



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY102531

DfES Number: 532405

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	13/07/2004
Inspector Name	Rebecca Elizabeth Khabbazi

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	The Ark Day Nursery
Setting Address	37 County Road Thornton Heath Surrey CR7 8HN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Almas Iqbal
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ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

The Ark Montessori Nursery opened December 2001. The nursery operates from a large hall within a sports club in a residential area of Thornton Heath. It serves the local community.

There are currently 38 children from 2 years to 5 years old on roll, including a total of 32 funded 3 and 4 year olds. The setting supports children who have special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language. Children can attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is open five days a week. Sessions are from 09:00 to 15:00 during term time. Eight full time staff work with the children and all have an early years qualification.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The Ark specialises in Montessori teaching methods.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The Ark Montessori Nursery provides good quality nursery education that helps children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have caring relationships with children which supports their overall good progress. They have a good understanding of how children learn and the expected goals for their development. They encourage conversations, listen to what children have to say and ask questions that make children think. Staff plan an interesting range of activities for children that cover all areas of learning, and know what children are expected to learn from them. However, activities in some areas, especially creative and physical development, sometimes lack sufficient variety. Planned focus and free play activities are presented in a lively and enthusiastic manner and children enjoy taking part. Larger group activities are less effective in maintaining the interest of all children.

Staff know children well and regularly make observations and keep records of their progress. However, their assessments are not yet used to identify next steps for children's learning and plan activities that build on what children know and can do. Consequently, some activities lack challenge for older and more able children.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work together well as a team. There is good support for staff to develop their knowledge through professional training, but staff have not yet attended training in the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is a good commitment to development and improvement of the provision.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents find staff friendly and approachable. They are provided with termly written reports about their child's progress in relation to the expected goals for children's learning. However, the information provided about routines and activities on a day to day basis is more limited.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident and sociable. They work well together in small groups and show good concentration when completing tasks.
- There is very good support for children with English as an additional language. Staff are all bi-lingual which aids communication with both children and parents. Signs and labels around the room are produced in different languages as appropriate. French and Arabic teachers also provide extra support.
- Staff create a calm and consistent atmosphere in the nursery where good

behaviour is encouraged.

- Children's good progress in their mathematical development is supported by a wide variety of practical experiences, such as fitting pieces together to make mosaics, using circle and star shaped cutters with the playdough, filling different size containers with sand, or using 3-dimensional shapes to play a memory game.
- Children receive good support to develop independence and do things for themselves. Materials are organised so that they are accessible to the children, and they take responsibility for tidying their things away.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of large group times, so that all children are interested and involved
- the use of assessments to identify next steps for children, so that activities can be planned that offer older and more able children sufficient challenge
- the variety of outdoor physical play activities and opportunities for children to practise climbing and balancing skills
- the opportunities for children to develop their imagination by using a variety of role play materials
- the opportunities for children to design and make things according to their own ideas

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable. This is the nursery's first inspection of the provision for funded children.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children develop confidence and show increasing independence, for example, when pouring their own drinks, using the bathroom and helping tidy activities away. Children are learning to share, take turns, be polite and show consideration towards others. They are encouraged to persist with difficult tasks, and they show good levels of concentration when working in small groups. Larger group activities do not always maintain the interest of all the children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are eager to communicate with each other and staff, and use language confidently to share their news and experiences and talk about what they intend to do. They are encouraged to listen to the sounds that letters make. Children listen to stories and enjoy sharing books with staff. They use books independently in the book corner. Older and more able children can write and read simple words, but opportunities to extend and build on their learning are not always fully exploited.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have very good practical opportunities to develop their understanding of shape, size and pattern using a range of Montessori materials. Children recognise shapes and some children can name 3D shapes, such as a cube or a sphere. Children count confidently and recognise numerals beyond 10. Older children are encouraged to compare numbers and see how many there are altogether. Opportunities are missed to develop this knowledge through meaningful everyday activities such as role play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children talk about their lives and families when sharing their weekend news. They show an interest in the lives of others. They find out about features of the natural world and explore patterns and change through well planned topic work. For example, finding out about the life cycle of a butterfly, watching beans grow in a glass jar, or making a height chart for all the children in nursery. There are not enough opportunities to use a range of tools and materials to design and make things.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are taught to handle and control a variety of small objects. They squeeze pegs onto the line, use glue spreaders and scissors to make pictures, manipulate small beads to fit onto a peg board, and pour water carefully from container to container. Children recognise when they feel hungry, tired or cold. They play outdoors in the garden every day but opportunities to practise a wide variety of skills, including climbing and balancing, are not fully developed.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children explore colour and texture using a range of media and materials, for example when using playdough, playing with the sand or making collages. They enjoy singing and know the words to familiar songs from memory. They enjoy planned craft activities, but opportunities for children to freely use creative materials to express their own ideas are not fully developed. Children use their imagination when playing with the dolls house, but role play activities lack variety.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Develop the use of assessments to identify next steps for children's development. Use the information gained to plan activities that will challenge and extend children's learning, especially older and more able children.
- Evaluate the organisation of large group activities in order to make sure that all children are interested and involved.
- Extend activity planning in order to provide: 1) more encouragement for children to develop their imagination through varied role play activities; 2) more varied outdoor play experiences, including opportunities to practise climbing and balancing skills; and 3) more opportunities to design and make things with a range of tools and materials.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.