



The Four Seasons Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY152665
Inspection date	30 September 2005
Inspector	Kay Williams
Setting Address	Mill Hill Park Pavillion, off Wise Lane, London, NW7 2BD
Telephone number	0208 201 1199
E-mail	
Registered person	The Four Seasons Montessori
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Four Seasons Montessori opened in 2002 and is one of two nurseries owned by the proprietor. It operates from two rooms within a pavilion building. The pavilion is situated within the grounds of Mill Hill public park, within the London borough of Barnet. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:15 until 12:00 and until 15:20 on Tuesdays. Sessions run during term time only. The children have supervised access to an

enclosed outdoor public play area.

There are currently eight children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these five receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The children come from the local and wider catchment areas. The setting supports a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs two staff. The acting manager holds an appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The setting follows the Montessori method of teaching.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean, hygienic environment which is both warm and welcoming. They are effectively learning the importance of good personal hygiene. They have a clear understanding of why they must wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. The children follow simple instructions from informative posters regarding the hygienic use and disposal of tissues, this further enhances their understanding of good hygiene practices. Children's health and wellbeing is further protected as all staff hold a current first aid qualification and know how to respond in an emergency situation. They know the correct procedure for administering and recording medication and recording accidents. Children are protected from infection as staff are able to judge when a child is well enough to attend the setting or not, giving appropriate consideration for children's individual health needs and the need to minimise the risk of cross infection.

Children enjoy a healthy mid-morning snack. They are encouraged to bring fresh fruit to share, this supports the settings commitment to healthy eating. Children who bring packed lunch must follow the settings policy on healthy eating and only bring food which is nutritious and healthy. Children's individual dietary needs are understood by all staff and they are trained in matters of food hygiene.

Children enjoy daily fresh air and exercise. Although they have no direct access to outdoor play space, they are taken to the public park and play area, where they can run, climb and enjoy the open space and fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are greeted warmly by the staff. They clearly feel safe and secure within the warm and welcoming environment that is provided for them. The premises are set out with children in mind. The rooms are clean and the large windows give good amounts of natural light. The walls are attractively displayed with posters and children's work. Children benefit from the way in which staff make good use of the space. They are

able to move about freely and choose where they wish to play.

Children are kept safe as effective systems for addressing safety issues are in place. Staff effectively monitor all visitors to the setting. They conduct regular checks to ensure that the children can enjoy an environment and equipment that is well maintained. In addition, staff rigorously check the safety of the outdoor area prior to the children using it as this is a public area. Children are effectively supervised as correct ratios are maintained and staff are effectively deployed.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect as staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibility with regard to child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. The stimulating learning environment means that they spend their time purposefully. Although staff have yet to implement the Birth to Three Matters framework their knowledge of the needs of children under three is good. As a result children are developing well and are effectively progressing towards the foundation stage curriculum as they qualify for nursery education funding. Funded children are developing well and are making good progress in all areas of the curriculum overall, although there is a weakness within the programme for creative development. All children learn at their own pace and enjoy good periods of uninterrupted free play where they can practise and consolidate their learning.

The 2 to 3-year olds are developing their confidence and self esteem very well. Staff are calm and gently spoken and the children communicate with them very easily. Children are settling into the group with ease.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the early learning goals and link this effectively with the Montessori method of early education. Staff make effective use of the daily routine allowing children time to select their own activities, children in turn are interested and enthusiastic about their selection. Staff then interact with the children, skilfully questioning their learning in order to progress their thoughts and knowledge. Staff have effective systems of child observation in place, consequently they know the children very well. They link what they know about the children directly with the curriculum planning and therefore move children forward with their learning.

Children are confident and independent. They are very well behaved. Relationships are good. Children are able to take turns and share fairly, waiting appropriately for their turn to suggest a song for the music teacher to play. Children part happily from their parent's and settle quickly into the familiar routine of the setting. They spend their time meaningfully and are motivated, enthusiastic learners.

Children are confident speakers. Staff value their ideas and children are used to

speaking in small groups. They appreciate a range of other languages and sing songs in French and Chinese as well as English. They listen attentively at story time and make good use of books independently. Staff effectively teach children the sounds that letters make and children write for a variety of purposes. Older children are able to write recognisable letters

Children benefit from good individual support which teaches them to count, read and write numbers with increasing understanding. Children use numbers with confidence and older children can write recognisable numbers and can problem solve complex addition. They are able to sequence effectively and know how to use mathematical language to describe shape, size, measurement and quantity. Children can compare with skill, describing the difference between a hexagon and an octagon.

Children learn about their own culture and those of others. They learn to care for living things as they tend and water the indoor plants. Staff make good use of the settings park location and take the children on regular nature walks so they can observe change and difference, especially seasonal and environmental change. They use the cassette recorders, a telephone and a computer to support the development of their information technology skills.

Fine motor skills are developing well. Children use dough, scissors, tweezers and threading beads with increasing control. Staff make good use of the outdoor play area to ensure that children have regular opportunities to learn to run, jump and climb. Good resources support children's development of skills such as throwing, catching and balancing. Children demonstrate a good sense of space, carefully negotiating the position of their chair when creating a semi-circle for the music session.

Music is a strong feature of the curriculum, children delight in weekly sessions. They are provided with opportunity to make their own music too. Children use their imagination during planned movement to the music session. The children are able to be creative with their own art work while using the painting easel. However, many of the other art activities are over adult directed and the children are not permitted to express their own creativity freely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are effectively valued as individuals. Staff know the children well and enjoy their company. Children who have recently joined the setting have settled well. They have developed positive relationships with the staff and are keen to talk with them and ask questions. The children are beautifully behaved and play well with each other. Children are learning about the world they live in while visiting the local bowls club to participate in a charity event in aid of people suffering from cancer. They are developing an appreciation of their own culture and those of others as throughout the year they celebrate a variety of different festivals. Children play with a range of resources which portray positive images of social and cultural diversity, including books and puzzles. Both boys and girls are treated with equal concern. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered

Staff have appropriate systems in place to integrate children with special educational needs. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator has good working links with the local authority and has experience of caring for children with special needs. Staff have attended training and understand their role in promoting the integration of all children.

The partnerships with parents is good. Children benefit from good relationships between staff and parents, as information is shared regularly so the children's individual needs are effectively met. Staff share records of children's development with parents to keep them informed of their children's progress. Notice boards and news letters keep them informed of the learning that staff plan for the children. This also supports parents in extending their child's learning at home. They are actively encouraged to spend time in the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The setting is well organised and good communication means that routines and practice flow smoothly. Regular staff meetings, effective induction procedures and curriculum planning sessions effectively support effective team work. Children benefit as staff regularly update their knowledge of child care and education and are soon to attend training on Birth to Three Matters. Despite recent staff changes the team have continued to work well together in order to offer children an interesting and stimulating curriculum. Although Ofsted has not been notified of these changes.

Children spend their time effectively engaging in a good range of activities. Daily routines flow smoothly and routines are well organised to allow children to play and learn without interruption.

Policies and procedures are well documented and cover all of the legal requirements in appropriate detail. Children's developmental assessments are well documented and shared with parent's. They link effectively with the curriculum planning. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the setting was asked to improve several policies, procedures and practice issues. Children now benefit from good improvements in practice and enhanced policies and procedures support this. Safety issues have been effectively addressed, the first aid box is appropriately stocked and all visitors are recorded. Staff knowledge of child protection is good, policies and procedures are known to parents and risk assessments cover the use of the outdoor play area. Children enjoy serving food and drink at snack time and are learning to appreciate cultural diversity.

Opportunities for children to develop their own individual creative art work continues to require further development.

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):

- ensure to notify Ofsted of all significant changes.

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):

- provide children with more opportunities to express their own individual creativity during art activities and offer less adult direction during such activities.

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