events of their weekend with peers showing great delight and enthusiasm at the opportunity to do this. For instance, one little girl told her friends 'mummy bought me new pyjamas, they are just for me, not you, they would be too small for you'.

Children are confident about handling books and have a developing understanding of the purpose of written language in their environment. The children enthusiastically listen to and are involved, in stories told to them by staff. In addition, the children take great delight and pride in reading stories to each other. For example, one child read the story of the 'three little pigs' to the children using pictures to guide her and props such as the wooden house.

Children are gaining independence and making choices, they have opportunities to strengthen self-help skills and foster their independence. For example, they help themselves to equipment, play materials and use books independently. However, children's independence skills are not sufficiently promoted at mealtimes. This is due to the fact that staff dish out food and pour the children's drinks.

Children learn to count through a range of practical activities, such as counting the number of pieces of fruit on their tissues at snack time, some of the more able children can count accurately

up to 10 and beyond. Some children understand simple addition and subtraction as this is presented in a practical way. For example, the staff ask children how many pieces of fruit they would like, if they had one more or less how many pieces would they then be left with.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is managed in a sensitive and calm manner. Staff respect the children's individual needs using appropriate methods that take account of the child's age and understanding. This positive approach influences the children's behaviour, which in the main is calm and relaxed. Children have an understanding of the boundaries and behavioural expectations of the setting. For example, the older children remind each other that they must share resources and take turns. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children are provided with a range of resources and visual images that reflect positive images such as puzzles, dolls, books, puppets and posters. These resources are beginning to increase the children's awareness of diversity and understanding of others within the wider community.

Children with English as an additional language are well supported by staff who speak a variety of languages, this ensure the children feel comfortable and valued. The setting has a sufficient understanding of the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although no children are in attendance. There is a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator worker present and written policies are in place to support practice.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff have established effective communication systems with parents both verbally and written. For example, staff exchange information with parents and carers on a daily basis about the child, an open door policy is in place, notice boards keep parents informed and regular parents' evenings take place. Newsletters and an introductory pack containing policies and procedures are shared with parents. In addition, information is provided to parents and carers about the Foundation Stage curriculum, an 'activities at home' form informs parents of the topics being covered, the six areas of learning and how they can support the child at home by following through the topic.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and as a result, the day runs smoothly for the children. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are supervised and engaged in meaningful play. The staff are committed to providing a good standard of care and education, they work well as a team, are motivated and well organised.

The manager works directly with the children and provides a good role model to staff. In addition, she is committed to the promotion of quality childcare. She works closely with the advisory teacher from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance in order to improve practice.

All of the legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and wellbeing are in place. Although the manager is clear of the procedures to follow if a complaint

is received, the policy does not clearly identify to parents the timeframes in which complaints will be dealt with.

The premises are suitably organised and space is set out to maximise play opportunities for the children. All the staff working directly with children hold a recognised childcare qualification. The setting regularly shares information with parents to keep them informed about their child. This contributes to the continuity in the children's care. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection several recommendations were made in relation to the absence of the required policies and procedures. The setting has now devised these policies and is effectively implementing them, this improves the welfare and care of the children and working relationships with parents and carers.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- include timeframes in the complaints policy, which identifies the length of time complaints will be dealt with.

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):

- provide children with more opportunities to develop their independence skills, in particular at meal times.

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