

Snowflakes Day Nursery & Montessori Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	05/05/2010
Inspector	Christine Bonnett
Setting address	Grand Union Village, 8 Higham Mews, NORTHOLT, Middlesex, UB5 6FP
Telephone number	02088 458998
Email	snowflakes_100@hotmail.com
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Snowflakes Day Nursery & Montessori Ltd is one of two nurseries run by Snowflakes Day Nursery & Montessori Ltd. It opened in 2007 and operates from a purpose built building in Northolt, in the London borough of Ealing.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 72 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. There are currently 82 children aged from three months to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four, and follows some aspects of the Montessori teaching ethos. The nursery currently supports a number of who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 18 staff working directly with the children, of whom 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are valued as unique individuals within a clean and safe environment. Effective engagements with parents ensure the needs of all the children are known and met appropriately. Children make good progress in their learning and development because staff are knowledgeable about the welfare and learning requirements of the Early Years Foundations Stage, and apply them consistently and effectively in their practice. The manager/provider is fully committed to the continuous development of the nursery to enhance outcomes for all children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide different arrangements of toys and soft play materials in 'lilac room' to encourage crawling, tumbling, rolling and climbing
- ensure garden equipment offers challenges to all children at different levels of development to increase their confidence and enjoyment
- ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in emergency evacuation drills to enable them to become familiar with the process in order to help keep themselves safe.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager/provider and her staff have in-depth understanding of safeguarding issues. They know the indicators of child abuse and the reporting procedures, should they have concerns. Recruitment procedures are robust. All adults working on the premises are vetted appropriately before they have any unsupervised

contact with the children. In addition, the manager/provider is aware of her duty to refer people who she believes are unsuitable to work with children to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. All the necessary records and documentation required for the efficient management of the setting and the well-being of the children is maintained. Detailed risk assessments are conducted on every aspect of the premises to identify and address any potential hazards to children. Security of the premises is good. Effective systems are in place to prevent children leaving unsupervised, and intruders entering. All staff have relevant first aid certificates to further safeguard the children's welfare.

The manager/provider has a clear vision of how she wishes to further develop the existing good practice of the nursery. She regularly consults with staff and parents to ensure that everyone with an interest in the sustainability of the nursery has their voice heard. The manager/provider is highly effective at communicating her expectations to the staff, and consequently, staff share her enthusiasm and channel their efforts to good effect. The appraisal system is used to identify training needs for staff to support their professional development. One of the areas highlighted by the manager/provider to enhance is the outdoor area. The aim is to provide an 'all-weather' area to promote its use and to provide a richer learning environment for children throughout the year.

All three of the rooms are conducive to children's learning as they are clean, spacious and well resourced. Children have ample space to fully explore the play materials in comfort and safety. The play materials are of good quality and deployed well by staff to support the children's learning. The layout of the building enables a free-flow play system to be adopted. This allows the older children to choose to play indoors or out. The garden area is also well resourced and used as an extension to the rooms. As well as items to promote physical play, it has a book corner, planting/growing area and mark-making facilities. These are well used and enjoyed by the children. The 'lilac room', used by the youngest children is a designated 'no shoe' area, this means that the carpet is kept very clean to enable babies to crawl and lay on the floor with no obvious risk to their health. Although the available floor space enables children to move around freely, it lacks equipment to encourage crawling, tumbling, rolling and climbing to further assist their physical development.

Equality and diversity are well promoted at the nursery. Both children and staff come from a rich variety of cultural backgrounds, which means that children have plenty of opportunities to begin to learn about wider society. Festivals and traditions from many faiths are acknowledged, and staff act as positive role models for the children. Children with additional needs are fully included in the life of the nursery, and staff work closely with other agencies to ensure they receive the support they need.

Positive relationships with parents are well established to ensure that the needs of all the children are known and met appropriately and consistently. Parents and carers interviewed as part of the inspection process stated that there is an effective two-way flow of relevant information between themselves and their child's key worker in relation to the developmental progress of their child and their well-being. Parent questionnaires are circulated regularly as part of the self-

evaluation of the nursery, and where possible, emails are used to disseminate all topical messages to keep parents in-touch. All parents are welcome to attend 'Open forums', these are run by the manager/provider to enable parents to learn about the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the system used to observe and monitor the progress of the children. Comment forms completed by parents following a forum state how useful and informative the event had been in increasing their understanding of the work done by the nursery. In addition, the parent committee is used effectively to resolve potential difficulties between the nursery and parents.

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

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as the staff have good knowledge and understanding of the six areas of learning and how to implement them effectively in their practice. The comprehensive system used to record and assess observations focuses on the individual needs of each child. It also clearly shows how the next steps in their unique learning journey is identified and incorporated into the play plans. Staff understand how children learn and consequently provide fun and stimulating play experiences and activities for them to enjoy. These include cooking, making play dough, constructing houses from boxes and using natural resources in their play, such as leaves and shells. Children learn about the solar system, and answer question with enthusiasm about which planet has rings, and which is the smallest. Children are motivated to learn and radiate positive energy and enthusiasm as they engage actively in their play.

Children learn vital skills for the future. They have plenty of opportunity to develop pre-writing skills, and some are able to form letters and write their name. Staff use phonics to breakdown words into sounds, and the children enjoy reciting the associated rhymes to reinforce the sounds the letters make, such as 'flies are flying'. Books are readily available for children to access in all of the rooms to help them develop pleasure in reading. Counting is incorporated in the daily routine, such as counting the number of children as they go into the garden, as well as through using appropriate resources. Older children have access for most of the day to computers. This enables them to develop the necessary co-ordination to operate simple programs and to learn the purposes of information and communication technology. Children play well together and learn the importance of respecting others as they share and take turns.

The nursery encourages children to adopt healthy lifestyles. They have plenty of opportunity for physical play outdoors. Each morning, the older children enjoy an organised physical exercise session in the garden. They have great fun jumping around and running. Although some low-level apparatus is available for climbing and sliding, it does not offer challenge to more physically developed children to increase their confidence and enjoyment of physical activities. Children also go out for walks along the canal, or collect leaves for nature projects. Effective procedures are implemented for outings to protect the children from harm. Healthy and nutritious meals are cooked on the premises. Account is taken of individual dietary needs. The kitchen has a 'five star' rating for food hygiene standards. Staff talk to

the children about which foods are good for them, and which to avoid. The menu includes couscous, tuna curry, fresh fruit and water to drink. The older children's independence is promoted as they skilfully serve themselves at meal times.

Children begin to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They practise how and where to cross roads safely on outings, and how to use knives and scissors without harming themselves or others. Although emergency evacuation drills are conducted, they are not held sufficiently frequently to ensure all the children, including those who attend part-time, have the opportunity to become familiar with the process so that they are fully aware of what is expected of them, should an emergency arise.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery as they form close relationships with the staff. Older children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure as they move around from activity to activity with confidence and enjoy warm interaction with the staff. Younger children also benefit from the care and kindness shown by staff and happily snuggle up to them for cuddles.

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

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
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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