

# Montessori On The Park

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY260772
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Lesley Boyle
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Marks Church, St. Mark's Gate, London, E9 5HT
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Montessori On The Park Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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?

Montessori on The Park Day Nursery opened in 2003. It operates from four rooms in converted church premises in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A maximum of 59 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 48 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves children from various boroughs in London. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

Eighteen staff work with the children. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications. Montessori on the Park is an independent school following the philosophy and principals of the Montessori method of education.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's overall health is consistently promoted and they thrive because there are highly effective procedures and practices which promote their physical, dietary and health needs. Staff are experienced and have an excellent knowledge of this area and their consistent support and guidance enables children to gain a thorough understanding of hygiene and health issues. Children demonstrate high levels of independence in their personal care as they help themselves to drinks, blow their noses, disposing of tissues appropriately and older children go to the toilet independently. Fruit is available to children throughout the day and older children are able to help themselves and peel and cut the fruit without assistance, under supervision.

Attention to detail in planning means that there are additional policies covering areas such as procedures to follow should a child become ill whilst at the setting, nappy changing policies, potty and sterilising procedures and promoting children's health. This is further promoted to a consistently high standard as all staff have current first aid qualifications. However, accident records are not consistently signed by parents which compromises the continuity of care for the children and of their health.

Children are offered exceptionally healthy and nutritious snacks and meals which include a wide range of food types. The nursery employs a cook who has carefully devised menus to include all the nutrition young children need. The delicious meals are enjoyed by all the children and older children help in laying the tables with high quality crockery and cutlery. The menus are clearly and attractively displayed to inform parents of the choices available. Staff sit with the children during meal times, providing role models in establishing good social etiquette and by making the time more enjoyable for the children. Children's individual dietary needs are clearly recorded and staff have developed an exceptionally practical system for checking all needs and allergies, ensuring that children's health is protected at all times.

Children's physical health is consistently promoted because they are offered a good range of activities both indoor and outdoor. Children are encouraged to exercise and staff make effective use of local parks and walks. A suitable range of equipment, for example, slides, balls and hoops enables children to develop new physical skills according to their stage of development. Young children also have daily opportunities to the outdoor area and have further access to activities such as 'baby-yoga' or Pilates.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure premises, which is welcoming. Doors to the premises are kept locked and doors to the upstairs rooms require a code to enter. Moreover, there are cameras that monitor each room from the manager's office to further promote children's safety. The rooms are organised very effectively, creating a child-friendly environment which enables children to explore and take risks while being appropriately supervised. Children use a comprehensive range of high quality toys and equipment that is kept clean, in an excellent state of repair and is frequently checked for safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a good understanding of child protection procedures which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding

Children Board. A designated person makes sure that all child protection issues are well co-ordinated and appropriate agencies are notified in the event of concerns for children's welfare.

The consistent daily implementation of policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety, for example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised frequently. Children are gaining a realistic understanding of safety issues and how to keep themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff to reinforce their understanding, for example, children are made aware of the importance of tidying resources away after they have played with them so that they do not trip over or hurt themselves. Staff also use outings to places in the community to talk to children about safety issues such as road safety.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. There is a gentle settling-in process which is carried out at the children's pace and gives the key workers time to get to know and understand each child's particular need and their ways of learning. For example, if children are unsettled staff give them individual attention and give them time to sit and observe before gently encouraging them to join in. All children enjoy their time at the nursery, enthusiastically participating in the excellent range of activities and play opportunities provided. Children have very good relationships with each other and with staff, confidently participating in discussions and initiating conversations. Their personal development and self-esteem are consistently promoted through extremely sensitive support and interaction from highly experienced, genuinely caring staff.

Children are in a stimulating environment where toys and equipment are labelled and easily accessible. Children show very high levels of independence as they choose resources and activities throughout the sessions. All staff consistently make good use of open questions, taking every opportunity to extend children's learning and encourage them to think further. For example, during a puzzle activity a member of staff encourages children to match the puzzle shapes to a map of the world and praises them for correctly identifying the country.

The staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and apply it skilfully to plan for exciting activities for younger children and to provide information to parents about the children's development. Children aged two years and under enjoy a particularly good range of interesting activities to stimulate their imagination and cognitive skills, like bread making, balloon play and sand. Staff use these activities to develop children's language skills such as imitating the noises babies make and encouraging them to identify sounds in the environment. As a result, children throughout the nursery have highly developed language skills and are able to give explanations for their actions. A two-year-old child, for example, will confidently approach an adult saying 'look at my rabbit, I have put glue on it. It's over here, come and see!'

Staff know the younger children well and are aware of their achievements through spontaneous and formal observations that link into areas of learning. The next steps of learning are generally identified and linked into the following weeks planning. However, there is currently limited information on children's starting points and this means that there is no clear record of the progression the children have made or a clear picture of their stage of development.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and use appropriate teaching methods. The majority of activities are child-initiated, with staff providing support, encouragement and additional resources whenever needed. Staff are exceptionally skilled in this, carefully watching children and making judgements about when to intervene and when to allow children time to develop their ideas.

All children show great confidence and independence in exploring, gathering their own resources and organising their play. They are consistently inspired to try out new ideas and activities because staff pay meticulous attention to detail when organising and displaying resources. For example, children are encouraged to taste different foods and they independently fetch a tray with a lemon and a squeezer and under careful supervision are able to cut and squeeze the lemon by themselves, returning the equipment and clearing up when they are finished. Staff know the children well and are skilled in adapting the activities to suit individual needs. However, children's daily learning is not fully optimised because plans do not always include sufficient detail regarding the extension or adaptation of the activity, and the next steps are not consistently identified, which means that children's individual needs and strengths may be missed within the planning.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment of their time at the setting as they participate in the wide range of activities and play opportunities. These include regular opportunities such as painting, reading, imaginative play, construction activities, sand and water play. Children's knowledge is extended and they are offered further challenges as they participate in a variety of topic work. This enables them to look more closely at subjects such as a recent topic on England where the children developed a thorough understanding of English culture through exciting activities such as a trip to buy fish and chips, making scones and having an English tea party with scones and cucumber sandwiches. The children also developed their sense of time and place through identifying places on a map of England and by looking at recent historical events to do with the English monarchy.

Children are provided with many opportunities to recognise their name and they have a developing knowledge of letters that make up their names. Some more able children are experimenting with sounds in words. Children are very confident speakers who chat happily to their friends and staff. Labelling around the room helps children to understand that print carries meaning as well as being able to find resources easily. There is a reasonable range of activities and resources that encourage mark-making and some children can form recognisable letters. Children enjoy books and spontaneously look at books on their own, with staff or with friends. They enjoy music and movement and sing their favourite songs to each other. They tell their own stories in role play and dressing up scenarios.

Children make very good mathematical progress and use mathematical language and calculation skills spontaneously in their play like 'I'm not coming in for 4 days', 'my legs are long but not as long as my daddy's' and 'zero means nothing'. There are ample opportunities for children to explore numbers, to measure and look at shapes. They also develop very good knowledge and understanding of the world and demonstrate this through their understanding of weather, for example, by commenting on the fact that the different seasons bring different weather and that 'now it's nearly spring, but when starts spitting outside it makes me chilly'. Children also have good opportunities to explore different materials such as magnets, metals and minerals.

Children's physical development is well promoted as they develop an awareness of different forms of movement through organised activities such as music and movement sessions, action

rhymes and they develop their co-ordination skills by daily access to the outdoor area. Their physical development is further promoted by sessions with a Physical Education teacher and opportunities to swim on a weekly basis.

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing a positive self-image and feel welcome and valued because they are respected as individuals. Their confidence and self-esteem are promoted because staff praise their efforts and achievements, and offer support and encouragement. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their individual requirements recognised and consistently met. There is a clear policy supporting this and staff ensure that this is consistently implemented. Staff are experienced and work sensitively with parents and with other professionals to ensure that children's care is consistent and appropriate. The good levels of support and high staff ratios ensure that children are able to participate meaningfully in all activities and daily routines.

Children are offered a wide range of play opportunities and activities which promote their understanding of their local community and the diversities of wider society. They have daily access to an appropriate range of play resources which give positive images and information about other cultures and ways of life. These include books, ethnic dolls and traditional musical instruments. Their awareness is further increased as they participate in activities to celebrate festivals, such as the Chinese New Year, Holi, St George's day, cultural dances, and cooking and tasting traditional dishes. Children also have an opportunity to learn French. Children who speak English as an additional language have their needs well met by sensitive support from staff and good partnerships with parents.

Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Therefore, children are well-behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff. Behaviour within the nursery is of a consistently high standard as children of all ages have a mature understanding of right and wrong. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are warmly welcomed and positive efforts are made to accommodate their needs, for example, by exchanging information electronically. Newsletters keep parents informed about the routines and changes and a comprehensive notice board also provides useful information such as health and safety issues, menus and learning and development plans. A good induction programme is available for parents and ensures they know about the policies and routines at nursery.

Children's individual needs are met because parents and staff share information. For example, parents are informed of their child's progress because have the opportunity to attend two formal meetings a year and receive an end of year report. The continuity of education is further promoted by practices such as sending reading books home. The nursery is proactive in finding out how parents feel about the care and education provided for the children and act upon the results.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled. They enjoy activities and achieve well because staff are creative with the space and resources available and are consistently looking at new ways of achieving the best outcomes for children. The managers have a clear vision of how children thrive and use their skills, knowledge and experience to lead by example. Children's daily safety and welfare are promoted because there are stringent procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. There is also a clear staff induction process and policies and procedures are complete and up-to-date. These are shared with parents to ensure children's health, safety and welfare.

Children's play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of time and space. They are able to move safely and freely between activities, enabling them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. The time and attention given to the promotion of children's skills and independence means that there is a seamless flow to the daily routine where children are always purposefully engaged and confident in their abilities. There are high staff ratios enabling more individual attention to be given to the children which further aids their learning, skills and overall development.

Leadership and management is good. Children's learning, development and welfare are promoted by the managers' thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they keep in regular contact with the nursery owner. The nursery is well-managed and continuously monitored to ensure that appropriate care is provided. Staff are supported in their daily work and training is given a high priority and is constantly evaluated. As a result, staff turnover is very low which provides continuity of care for the children. Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At their last inspection the nursery were asked to make sure that the children do not have access to the changing areas. The nursery have now put in stair gates to prevent children from accessing the area.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspections there has been 1 complaint made to Ofsted.

These related to National Standard 5 - Equipment; that equipment used had not been age appropriate for a specific child, National Standard 6 - Safety; regarding inadequate supervision which led to an accident and unexplained injuries, National Standard 7 - Health; regarding the recording of accidents and National Standard 12 - Working in partnership with parents and carers; that a parent was not contacted immediately following an accident, specific information in regards to an accident could not be given to parents and that the account of an accident was inaccurate.

The provider contacted Ofsted to give information in regards to the incident and Ofsted visited the provider to discuss the concerns raised. As a result of the investigation visit, actions were set under National Standard 6 - Safety; to 'ensure that risk assessments identify risks posed and allow for children to play safely through a combination of adult supervision and the use of safe equipment' and National Standard 7 - Health; to 'maintain concise and detailed written records of all accidents which are shared and signed by parents'. The provider responded to

Ofsted to confirm that suitable measures had been taken to meet the actions set. No further action was taken and the provider continues to be registered.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by the 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):

- improve the accident procedures by ensuring that all entries are countersigned
- provide a baseline assessment to which parents contribute (also applies to nursery education).

#### **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):

- develop further the existing planning to show differentiation for children that need further challenge or support and use observations to highlight next steps in 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)