

Living Spring Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY293804
Inspection date	12 May 2008
Inspector	Caren Carpenter
Setting Address	St. Michaels Church Hall, St. Michaels Road, London, NW2 6XG
Telephone number	0208 8307331
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Registered person	Living Spring Nursery Ltd
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?

Living Spring Montessori Nursery was registered in 2004. The setting is located in a church hall within London borough of Brent. The nursery serves the local and wider community.

A maximum of 72 children may attend at any one time. Children attend full-time and part-time for a variety of sessions. The nursery opens for 48 weeks of the year, each week day from 08:00 to 18:00. There are currently 82 children from eight months to five years on roll. Of these 35 children receive funding for nursery education.

The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as additional language.

The nursery employs 18 staff to work with the children. The nursery follows Montessori and Early Years Foundation teaching methods. All staff hold early years qualifications and the Montessori Diploma. The setting receives support from the Early Years Childcare Development Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning good hygiene practices as staff maintain good levels of hygiene, for example, they are encouraged to wash their hands before meal times helping to prevent the spread of infection.

Staff are knowledgeable in medication and accident procedures; records are countersigned by parents. However, accident and medication records lack necessary staff details, to fully support children's welfare

Children's nutritional needs are very well provided for. The weekly menu is developed by the nursery to ensure that children receive a good variety of nutritious meals that are freshly cooked. Food is provided according to the dietary requirements of the children to ensure that their individual needs are met effectively. Staff are well informed of children's dietary needs and requirements and are very pro-active in ensuring these needs are met effectively.

Children choose from a selection of fresh fruits which they help to prepare for snack time. They have very good access to regular drinks throughout the session and are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water.

Children's good healthy is well supported throughout the nursery as they enjoy lots of fresh air and exercise, for example, they enjoy their time in the outdoor play area and daily planned trips to the local parks, developing a range of physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a stimulating environment with colourful wall displays and interesting and attractive activities. Space is well organised and enables children to move freely and participate comfortably in all activities.

Good supervision and a good awareness of health and safety issues allow children the freedom to choose activities that offer variety and challenge within safe limits. Risk assessments ensure potential hazards are minimised. Children understand and practise fire drills regularly which are recorded.

Careful monitoring of access to the premises ensure that children are protected from unknown visitors and are unable to leave unsupervised. An effective entry system is in place to manage safe access to the premises promoting children's safety.

Children are safeguarded from abuse or neglect. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues which helps to ensure children are protected from harm and neglect. For example, staff know how to implement local child protection procedures and have the required policies and documents in place to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a good attitude to learning and are happy, settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session. Younger children benefit tremendously from staff's knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are cared for by a caring and loving staff team. Children are supported extremely well by staff to help them settle into routines. They are given help and encouragement as they participate in activities. Babies to two year-olds are developing confidence and self-esteem. They are actively participating in activities which are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Developmental profiles for each child give an overall picture of how each child progresses. These along with the key carer's knowledge of the child, help in organising opportunities for children to be challenged and move on in their learning. Children are happy and secure in the nursery, making their own choices about what they play with and well supported by the staff.

Children are forming good relationships with each other and adults, their independence is well promoted as they select from a range of quality Montessori materials, toys, activities and resources.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff show pride in their thorough knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and they plan an interesting, well-balanced curriculum which provides lots of challenges to the children. Teaching methods are sound as staff demonstrate new tasks, skilfully extend children's vocabulary and offer lots of praise and encouragement. However, activities are not evaluated to ensure that the learning intentions are achieved.

The key worker system enables staff to monitor the children's progress effectively to help them to move on to the next steps of learning. Children are set realistic challenges. They enjoy planned, interesting activities as a result they are motivated, sustain concentration levels for pro-longed periods of time and make clear links in their learning. Staff are skilled in their questioning of children, giving them time to think about their answers.

Children are developing their independence as they help to tidy up and choose activities in which to participate. Behaviour is good; they negotiate with others and take responsibility for their actions.

They are kind and considerate towards each other and they play well together as they share and take turns.

Children listen attentively to a range of stories and have access to quality books in the comfortable book area which they share with adults and each other. Children are confident speakers and listeners; they are able to recognise letters that are familiar to them, for example, in their own names and are able to link some sounds to letters. Several children are able to write legible letters and words before they leave the setting.

Children count confidently and can count up to 10 and beyond and are exploring simple addition and subtraction through many practical Montessori activities. They recognise and name shapes such as circle, triangle, oblong, sphere, square and rectangle. Children are learning about shape and size as they confidently fit puzzles of varying challenges.

Children have good opportunities to find out about the environment as they plant seeds and grow plants outside. They take pride in looking after their plants by watering them daily. Children are studying living things such as mini beasts and the life cycle of butterflies. They have good opportunities to use new information and technology to support their learning. They develop awareness of their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people, for example, they enjoy a wide range of festivals such as Eid, Chinese New Year and Christmas.

Children have opportunities to develop their imagination through story times and a variety of role-play activities. They enjoy weekly piano sessions and are able to select and play musical instruments. However, children do not have opportunities to design, create and construct their ideas using a range of natural materials.

Children are making good progress in their physical development. They are enthusiastic as they enjoy fresh air and physical exercise daily. Children regularly use large physical play equipment to jump, climb, slide and balance which develops their large muscles and co-ordination skills. Children handle small tools such as pencils, paint brushes and scissors with increasing control.

Children's interest and spontaneous play are well supported by staff. Staff uses children's interest to plan a well balanced curriculum. Children clearly enjoy their time at the nursery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals by all staff who ensure that activities are suited to children's levels of understanding and that they are appropriately challenged. Children gain an extremely good sense of belonging and feel secure in the centre. Positive relationships are formed and children work very well together, sharing and taking turns.

Children are well behaved, listen to others with interest and welcome visitors to the centre in a confident and polite manner. Children receive regular praise, reassurance and encouragement which promote their confidence and self-esteem. Children play very well together learning to share and take turns and negotiate this with confidence. They are developing a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are well behaved, polite and courteous to each other and know what is expected of them.

Through the well plan topics children have good opportunities to engage in activities which enhance their learning and understanding of the wider community and the world around them. For example, they celebrate a variety of festivals such as Diwali, Christmas, Chinese New Year and Eid. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The needs of the children with learning difficulties and disabilities are recognised and met sensitively by the centre. Staff work well with the early years special educational needs team and parents. This ensure that children's individual needs are met effectively.

Partnerships with parents are good. Parents receive detailed information about philosophy of the setting, which helps them to understand how their children learn and develop through play and help them to gain an understanding of how their children make progress and how this can be supported at home.

They are kept well informed of their child's achievements through daily exchange of information. A daily communication book is used effectively between parents and staff to keep parents

informed of their babies' daily routine. As a result, babies are happy and content because their individual care needs are well met.

Parents are invited to regular review meetings with the key workers to discuss their children's progress. They receive written progress reports towards the Early Years Foundation Stage and contribute to planning the next step in their children's learning. They share how their children are developing through information in profiles which is attractively display, through the use of photographs and examples of children's work. Informative newsletters are provided for parents and carers and gives details such as forthcoming events and weekly topics. Parents are invited into the nursery to share their experiences, to talk about their job roles and to read stories to the children and contribute to the planning of the nursery menu.

Parents speak highly of the provision; they say 'our children are well nurtured, staff are very warm and caring and children are treated as individuals'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are relaxed and motivated in a well organised learning environment. They are well cared for by adults who are routinely vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Children benefit from the effective organisation of the space and resources both indoors and outdoors. This helps children to make choices and develop their ideas as they play.

Resources and equipment are organised to promote children's safety, welfare and development. Staff work very well as a team to meet the needs of the children. The ratio of staff to children is good, enabling all children to receive a lot of individual attention, including children needing additional support.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The manager is pro-active in her approach. She works alongside the established staff team who are deployed effectively to ensure that children are well supported. Staff are skilled at adapting plans to effectively support and guide children to extend their play and learning. The developing use of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum gives children positive experiences and helps children make good progress in all areas. Planning is shared very well and understood by the staff team. However, activities are not fully evaluated to ensure learning intentions are achieved. The programme for creative development does not provide children with opportunities to design, create and construct their ideas using a range of natural materials.

The implementation of policies and procedures and appropriate recording of documentation helps to promote children's welfare, care and learning. However, accident and medication records lack necessary staff details, to fully support children's welfare. The setting meets needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to extend the opportunities for children to do free art work; further develop the range of resources for information technology and develop the provision for imaginative play. Children enjoy participating in a range of creative activities such as painting, drawing and sticking with various materials. Children benefit from taking part in a communication, language and literacy programme through Brent early years. As a result, children explore and operate a range of information technology equipment such as remote

control toys, cameras and walkie-talkies. Children make connections in their learning and they enjoy their time as they take part in role-play. For example, the home corner changes to a shop and a theatre. This means that children are developing their imaginative skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 1, Suitable person. Concerns were raised regarding the robustness of the vetting procedures and about unvetted staff having unsupervised access to children. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate and report back. From the information received Ofsted was satisfied that the provider took appropriate action in order to meet National Standard 1. Ofsted were then satisfied that the National Standards were being met and the provider remained qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure that all accident and medication records include staff full names

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 that activities are evaluated to ensure that the learning intentions are achieved
- extend the programme for creative development by ensuring that children have access to a range of natural materials to design, create and construct their ideas.

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