

# Great Beginnings Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY301187
<b>Inspection date</b>	25/03/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Gail Groves
<b>Setting address</b>	The Advent Centre, 37 Brendon Street, London, W1H 5JE
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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**

Great Beginnings Montessori Nursery School opened in 1983 and now operates from three rooms in a church building. All of the rooms used are accessed by flights of steps. The nursery is situated in the City of Westminster in London. It is open each weekday from 08.45 to 15.30 during term time only.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 64 children under eight years at any one time. There are currently 74 children aged from two to six years on roll, some in part-time places. This provision is also registered by Ofsted on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as a number of children with English as an additional language.

There are 12 members of staff, 11 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification Level 2. The setting operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children's welfare is well-promoted because of the focus the nursery places on meeting the needs and encouraging the potential and progress of each individual child. Staff work closely with children's parents as well as other providers and agencies to meet children's individual needs and this helps to ensure that all children make good progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting points, capabilities and interests. The nursery's strong ethos of reflective practice and their wish to provide high quality care and education for all children ensures that self-evaluation procedures are used effectively to identify priorities for the future development and continuous improvement of the setting. Most documentation is in place and the nursery's policies and procedures are inclusive and effective in meeting children's care and learning needs.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- ensure children's healthcare with reference to hand washing procedures before eating
- improve the frequency of children's opportunities to use a range of everyday technology
- ensure that the system used to monitor children's progression towards the early learning goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage is appropriate and is used throughout the nursery.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- carry out and record a full risk assessment for each type of outing, which includes an assessment of the required adult to child ratios. (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

09/04/2009

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted well. In line with Montessori philosophy the nursery is organised to provide a safe, stimulating and attractive environment in which children can safely and independently explore and master the wide range of skills that lay the foundations for their future learning and development. Well-qualified and committed staff form an effective team who work together closely to ensure that children are very well-supported in their learning. They regularly attend training to update and enhance their skills and staff appraisals, induction and monitoring processes support staff development well. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children's welfare is carefully safeguarded and policies and procedures are effective and consistently used to meet children's needs. Most of the required documentation for the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place although the Early Years Foundation Stage requirement to keep records of risk assessments for each type of outing is not fully met.

All of the staff are involved in the process of self-evaluation of the setting and parental views are always sought and acknowledged so that a full and accurate picture of the nursery's strengths and areas for development can be obtained. For example, areas identified for improving children's learning include the increased use of the local parks and green spaces to extend children's physical skills and interest in the natural world. In addition, the nursery plans to improve the provision for children to explore more complex science activities.

The nursery values and carefully fosters its strong partnership with parents and carers who are always regarded as the child's first educators. Regular opportunities to attend parent evenings, talks and coffee mornings encourage parents to become involved in the life of the setting and to discover what their children are learning so that they can reinforce this at home. Good quality information is given to parents about the Montessori approach to education and they have access to a library of books that they can borrow to increase their understanding still further. Children's development and progress records are shared formally with parents during consultation meetings whilst daily discussions with staff ensure that a regular exchange of information is maintained. Partnerships with local schools are also carefully fostered to ensure that when children move on there is continuity in their learning and development.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

The nursery promotes children's welfare, learning and development very effectively. Children enjoy a safe and attractive learning environment in which they are encouraged to be independent, active learners. Consistently used policies and procedures ensure that children's good health and well-being is promoted effectively and that all necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. Children's understanding about the importance that healthy eating plays in developing a healthy lifestyle is encouraged both through planned topic work, for example, a visit from a dentist, as well as through the provision of healthy snacks and drinks. However, although children learn good hygiene routines such as washing their hands after using the toilet, the procedure for washing their hands before eating snacks is not fully effective. Safety is given a high priority and daily safety checks and effective safety policies and procedures ensure that children are effectively protected from injury. Children also learn to keep themselves safe through discussions and practical experiences within their daily routines such as, taking part in regular fire drills and practising road safety rules when they are out for walks in the busy local environment.

Children are constantly encouraged to make choices and take decisions throughout their daily routine. They show high levels of involvement and concentration as they play and explore alone, in pairs and in small groups and are confident, happy and interested in finding out about the world around them. Their self-care skills are well-developed and they put on and take off their aprons, wipe their noses and use the toilet with little or no support. Children behave well and clearly understand what is expected of them because the staff are calm and consistent in their approach to behaviour management and provide good role models at all times.

Children enjoy individually planned, purposeful play and exploration which is tailored to meet their individual interests and learning styles through the use of the Montessori educational philosophy.

Learning is guided by the children's developmental needs, and children are given time and space to observe, explore and investigate the environment and engage with it. Staff make detailed and comprehensive observations and records of children and their activities and use these as planning tools for children's learning. Children have opportunity to repeat activities at will in order to reinforce and encourage their development but staff also ensure that they model the next steps in children's learning in order to challenge them and ensure their further progression. However, the system for monitoring children's attainments within the Early Years Foundation Stage is ineffective because it is not age appropriate for the children attending and is not used throughout the nursery. As a result, it does not provide a baseline of children's starting points against which their future progress can be accurately assessed. Children with additional learning and/or development needs as well as those with English as an additional language are quickly identified and are well-supported. The nursery works closely with other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists as well as the child's parents in order to meet children's particular needs and to ensure progression in their development.

Children are particularly well-supported to develop early reading and writing skills. For example, they develop phonic awareness by playing listening and 'I Spy' games and have many opportunities to develop the coordination and motor skills needed for writing through taking part in activities such as pouring, using scissors and sewing. They develop a good understanding of mathematical and number concepts as they explore fitting wooden blocks together to make a cube, sort cylinders by size or use strings of beads to understand how numbers can be added together or subtracted. Visits to places such as, the Natural History Museum, the Guards Museum and Paddington Station extend children's learning into the local environment in practical and exciting ways whilst the wider world is also brought into the nursery when parents come to share their skills and interests with the children. For example, playing a musical instrument and sharing the enjoyment of listening to live music or reading them stories. Children's understanding about everyday technology is limited because there are insufficient regular opportunities to use items such as the nursery's computer.

## 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

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	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](http://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.