

Mace Montessori Schools Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY303942
Inspection date	29/07/2009
Inspector	Liz Corr
Setting address	Mace Montessori School, 38-42 Millman Street, London, WC1N 3EW
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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 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

Mace Montessori Nursery is one of four nurseries run by Mace Montessori Schools Limited. It was registered in 2005 and operates from a low rise building situated in a block of flats in WC1 area of the London Borough of Camden. Children have access to a large playroom and toilets. An enclosed outdoor play area is also available. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00. The nursery closes for a week at Christmas and bank holidays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 26 children in the early years range on roll, some in part-time places.

There are five members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery use the Montessori teaching method.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are well cared for by a consistent staff team who know the children well. Staff provide a sensitive approach which means children are settled and happy here. Children are able to easily access a good selection of Montessori play equipment which helps promote their independence skills. They are making good progress as staff provide activities to help children reach the early learning goals. Staff plan a curriculum which is Montessori based and focused on children's individual interests. Systems to evaluate the provision are in place and a number of improvements have been prioritised.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve safety by ensuring the entrance to the nursery is fully risk assessed
- continue to develop the organisation of record keeping on premises and the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance to record children's starting points, plan, monitor and assess their progress and fully develop partnership working
- ensure there are confidential systems in place for recording complaints

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

- ensure that procedures relating to new staff awaiting suitability checks are appropriately implemented (suitability of adults) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register)

27/08/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager has a positive attitude to evaluating the provision in order to maintain continuous improvement, although there are some minor weaknesses that have not been addressed. Several areas of improvement have been identified including, changes to the information they gather at the beginning of a child's placement and formal meetings with parents to share progress and continue children's learning at home. The manager has developed good support systems including, the local early years service. Consequently staff make good use of training opportunities and support to enhance their existing good practice.

Satisfactory systems are in place to safeguard children, staff have an appropriate knowledge of how to report child protection concerns to their manager. There are secure systems in place to ensure any concerns of abuse or neglect are reported to the appropriate agencies. Adequate vetting systems are in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. The management ensure that new staff provide records of their suitability from previous work places or colleges whilst new checks are undertaken. The setting's procedure for ensuring children are protected means that new staff are not left alone with children until new checks have been processed. On occasions this procedure is not fully implemented. However, risks to children are minimised due to the overall vetting procedures in place.

Regular risk assessments are carried out for the premises both inside and out. When outings are undertaken staff assess any risks in advance. A good proportion of staff are trained to administer first aid to children which promotes their well-being. An evacuation procedure is in place to help children learn how to keep safe in an emergency, however regular evacuations have not taken place this year. Children are generally well protected as the premises have a secure intercom entry system at the main entrance to the building. However, the systems for preventing unknown visitors accessing the nursery building were not totally robust on the day of the inspection, although the risks to children were minimised by staff monitoring of the entrance to the setting.

Good relationships have been developed with parents. Information is shared about their child's progress on a daily basis. A notice board and information booklet provides parents with details of how the setting is run. A complaints procedure is in place, however, it does not contain details of how to contact the regulator and confidential systems for recording complaints have not been established. There are good systems in place to ensure a daily record of children's attendance is maintained.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children enjoy their time here and are making good progress in all areas of their learning. Staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and provide a rich learning environment using the Montessori and EYFS frameworks. Children are developing a strong sense of independence as they

easily access play materials from low level storage units. They are encouraged to tidy away their play equipment and are therefore learning to respect their environment. Children's learning is supported by staff who are well deployed throughout the setting. Staff organise group opportunities well as they capture children's attention and encourage their learning. During discussions about the weather children are encouraged to think about their journey to nursery. Staff encourage their involvement as they recount details of their own journey and encourage them to think about the contrasting weather which is both warm and wet. Children enjoy opportunities for developing their language skills as they link sounds to letters in everyday activities. For instance, as they choose fruit at snack time, staff encourage them to sound out the first letter of the fruit. Older children confidently write their names and are able to recognise familiar words in the setting. They are gaining confidence in early maths as they take part in number recognition games and enjoy spontaneous opportunities to calculate at meal times as staff ask how many cups they will need for the two tables of children.

Staff are currently updating their systems for observing and assessing children's development. There are good systems in place to gather information for children's individual interests as staff observe them well. Their planning systems are flexible so that activities can be adapted to meet children's interests. Although the manager has identified that staff need to have regular non-contact time to plan and assess children's development, this has not been effectively implemented and consequently some records are taken home and are not easily accessible.

Children's well-being is effectively promoted as they learn to adopt a healthy life style. For example, they are provided with healthy meals and snacks and can easily access fresh drinking water when they need to. Children are learning that physical activity is good for them and understand that they feel hot because they were taking part in physical play outdoors. Children are learning the importance of washing their hands regularly and are able to easily access the low level sinks. However, they are not always able to access liquid soap to fully promote good hygiene. Children learn how to keep themselves and their environment safe as they confidently take responsibility for clearing away their play equipment and resources after use.

Children benefit from the secure settling-in procedure and settle well here. Staff are mindful that new children need time to adjust to the routine and provide a flexible approach which enables children to feel settled. Furthermore children are provided with a key person who works closely with them. Children receive regular praise for their achievements. If they display negative behaviour staff gently direct the children and promote their good behaviour with encouragement and support. Children are learning confidence and good self esteem as staff help them to understand their feelings. When other children ask why a child is upset staff provide clear explanations which helps foster a supportive and caring environment.

The setting is committed to providing an inclusive service and are in the process of updating their registration information to ensure children's individual needs are well recorded. The setting is aware of children's family backgrounds and cultures. Children whose first language is not English receive appropriate support at the setting. The setting had identified that they can provide further support by

acquiring key words in their first language. Children learn about the wider world as they celebrate a range of cultural festivals throughout the year.

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?	3

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?	3
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:

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report 27/08/2009

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report 27/08/2009