

Dawmouse Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143750
Inspection date	03 March 2008
Inspector	Lorraine Sparey
Setting Address	34 Haldane Road, Fulham, London, SW6 7EU
Telephone number	020 7381 9385 or 020 7385 3735
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Registered person	Dawmouse Montessori Nursery School 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.

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?

Dawmouse Montessori School originally opened in 1985 and the current owner took over in 1994. It operates from three rooms, an indoor gymnasium area within a Boys Club. It is in a residential area of Fulham within the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. There is a large area for outdoor play.

A maximum of 50 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 70 children on roll of these, 47 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery school opens from 08:45 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:30, school term time, with some children attending all day, bringing a packed lunch.

All staff with the exception of one assistant hold Montessori qualifications and relevant Early Years qualifications. Dawmouse Montessori School uses the Montessori educational approach, in addition to the Foundation Stage Curriculum for early learning. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children follow good hygiene practices. They automatically wash their hands at appropriate times such as after creative activities, before food and after using the toilet. Good visual prompts increase children's awareness and support their understanding. Suitable resources are provided to encourage children's independence. Children are beginning to show an awareness of supporting their own health. Some children remember to cover their mouths when coughing and others respond to staff's gentle prompts. Staff implement effective policies and procedures with regard to children's general health and well-being. A sick child policy is displayed with information on exclusion times to ensure that the spread of cross infection is limited. Detailed accident records provide parents with information to ensure consistency in children's care. Any entries are evaluated and used to promote safety and minimise any risks. All staff except one member are qualified in first aid. This means children are treated quickly and effectively in the event of requiring emergency treatment.

Children benefit from healthy and nutritious snacks such as a variety of fresh fruit. Children choose when they would like to have their snack during the morning. Water is available to ensure that children's fluid levels are maintained. Some children bring packed lunches and staff sit with the children promoting a social environment. Children participate in cooking as part of themes and projects. For example, children prepare and enjoy tasting stir-fry vegetables as part of Chinese New Year.

Children have good opportunities to exercise and play in the fresh air. They participate in a wide range of activities to promote and develop their large and small muscle control. During an outdoor session they use a wide range of resources such as tunnels which they crawl through, cones that the children move in and out of with increasing control, coloured squares that children jump on. During the summer term children, parents and carers enjoy a sports day. They all participate in races including sack races where children demonstrate their hopping skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment. Staff work extremely hard to create safe and inviting play areas where children can safely move between all the play areas both indoors and outdoors. Children safely choose from a broad range of quality resources. They are encouraged to show respect for the equipment and to put the activities away once they have finished playing with them. This helps keep the play areas and themselves safe. Children are beginning to learn about taking responsibility for their own safety. Staff increase children's awareness, giving good explanations to promote children's understanding. For example, children sit together at circle time and a member of staff reminds them about moving their chairs carefully so that they do not trap their fingers. Staff implement a range of policies and procedures to support children's safety such as an emergency evacuation policy and procedure. However, although staff have practised the fire drill previously, the children are not aware of what to do when they hear the bell. Therefore, they are not familiar with how to evacuate the building quickly and safely.

Staff demonstrate clear knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children from harm and neglect. They are able to describe signs and symptoms of potential abuse and effective

procedures to be followed in the event of a concern being raised. Parents are made aware of the staff roles and responsibility through the child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are eager to come into the setting. They quickly settle into their room and activities of their choice. Children participate in a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. For example, after a recent trip to the Natural History Museum children paint still life copying dinosaurs models on the large sheets of paper which are then displayed on the walls. Children study the life cycles of plants, insects and animals as part of their theme of spring. Staff encourage child initiated play and learning by providing a broad range of activities and equipment that the children can access independently. Staff interaction is good and they are skilled in maximising learning opportunities. For example, during 'show and tell' children bring in various subjects beginning with the letter of the week. A child brings a submarine and this leads to a discussion about how submarines operate under the water. Several children enjoy talking about their experiences of going under the water whilst on holiday. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure that children are progressing in their development and learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff demonstrate clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They effectively plan a broad range of quality activities and learning opportunities linked to the areas of learning. Staff evaluate activities to ensure that children have achieved the learning outcomes. They use a good range of effective teaching methods. For example, staff use open-ended questioning to promote and reinforce the children's thinking and learning. A rich and vibrant learning environment encourages children to be motivated and interested. Staff complete detailed and regular observations to help plan the next steps in children's learning. They operate an effective key worker system and clearly know their key children well. However, there is no clear system to record this information. Staff work well together as a team providing good levels of support to each other and the children. Children with additional needs are well supported. The key member of staff demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of how to ensure that children reach their full potential. For example, attending training on a regular basis, liaising closely with parents and other early years professionals. There are good procedures in place to ensure that children with English as an additional language are well supported.

Children are making good progress in their learning. They quickly and confidently separate from parents and carers and are motivated in their learning. Children are very independent using the toilet facilities unaided, putting on their aprons before creative activity and their coats on before going out to play. Children are developing good relationships with their peers and the adults. They actively seek out their peers to join in their activity. Children playing with the sand see their friend and invite them to play. They spend considerable time talking and developing their own ideas. Children are confident speakers both in groups and on an individual basis. A three-year-old tells an adult about the nursery school trip to the science Museum. They talk about the space rocket and that they made models with Lego after going in a lift. Children have many opportunities to practise mark making and the majority of children form recognisable letters and are able to write their names. They practise letter sounds and enjoy bringing in objects beginning with the letter of the week. Children enjoy listening to well read stories. Several children are totally absorbed with a story 'Aliens love underpants'. Children

laugh as the aliens take the underpants off the washing line. The adult reading the story explains new words to them such as radar, author and illustrator.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the wider world. During a child initiated activity they study the globe and confidently answer questions about the continents. A three-year-old quickly says 'We live in Europe' and points to it on the globe. This leads to a discussion about holidays. Several children talk about places they have visited such as Bermuda where it is hot and sunny. They look at the globe to find the various destinations. Children have good opportunities to explore information and communication and technology (ICT). Children use compact disc players and investigate how the player works by taking apart with a screwdriver. The children have some opportunities to use a digital camera with a member of staff supporting them. Children's imagination is developing really well. A three-year-old confidently tells an adult about their painting. They point explaining this is a bouncy castle, the night sky and trees before going to put their painting to dry. Examples of children's creative work is displayed around the room. Children work together with an adult to create an Easter wall display. Children paint daffodils, and rabbits before sticking them on the display paper. They enjoy talking about their favourite flowers and what happens during spring. They build models using clay, developing their own ideas. Children confidently join in with familiar rhymes and songs. They excitedly prepare for an Easter concert for the parents. Children learn new songs and use a wide range of musical instruments. They use ribbons moving to the beat of the music.

Children's mathematical language is developing. They confidently use words such as big, little, underneath and next to in the right context. Children confidently count independently during play and in groups. For example, children count the number of children going out to play. A wide range of mathematical resources support their interest in numbers and problem-solving. A member of staff works with two children using the number rods. She asks the children what comes before the number four, the children correctly answer three. She continues until they reach number one, congratulating them for being so clever. Children have excellent opportunities to practise their physical skills. They participate in various running games where they show good control in stopping and starting without bumping into each other. They negotiate successfully around an exercise course moving in and out of cones, hopping in a sack and jumping from one square to another. Children competently use a wide range of resources to increase their small muscle control. They correctly use scissors and confidently cut around shapes. A three-year-old spends considerable time making a 24 piece puzzle. They turn a piece of puzzle around until it fits. An adult immediately congratulates them and talks about what they can see in their puzzle.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well met.

There are effective procedures in place to ensure staff liaise closely with parents and carers to ensure they have sufficient information on children's likes, allergies, any fears and abilities. Children have their own aprons with their names on and staff greet them warmly when they arrive. Children's creative achievements and photographs of them involved in activities are displayed at child height around all the playrooms. Staff and children sing a welcome song which helps children to feel secure and develop a strong sense of belonging, developing children's confidence and self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are effective procedures in place to ensure that children with additional needs

are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator is very enthusiastic and confident to seek additional support and advice from other professionals.

Children's behaviour is good given their age and stage of ability. They are polite and well mannered saying please and thank you and excuse me at appropriate times. Children show consideration to each other and generally share well. Minor disputes are quickly resolved with the support of staff who gently explain about being kind to our friends. Staff are very positive role models in the way they speak to each other and the children, consistently using positive language and praising children's achievements.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They receive quality information on the nursery school, the Montessori ethos and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents attend regular parent consultations with their child's key worker. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through activities at home and within the setting. Nursery staff develop good relationships with the parents and they have opportunities to socialise together on a regular basis. Parents report that their children are making good progress and they are extremely pleased with the staff and the provision offered. Their children participate in a good balance of activities promoting the right balance in play and learning. Several parents comment that they think the nursery's strength is the relationships developed both with the children and themselves.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by suitable adults because there are effective recruitment and vetting procedures. Staff are enthusiastic and work well together as a team providing support to the children and their colleagues. All the staff with the exception of one assistant are qualified in early years and Montessori education. They are committed to attending additional courses and training to keep their knowledge up-to-date and relevant. Staff readily evaluate the provision to ensure that they provide positive outcomes for children. Staff work exceptionally hard to create a welcoming and stimulating environment. The space and resources are used successfully to provide children with excellent learning opportunities.

The setting has a wide range of policies and procedures to support staff in providing good quality care and education. They cover all aspects of the provision and are shared with parents to ensure that they are aware of the service offered. However, the procedures to promote children's awareness of what to do when the fire alarm goes are not completely successful. A clear registration system ensures that staff know who is on the premises at any time.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The nursery school owner is extremely enthusiastic and a very positive role model to staff as she works directly with the children. There are effective procedures in place to monitor nursery education provision. For example, regular staff meetings and visits from the early years advisors provide opportunities to evaluate the provision. The person responsible for nursery education completes regular observations in all areas of the nursery school. She views the children's record folders to ensure that they are making good progress in their development and learning. The owner has high and realistic expectations for the staff and the children. As a result the staff group are very committed to providing high quality care and education for all.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting received two recommendations. To ensure the child protection policy and procedure includes what to do in the event of a child protection concern being raised about a member of staff; to ensure the procedure for lost or uncollected children is put in writing. The setting has addressed both issues, there is a statement with regard to an allegation being made about a member of staff however it is in the complaints policy rather than the child protection policy. A policy for the procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or uncollected is in writing and this ensures that parents and carers are fully informed.

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

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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):

- further improve children's safety by ensuring that children are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures

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):

- further develop the systems to improve children's progress records to enable the information to be used to plan the next steps in children's learning

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