

Step By Step Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY282316
Inspection date	18/05/2009
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting address	John Keble Church Hall, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 9NS
Telephone number	0208 203 6581
Email	kay@nanjis.co.uk
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 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

Step By Step Montessori Nursery opened in 2004 and is privately owned. It operates from a church hall located in Edgware, within the London Borough of Barnet. A level entrance means that the premises are accessible. Children have access to the communal outdoor area of the church grounds. The setting follows the Montessori educational philosophy.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday during term-time only and sessions are from 09.00 until 15.00 each day, with the exception of Thursday, when the setting closes at 14.00. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 48 places and there are currently 45 children attending who are within this age group. The setting serves the local and wider catchment area. A small number of children attend other settings such as other local nurseries and childminders. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and several children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently no children on roll in this age range.

There are nine staff members. Of these, seven hold relevant childcare qualifications and two are currently working towards a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Staff's excellent knowledge of each child and the setting's ethos of supporting each as an individual means that all children are respected and their individual needs are meticulously included in the planning. Children make excellent progress in all areas and are consistently supported to ensure that they are included and gain the maximum benefit from all activities and opportunities. A key strength of the setting is the excellent planning for each child, meaning that children are offered a wide range of activities that reflect their interests and needs. The nursery owner and staff continuously evaluate their practice, devising clear action plans for future improvements, and thus offering a service which is responsive to the needs of all children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the procedures for safeguarding children to ensure that these relate to local procedures.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The owner and staff have developed thorough procedures for self-evaluation. They attend a wide range of additional training and actively seek feedback from parents, using this information to inform action plans for future developments. They maintain a positive approach to feedback, taking action to address identified weaknesses and thus improve the outcomes for children. Recent improvements include additional outings so that children are offered an extended range of opportunities and experiences.

The consistent implementation of the setting's policies supports the efficient daily running of the group and helps to ensure that children are consistently offered a secure and welcoming environment. The manager makes sure that rigorous checks are carried out on all staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff have attended additional training relating to safeguarding children, helping to ensure that children's welfare is promoted and they are protected. However, this area is not fully promoted as the setting's procedures do not consistently reflect the procedures of the local authority. Thorough risk assessments for all areas ensure that hazards are minimised or removed. Ongoing explanations from staff help children to gain a clear understanding of safety issues, such as how to set up activities and resources safely.

The setting works exceptionally well with parents and carers and ensures that there is a thorough exchange of information, which is actively used to promote children's learning and development. Parents are very well informed of their children's activities and progress through daily discussions with staff, consultation events, written reports and regular newsletters. The setting encourages parents' involvement in their child's learning, for example, through organising talks and information sessions. Good links are maintained with other settings, helping to ensure that children's care is consistent and their development is promoted.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning and development because activity planning is securely rooted in their individual interests and current developmental needs. This is underpinned by thorough procedures for assessing children's ongoing progress. Staff are exceptionally confident in enabling children to initiate their play and in offering sensitive support and encouragement. This promotes children's confidence and they are keen to explore and are developing positive attitudes to learning. The attention to detail in planning means that children are offered an extended range of opportunities and experiences. For example, when children expressed an interest in transport and vehicles, staff planned additional activities such as trips using underground trains and local buses.

The stimulating environment and ongoing support positively encourage children to explore, share ideas and solve problems. For example, children playing with coloured wooden rods use these to construct and then put them in order of size,

using simple mathematical language such as 'longest', 'shortest' and 'equal to'. The attention to detail in the provision of resources means that these are accessible and also reflect children's current interests, inspiring them to extend their play and explore further. For example, staff note that children are interested in Italy and so provide additional resources; children thoroughly enjoy looking at maps, examining pictures of classic Italian architecture and setting up an 'Italian Café', where they become engrossed in role play.

Children's self-esteem is promoted because their conversations and contributions are genuinely valued and they are encouraged to understand and respect each other. Children's home languages are truly valued, with both staff and children enthusiastically learning and actively using key words in a number of languages. Children who have additional learning and/or development needs are exceptionally well supported. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's needs are clearly documented, developing individual plans for each child to make sure that they are offered appropriate activities to extend their learning to the optimum.

Children's interests are truly valued and staff base the activity planning on these. For example, when children showed a particular interest in construction, staff provided numerous exciting resources to promote this, developing these further as the children incorporated artwork into their construction activities. Staff vigilance and their thoughtfulness means that children's opportunities are extended. For example, the innovative provision of additional resources inspired children to construct their own Roman Arch and make rain sticks.

Children are positively encouraged to explore and extend their knowledge. For example, they eagerly set up experiments to determine what conditions seeds need to grow and whether or not flowers take up water. The excellent use of local facilities means that children are gaining a comprehensive knowledge of their local community. They enjoy visits to the library, use the local shops to purchase fruit and vegetables for cooking activities and visit nearby museums and garden centres.

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?	1
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?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
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?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met