

Montpelier Community Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100616
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Sarah Johnson / Deirdra Keating
Setting Address	115 Brecknock Road, London, N19 5AH
Telephone number	020 7485 9813
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Registered person	Camden Community Nurseries 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?

Montpelier Community Nursery registered in 1992. It is a registered charity and is managed by a voluntary management committee. It operates from a purpose-built outbuilding in North London. A maximum of 18 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:00 to 17.00, during term time only. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 19 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing good health and hygiene practices because staff consistently encourage and support them. Pictorial timelines made up of photographs of the children in the setting help remind children how to wash their hands at the low-level sinks. Children are protected well from illness and infection by clear policies that are proactively shared with parents on a notice board. Clear parental consents are sought regarding emergency medical treatment and medication requirements. Children receive good care if they have an accident or minor emergency as a good proportion of staff have attended first aid training and a well-stocked first aid kit is readily available. All accidents are recorded, however parents do not always sign the accident book at the end of the session which could compromise children's safety. Children can rest if they become tired; a cosy area is available and has been furnished with cushions and a carpet. Fold away beds and clean bed linen are provided for tired children who may need to rest and sleep during the day.

Children's dietary needs are met well as the nursery provides freshly home cooked meals and snacks. Individual dietary requirements are recorded in written agreements and respected. Food is prepared by staff who have attended food hygiene training. The food is healthy and prepared from fresh ingredients providing a balanced menu that is displayed for parents and children. Careful checking procedures ensure that preparation and storage of food is hygienic and follows the correct guidelines. Children enjoy a social snack time where they sit together around a table and are supported by staff. Snacks feature a variety of toasted breads and freshly chopped fruit or vegetables with milk or water. Children have independent access to drinking water at all times, which ensures they remain well hydrated throughout the day.

Children have the benefit of daily fresh air and exercise as the setting has an enclosed and appealing outdoor play area. The children enjoy a good range of activities outside; they ride trikes and have room to run around safely on an area that has all-weather safety surfacing. A covered area protects children and enables them to play happily outside in all weathers. A range of protective clothing and footwear is kept at the nursery to ensure children can always access the outside area. A climbing frame and slide encourages children to develop their skills and gain exercise out in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. The room is colourful and decorated with children's pictures and craft. The space has been creatively organised to give defined areas which are stimulating and homely. Children access a very good range of appealing resources and toys that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Low-level storage units that are labelled with pictures and text to encourage children to make choices about how to spend their time. Children have free access to the outdoor area which also houses a good range of resources, supporting their learning and development in all areas.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where staff take some steps to minimise potential hazards. However, the flooring is worn and the kitchen door does not close properly which could be hazardous to children. There are also resources stacked haphazardly in the outside area. Children learn about safe practices as adults explain about nursery rules. For example; as

they play on the slide staff consistently and carefully reinforce the safety rules. The premises are safe and secure with all access to the provision carefully monitored using an intercom system. Children are protected from fire by regular fire drills that are documented and discussed with them to reinforce their understanding of danger.

Children are protected well from potential harm, the child protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibility. Staff have undertaken recent safeguarding training and have a good understanding of how to put the appropriate procedures into place should a concern arise about a child in the nursery.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are warmly welcomed into the setting and have clearly established trusting relationships with the staff that they know well. Children are encouraged to initiate their own play from the exciting range of appealing resources that have been creatively set out. Most children are enthusiastic and self-assured in the welcoming environment, however recent staff changes have resulted in some children becoming unsettled. The relaxed session timetable allows children to fully develop their play and sustain it for long periods of time. Consequently, children participate with high levels of interest. Children's work decorates the room giving them a sense of achievement and pride. Younger children's learning is promoted well through activities adapted from the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Activities are planned to incorporate children's senses and provide tactile and exciting activities that support their development. They explore different materials as they make flowers and listen to the musical rhythm as they learn about Flamenco dancing.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff demonstrate a good working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the whole staff team are involved in planning and assessing children's learning. Children experience a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities which are loosely based around themes, such as 'around the world' and 'shapes and patterns'. Staff ensure that children are offered opportunities to become engaged in activities covering all six areas of learning. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is facilitated, as learning intentions are clearly identified in planning. The staff have worked effectively to develop detailed assessment files for each of the children. These include colourful scrapbooks which are full of meaningful photographs, observations and examples of the children's work. Staff have developed effective systems for recording detailed observations of children's development and these assessments are used effectively to inform future planning. As a result, children are supported to move on to the next stage in their learning.

Staff are enthusiastic in their approach to teaching, which helps children to have a positive disposition towards learning. For example, staff listen carefully to children while they play and happily join in when children choose to share books together. However, opportunities to extend and consolidate children's learning through everyday activities are not always fully maximised. This is because the staff who have the best understanding of the children's development are often busy tending to the care needs of younger children and the general organisation of the setting. Children's behaviour is good which indicates that they are engaged and interested in the activities offered. They learn how to take turns when sharing resources together, as they start the egg timer before their turn on the computer and proudly point out to staff that they are sharing the glue pot and spreaders. The children benefit from a rich learning environment,

which features easily accessible resources and many colourful visual displays such as number lines, posters and printed labels.

Children operate independently within the nursery and eagerly take on responsibility by managing tasks such as tidying away resources, setting the tables for lunch and completing the weather chart. They show an interest in caring for living things as they observe and feed the fish in the nursery tank. Children persist for extended periods with the activities they choose. For example, they work together to complete a challenging puzzle. As they look at photographs of themselves and their friends in scrapbooks, they demonstrate good levels of self-esteem and show that they feel a strong sense of themselves as members of the nursery group. Children are learning about the initial sound in words. For example, staff encourage them to listen to the 'th' sound as they search for the 'Thursday' label to add to the daily weather chart. Children are working towards using writing as a means of recording and communicating. For example, while playing in the imaginary office area, children write letters and address envelopes before posting them in the post box. Many children show a growing interest in accessing the range of books provided, often choosing to share these together. They talk about their favourite characters and point out key features in the pictures.

Children are learning about connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They recognise numerals on a number line up to 10 and with support from the staff they point out numbers of personal significance such as their age. Children are beginning to place numbers in the correct order as they sequence numbers in a puzzle. They use mathematical language to describe their position whilst sitting in a bus, such as 'inside', 'outside', 'in front' and 'behind'. Children explore different shapes as they arrange rectangles, circles and squares to make pictures of trucks. Children play alongside others who are engaged in the same theme. For example, they play at making food and drinks for their friends in the role play kitchen area. They use available resources such as bricks and dinosaurs to support their small world play and often introduce meaningful storylines and narrative. Children explore a range of media and materials through creative activities. They are given freedom to interpret planned creative activities in their own way. For example, when making Spring flowers, children are shown how to cut the tissue paper but are equally supported when they wish to tear it themselves.

Children are making sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. They investigate aspects of the living world as they observe and tend to the plants they have planted in the garden. Children experience good opportunities to use everyday technology to support their learning. They use telephones, computer keyboards and calculators in their role play and competently use a mouse to control a programme on the computer. Through junk-modelling activities, children use their skills in designing and making. They construct different boxes together to make cars and trucks. Children enjoy a range of physical activities that help them to develop their skills when using small apparatus, tools and equipment. They safely use scissors during craft activities and demonstrate control as they use tools safely to cut and shape their play dough models. Children enjoy developing their larger movements and spatial awareness during weekly music and movement sessions, where they have opportunities to participate in action rhymes, aerobics, dance and races.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children in this setting are valued and have a good sense of belonging. Individual points of reference that are labelled with photographs give each child a personal sense of meaning

and belonging. Staff actively gather information to ensure they can best meet individual needs and build an understanding of each child. Children are encouraged to discuss their home lives and parents are invited in to share their cultural expertise and knowledge. This helps children feel accepted and part of the wider community. All children are included as experienced staff support and adapt activities well to promote full inclusion and provide one-to-one support. Different sized groups encourage children to socialise and build relationships with each other. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through exciting hands-on experiences where they are encouraged to express their individual ideas, for example, through cultural music and dance. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the nursery. Staff are quick to access relevant support for children and have attended modular training. A designated member of staff has responsibility for this area, which ensures that children receive consistent support and a positive working relationship can be developed with parents and carers. Children understand good responsible behaviour as staff follow consistent strategies and have a few simple rules in order that children can understand and remember them. Innovative and meaningful strategies have been developed by staff with the children. For example, a pictorial rule book with coloured photographs and simple nursery rules enables very young children to understand the groups' rules. They talk through the pictures in the book and explain competently what they mean. Staff are clear, calm and consistent as they explain to tired children the need for safety rules.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are warmly welcomed by staff that know them well and have established trusting relationships with them. Policies are proactively shared with parents along with information about the setting. New parents are warmly welcomed and encouraged to stay and settle their children. A complaints policy is available and a parents' notice board displays a good range of information. Parents are actively involved in the nursery, they come in to share their skills and help to develop menu choices for their children's meals. Children's learning is supported as their parents are kept informed of the curriculum and their child's developmental progress whilst at the setting. For example, the planning is proactively displayed to highlight the main topics that children will be exploring and regular parents meetings are arranged to enable parents to view and contribute to their children's assessment records. Additionally, parents are provided with a detailed written report each term, detailing their children progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded as all adults who work at the nursery are required to complete checks to ensure they are suitable. Children are kept safe as they are not left alone with anyone who has not been vetted. The manager holds a relevant qualification and has appropriate experience of working with young children, ensuring she has sound understanding of how to meet the needs of the children. Staff work well together, following a rota of responsibilities which are displayed at the setting. However, the management of recent staff changes and general deployment of staff does not always fully support children's needs. For example, children often approach familiar longstanding staff for support but they are not always able to provide sufficient individual attention as they are busy tending to younger children's care needs or following the basic routine of the day. Space is organised well and staff create different areas for play both indoors and outdoors. The ratios of adults to children meet with requirements and staff keep daily registers detailing their hours of attendance and those of the children.

Most of the required records are in place to support the safe management of the nursery. Secure filing is available to ensure children's personal records are kept confidential. The manager is aware of the requirement to notify Ofsted of any significant changes or events and ensures the registration certificate is displayed at all times.

The leadership and management are good. The setting is led by a dedicated manager who has completed relevant training to enable her to support her staff team effectively. Staff have a clear vision for what they want to achieve at the nursery and a meaningful scrapbook has been developed to illustrate the key values of the setting. The self-evaluation process has been used to identify clear areas for improvement. Appropriate systems such as regular staff appraisals enable the manager to monitor staff performance. These appraisals also offer an opportunity for staff to identify their individual training needs, which are fully addressed. The staff team have attended a varied range of courses to build on their knowledge and understanding and they are allocated sufficient time out to complete paperwork tasks and planning.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to conduct written risk assessments of the premises, including time scaled actions taken to minimise risks identified to children both inside and outside the premises and review as necessary. These have been completed and risk assessments are now regularly conducted. They were also asked to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour. Staff manage children's behaviour well, working in partnership with parents and carers. A recommendation was given to the nursery to ensure the first aid box contents are checked frequently and replaced as necessary. A well-stocked first aid kit is readily available which ensures children receive the best care in the event of a minor accident. They were asked to ensure sufficient and suitable furniture is available to meet the needs of children under five years. Younger children use child-sized low-level chairs, tables and storage units which are suitable for them. Additionally they were asked to maintain all required records, policies and procedures, inclusive of all necessary detail. This has been generally addressed and the documentation available for inspection was inclusive of all details and up to date.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider was asked to provide increased resources and more opportunities for children to take part in writing in role play areas. Children now enjoy writing with resources such as calendars, envelopes and diaries in their role play. For example, they often write letters which they post in the nursery post box.

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.

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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):

- keep an accurate record of any accidents and ensure these are signed by parents on collection
- ensure that risks to children are minimised with regard to the storage of resources, worn flooring and access to the kitchen
- improve the organisation of staff deployment to ensure children receive appropriate levels of direct support and attention.

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 opportunities to consolidate and extend children's learning are fully maximised.

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