



Lavendale Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	147571
Inspection date	03 October 2005
Inspector	Maggie Thorp / Anne Bernadette Maher
Setting Address	Woodside Park Club, Southover, Woodside Park, London, N12 7JE
Telephone number	8343 9375
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Registered person	Lavendale Montessori Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lavendale Montessori is a privately owned pre-school which was registered in 1996. It operates from the hall and grounds of Woodside Park Club and the pre-school have sole use of the hall, kitchen, ladies toilets and an enclosed children's play area outdoors during their opening hours. The preschool serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to provide sessional care for 34 children aged 2 to 5 years of age. They are not registered for overnight care. There are currently 32

children the roll. This includes 15 funded 3 year olds and 1 funded 4 year old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Some children attend just during term time and some during school holidays as well. Children with special needs attend and there are some children who speak English as an additional language at the nursery. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:00 to 12:00 Monday to Friday.

There are four full-time and two part time staff who work with the children. The staff have appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's wellbeing is sufficiently protected by the policies and procedures that are in place and carried out by staff. They carefully record any medication given and obtain consent for emergency medical treatment from parents. A good level of staff have first aid qualifications and parents are kept well informed of any accidents. Opportunities for children to catch infections are reduced by good hygiene practices and by parents being asked to keep children with infections at home. Children are learning to keep healthy, they wash their hands after playing in the garden and using the toilet, many without prompting, and older children wipe their own noses and put the tissues in the bin.

Children enjoy fresh air and exercise during good weather in the large grassy outdoor play space, but staff have not fully explored with parents the benefits of this and how children can be better equipped to enjoy outdoor play when the ground is wet. Older children enjoy using the large outdoor play equipment and are developing skills in balancing, climbing and ball skills, however, they only have a short time each day for these activities and plans for how to challenge and extend children's large physical skills are not in place.

Children have healthy snacks but have little choice, and snack time does not foster children's independence. Children with allergies do not come into contact with those foods they are allergic to but are unable to mix with other children at snack time. Rather than staff sitting with children at snack time supervising what they eat, they sit at a special table, apart from the other children. Drinking water is available but not for children to help themselves to throughout the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made to feel welcome by staff, the environment is secure and adequately resourced. Children cannot leave the premises unsupervised, doors out of the premises are kept locked and visitors have to ring the bell to gain admittance. Children playing outside are carefully supervised too. Children enjoy playing in the

spacious hall and can access the facilities for toileting easily. Although the toilets and wash basins are adult sized, staff have made them accessible to children through the use of little step ups. Children play safely with the equipment and furniture, which is in good condition and suitable for the ages of children attending. However, each area is not planned and resourced to make it really attractive and to maximise the potential for children's learning.

Children play in safety because the premises are carefully checked each day, good systems are in place for fire safety and the nursery's procedures for children's arrival and departure are safe, ensuring children are only handed over to those people that parents have given their consent for.

Children are safeguarded from abuse or neglect by the adequate knowledge of staff of what to do if they have concerns about a child. The manager and administrator have received child protection training, there is a quick reference guide on the wall that can be consulted and staff are aware of the indicators of possible abuse. However, parents are not fully informed about the nursery's responsibility regarding reporting concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children engage in some interesting activities; for example, painting with sponges, listening to stories and building with construction bricks, and using them as pretend cooking materials in the play oven. However, some new children find it hard to settle to activities and some areas are not resourced sufficiently well to support younger children in sharing and co-operating so children get cross with each other.

The two year olds are learning to communicate in a variety of ways, and staff encourage this effectively. Children learn new words as staff name objects and colours and describe what children are doing as they play. Children for whom English is an additional language are supported well. Staff use gestures as well as words and other children who are more experienced English speakers, but with the same first language, help. However, sometimes younger children do not have enough support to help them gain the most from what is offered because monitoring and evaluation of how an activity is organised and the role staff take is weak.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress in some but not all aspects of each learning area. This is because plans and records of children's progress do not ensure all aspects of each area are covered and although some next steps for learning are identified how this will be achieved is not included in activity plans. Children gain a lot from some small group times, which are well organised when staff skilfully draw children in and help them learn. However, others are less well planned and do not extend children's learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Most of the children are happy and settled. They can sit and listen during circle time and small group work

and are confident in telling their news. Quieter less confident children's self-confidence is being encouraged by staff. Children are generally well behaved. Children are spoken to gently, with respect and they respond to directions well. They are building friendships with one another. Some children spend considerable time together, playing together, discussing what they have been doing and what they should play with next.

Children are developing their communication, language and literacy skills as they listen and discuss at some story times. During a well read story children got very involved with a discussion about animals and their habits and what nocturnal animals do. Some children are able to recognise and name letters, they know the initial sounds of words and can write their names. However, children are not challenged by the language worksheets they complete or helped to understand how writing is used for real purposes, for example by making shopping lists or labelling pictures.

Children are exploring numbers, and some children count confidently to ten and above, they are beginning to write numbers and know the names of many two dimensional shapes. The main method of teaching is through worksheets so children have few opportunities to solve problems and measure, or to explore and investigate natural materials and how things work as part of projects or every day activities like snack time or cooking. Children are developing an understanding of time and place through discussion of past events and future plans for example, children talk about when they will be moving to school or having birthdays. They find out about living things through nature walks.

Children enjoy pretend play, they bake in the home corner, construct railways for their trains and create jungle scenes for wild animals from the imaginary play sets provided. They are able to hear the rhythm of songs and use instruments to play in time as they sing. Children have less opportunity to develop their creativity with art materials and to develop dexterity. Children use pens and paintbrushes confidently and are learning to use scissors but there is little other more challenging equipment for them to master. They have few accessible resources to enable them to explore colour and texture, to make models with a variety of materials or to experiment with using different art techniques.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are developing confidence and self-esteem through the good relationships they have with the staff. However, new children struggle to establish secure relationships with staff as their special person is not allocated until sometime after the child starts. Children are generally well behaved and can work co-operatively in small groups, and take turns, as staff manage their behaviour appropriately, and children receive plenty of praise. But they do get irritable during waiting times for example, at home time and when they have insufficient resources to be able to share.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered adequately. Children enjoy music and stories and have times to reflect on these. Staff help

children to express their feelings and children are encouraged to help each other. Children's individual needs are met generally well within the setting, however, children's independence and self-help skills are not fostered effectively through the organisation of certain times of day and the limited choice and accessibility of resources in each area of the nursery. Children with special needs benefit from the good liaison between staff, parents and other agencies but are not always helped to join in effectively. Children are learning about the world they live in and the beliefs of other people.

Children benefit from the satisfactory partnership with parents. Children's progress reports are shared with parents when they leave and discussed with parents during the time children attend. The parent booklet helps parents understand the setting and generally what children learn. Parents are not able to be involved in their children's learning easily because little information is displayed or given to parents about the things children are learning about each week and children are handed over in the corridor so parents spend little time in the room seeing what children have done. Parents are not well informed about Ofsted's role in regard to complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and education is fostered satisfactorily by the organisation, leadership and management of the nursery. Appropriate systems are in place for recruiting staff and ensuring unchecked staff are not left unsupervised with children. However, delays in getting new staff checked and ensuring they have filled in forms properly are not followed up quickly. This results in staff being restricted in the amount of support they can offer children on occasions. Children enjoy the good staff child ratios.

Most children are confident and happy at the nursery, they enjoy good relationships with their key workers but the allocation key workers is not organised early enough to help new children quickly feel secure. Staff know children well and encourage children's self-esteem helped by the comprehensive information obtained from parents about each child. However, the organisation of snack times and the end of the day does not promote children's good behaviour and independence.

The manager has an adequate understanding of the foundation stage guidance. The systems for monitoring and evaluating what is provided does not ensure children enjoy stimulating learning experiences across all learning areas and aspects of the setting. The quality of teaching and learning is continually developing. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

The nursery has made only limited progress in addressing the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection both in the areas of care and education.

Children's well being is safeguarded better by the improvement in ensuring practice

reflects policies more accurately, staff are encouraged to read and understand these as part of their induction. Although there are still a few anomalies, for example, children's access to drinking water. The outdoor play area is more secure through the new fencing and children are well supervised to prevent them from going through a gap that is to be repaired.

Snack time has not improved so children's independence is not fostered. Children enjoy using the fixed equipment and ball games in the garden and the apparatus indoors but opportunities to encourage children's physical skills are still limited. Resources to support children's knowledge and understanding of information technology has not been developed. Children all have progress reports written about them and these cover all the learning areas, but each aspect of these areas and the next steps in learning are not identified for each area and fed into the activity plans to help children make progress in all aspects.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Develop more ways of building a partnership with parents, of involving them and keeping them informed about children's learning and development and ensuring they know of Ofsted's role regarding complaints.
- Make the settling in procedure and allocation of key workers more effective in helping children feel secure in their early days at the nursery.
- Make snack time a rich learning and social occasion that all children can enjoy together and where children have a variety of healthy snacks, and ensure drinking water is easily available.
- Improve staff checking systems.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Put in place a more robust method of evaluating and developing the quality of teaching and learning, how attractive and stimulating the provision is and how able children are to access this and make progress in all aspects of each of the six areas of learning .
- Provide more resources and planned activities to develop children's creative skills and experience, and for children to explore and experiment with a variety of tools and resources.
- Improve the opportunities children have to participate in interesting projects and practical experiences that encourage children to use numbers for a reason, to ask questions and to investigate a range of materials and environments.

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