

The Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY370786
Inspection date	04/11/2008
Inspector	Sarah Street
Setting address	102 Chestnut Grove, LONDON, SW12 8JJ
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

The Montessori School has been re-registered since 2008 and is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from two rooms on the ground floor of a Victorian house in a residential area of Balham. The building is accessed by steps up to the front door. The nursery primarily serves children from the local area. Children are grouped in rooms according to their age and/or stage of development.

The setting is open each weekday from 08:30 to 16:15, during term time. A maximum of 20 children aged from two to under six years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 22 children on roll aged from two and a half years to four years. Of these, seven receive funding for nursery education provision. The nursery supports children who have English as an additional language.

The setting employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and the remaining one is currently working towards a level 3 qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority early years advisory team.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Staff at The Montessori School are a committed team who put the needs of every child first. As a result children enjoy a happy and positive experience. Inclusive practice is well promoted, as staff treat children with equal concern and respect each child's background and needs. The setting strives for continuous improvement and management has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Effective links with parents mean they are well informed about their child's progress and achievements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further support the development of all children's Communication Language and Literacy skills by ensuring that stories are suited to their stage of development and allow them to listen with enjoyment
- develop the organisation of mealtimes to ensure children do not have to wait for food and further develop their self help skills.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Confident children play happily and safely in bright, welcoming and clean premises. They self select from the high quality range of Montessori equipment which is suitable for all the children's needs. Risk assessments are clear and demonstrate

that the setting is able to identify risks and take action to minimise these. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as staff talk clearly about any issues. For example, when staff remind children not to run as the floor may be slippery following cooking a child states 'that's right, we must walk slowly'. The care of the children is well supported as the majority of staff have appropriate qualifications as well as a friendly and professional approach, and a commitment to further training. The recruitment procedure demonstrates that staff working with the children are suitable to do so.

Good links are developed with parents. The settling in period for each child enables parents and staff to get to know each other well and helps support consistency of care. For example, staff seek information about favourite words, religion and languages spoken. During this time parents are encouraged to share information about their children's previous learning experiences. Staff use this information to support their future planning for each child.

Staff display a positive attitude towards continuous improvement and recognise areas for development in the very detailed self evaluation document. This is enhanced as the setting seeks the views of parents via questionnaires. Newsletters are used to inform parents how the setting has addressed any issues which have been raised. All required policies and procedures for the safe management of children are in place. Records are clear and confidentially stored.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The clear knowledge of the staff concerning the Montessori approach and the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements mean they are skilful in helping children make good progress in their learning. They obviously know the children well and use their observations and knowledge to support individual development. This ensures that each child receives an enjoyable and challenging experience across the areas of learning. Capable staff are aware when to stand back or intervene in play. Activities are well resourced and ensure all children can participate. Effective teaching methods and a good balance of self-chosen play and adult initiated activities extends children's learning. Learning is generally well organised. However, some of the story times are a little too long and do not maintain all the children's interest. Staff are clear about the aim of specific activities and are competent in covering several areas of learning. For example, during cookery children discuss healthy eating, excitedly use scales to weigh ingredients, receive copies of the recipe and use their sense of taste, smell and touch as they explore the ingredients.

Children happily enter the setting and are warmly greeted by staff. Children are independent learners who concentrate well at activities. They have good relationships and care for one another. For example, when a child drops part of their activity on the floor another child quickly gets up and helps them pick it up. Children regularly learn about the environment and world in a meaningful way as staff discuss differences, use props and arrange visitors or outings. Children's thinking is encouraged as they explore the visiting mini-beasts discussing the texture of snakes, snails and tortoises. Visits to the post office and a pizza restaurant, to make pizzas, help children learn about the role of others. Children

develop their imaginations and large muscle skills as they dress up, take part in ballet and dance sessions and ride on bikes. Children develop very good small muscle skills as they competently use tweezers, scissors, pour drinks and fit puzzle pieces.

Children make their own decision about when to stop and have snack or a drink as they freely access the snack bar during the session. At lunch they enjoy a healthy meal which is freshly cooked. However, the organisation of mealtimes does not further encourage children's self help skills as they wait to be served from one table. Children become restless during this time. Staff encourage positive behaviour as they are calm role models. Children are polite and regularly say please and thank you without prompting. All staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to ensure children's safety. Children's health and well-being is promoted as effective steps are taken to prevent the risk of infection, accidents are appropriately dealt with and children are closely supervised.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.