

# Mace Montessori School Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY335641
<b>Inspection date</b>	10/12/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Chris Banks
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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## 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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## Description of the setting

Mace Montessori School, located in the W6 area of the London Borough of Hammersmith was registered in 2006 and is one of four privately owned provisions. It operates from a detached, two storey building with a number of playrooms and a very small outdoor play area. Ravenscourt Park is within easy walking distance. The setting provides a service for 52 weeks of the year, excluding Public Holidays, between the hours of 8am and 6pm. A team of 21 staff work with the children, all of whom are qualified in Early Years. Two members of staff also hold Early Years Professional status. Care and learning is based on Montessori principles and those of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare register. It may care for a maximum of 70 children in the early years age group at any one time; of these, not more than 28 may be under 2 years, and of these, not more than 16 may be under 1 year at any one time. There are currently 65 children on roll. The setting receives funding for provision for free early years education and has support from local authority Early Years Advisors.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are secure and happy in the relaxed and welcoming setting. They are cared for by a well qualified and mostly experienced staff team who have formed some close, trusting relationships with children in their care. A balanced range of activities combined with an improved system for monitoring children's progress helps children make steady progress in their learning and development. An effective process of self evaluation combined with the setting of clear management improvement targets is promoting better overall outcomes for children.

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

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

- improve the overall quality of books for all age groups, ensuring they are age appropriate and made easily accessible to children
- further develop staff practice to ensure the next steps of all children are effectively planned
- positively involve older children in lunchtime routines to promote their co-operation and independence skills in serving themselves and others

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

The overall safety of children is positively protected because staff are highly secure in their knowledge of safeguarding issues and clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in child protection. They are familiar with the process for monitoring, recording and reporting concerns and have clear up-to-date written procedures to follow. Senior staff are well informed about the role of Ofsted. In line with new requirements, there is also a clear written procedure in the event of an allegation being directed against a member of staff. Staff are also strongly encouraged to monitor the practice of colleagues and report any concerns. Effective recruitment procedures, with careful checking of staff for their suitability to work with children, is an added safeguard. As a matter of good practice, all checks are renewed on a three yearly basis. New staff receive a thorough induction, are closely monitored during their probationary period and receive regular supervision.

Children's safety is further protected as arrangements for their arrival and departure are well managed. Suitably maintained records, mostly countersigned by parents also closely monitor children's attendance. Systems to ensure staff to child ratios are maintained at all times have improved since the last inspection.

Children are cared for in safe, secure surroundings. Playrooms are suitably organised in advance of children's arrival with sufficient clear floor space for each age group to explore in safety and relative comfort. Children benefit from the good overall safety awareness demonstrated by staff. Effective day to day practical precautions combined with a rigorous process for assessing risks across all areas helps ensure any potential safety risks are minimised and dealt with promptly. Other good routine safety procedures such as practising monthly fire drills with children also helps raise children's own safety awareness. Outings are carefully planned and children also learn about how to keep themselves safe by using good road safety practice. Children are well supervised as they practise their independence skills and are gently guided in the use of scissors, cutlery and other potentially harmful items of equipment.

The background and abilities of each child are well respected. Staff work closely with parents to ensure each child's individual needs are taken into good account when planning for their future care. An improved information gathering process with parents at the start of each placement now includes establishing what a child enjoys, already knows and can do. Parents' continuing involvement is encouraged. More experienced staff use good techniques to help ensure new children who speak English as an additional language are well integrated. Visual aids are effectively used as a communication tool and staff are beginning to learn about the language and customs of their new key children. Effective links with specialist outside agencies combined with ensuring staff are well trained in specific areas, helps ensure individual children are well supported should they require additional help of any kind. They are fully included in all activities and other children are strongly encouraged to be supportive and understanding towards those with differing abilities.

Partnerships with parents are good overall. A greatly improved system for observing and recording children's progress enables staff to more effectively share information about a child's learning and development. Some improvement is still needed, however, in planning for children's next steps as this is not effective in all cases. Staff continue to undergo in service training to improve practice in this area. Children's achievement portfolios are made readily accessible to parents and they are also kept informed about their child's care routines through the use of daily 'feedback' sheets. Parents' views are respected and valued. They take part in the nursery's evaluation process by completing satisfaction surveys which indicate they are mostly very pleased with the service provided for children. Their participation in nursery activities is encouraged. They attend annual concerts performed by children and open air 'fun' days, where they meet staff on a more informal basis.

Overall, children are provided with an adequate range of play and learning resources throughout the setting. Resources are displayed in low level storage units, enabling children to confidently select their own equipment and materials. Older children are very familiar with the practice of replacing equipment once an activity is completed and also co-operate well as they sing a 'tidy up song' before lunch.

Children are cared for by a well qualified and mostly experienced staff team. Recommendations arising from the last inspection have been positively addressed and some strong local leadership has seen other improvements in the way the setting is managed and organised. An effective process of self evaluation and the setting of realistic improvement targets is promoting better overall outcomes for children.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children attending the nursery benefit from the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere created by staff who know individual children very well. This helps children feel secure and valued and as a consequence they grow in confidence. Some warm, close relationships exist between children and their assigned key worker and as children move to new rooms, information is effectively shared between staff to make the transition as smooth as possible. Babies are well settled with their assigned worker and enjoy some warm companionable times with staff who support them well as they explore their comfortable, welcoming environment. Babies stare in amazement at mirrors, touching their own faces at those of their reflection and are also beginning to imitate gestures and actions during small intimate circle times.

Older children in other rooms enjoy a balanced range of planned and free play opportunities. They experiment with paints, dough and enjoy the properties of sand and water. They explore their own similarities and differences through self portraits which also helps build children's self esteem. Christian and non-Christian festivals are equally celebrated. The wishes of parents in relation to their children not taking part in particular activities are taken seriously. These are acted upon in

a way which does not make children feel excluded.

Older children confidently manipulate drawing, painting materials and printing blocks to create a varied range of colourful art work, displayed around the setting and also included in children's portfolios of achievements. They respect the needs of younger children who need to sleep and behave in a quiet considerate manner during this time. During the quieter periods, they freely explore the properties of specialist Montessori equipment and display good concentration during problem solving activities, during which they enjoy attentive support from staff. Better grouping of children based on individual abilities provide most children with more flexible learning opportunities where they can learn at their own pace.

Children greatly enjoy group times where child sized puppets are effectively used by staff to promote children's vocabulary and stimulate their imaginations. They excitedly respond to questions put by the puppet and show great affection towards their imaginary friend, giving her lots of hugs and kisses at the close of the activity. They are also enthusiastic contributors during an improvised story about an alligator and squeal with excitement as he attempts to catch them.

Activities to introduce children to new technology are provided on a planned basis. Toddlers learn about shape and colour using some good educational software and older children are learning keyboard skills during computerised interactive play. A poor quality and sometimes inaccessible range of books does not sufficiently promote reading as an activity. Many are in rather poor condition and are not age appropriate in some cases.

Children's independence and social skills are developing well. Older children use good manners, play co-operatively with other children and willingly share and take turns. Lunchtime is a mostly sociable occasion for children. They should, however, be more actively involved in the process by being encouraged to serve themselves and others. In this way, their independence skills will not only be enhanced but waiting time for food will be reduced. An earlier recommendation to ensure all children wash their hands before meals and snacks has been positively addressed.

Children's overall welfare and good health is suitably promoted. Detailed information is gathered and recorded at the start of each placement with clear indicators as to each child's individual needs. Any special requirements or allergies are well known by both staff and cooks who ensure children do not come into contact with any prohibited foods. A clear sickness policy helps ensure the risk of infection and spreading of contagious illnesses are minimised. An improved system for ensuring children's bed linen is kept clean has been put in place following the last inspection. A well managed system for administering medication combined with a carefully maintained record keeping system helps ensure medication is safely administered. Valid first aid certificates are held by most staff which means the nursery is well prepared in the event of any emergency. All records relating to children's overall health and welfare are well maintained.

Outdoor play and exercise forms an important part of each child's day at the nursery. Careful planning ensures all children enjoy some fresh air and exercise every day when they are accompanied to nearby Ravenscourt Park. Here they are

free to explore and also very much look forward to feeding ducks, collecting leaves and searching for squirrels. Planned premises improvements due to begin in early 2010, will see a roof garden installed at the main nursery enabling children to enjoy extended periods of outdoor play. In line with earlier recommendations, there are now improved opportunities for children to engage in physical activity at the nursery itself. A music and movement tutor attends twice weekly with children in each room benefiting.

Children enjoy reasonably healthy meals and snacks, hygienically prepared on the premises. These normally include fresh vegetables and fruit. Menus are prominently displayed throughout the setting and parents are invited to be involved in the planning of menus.



## 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*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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## **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