

Cherry Tree Montessori Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Pamela Bailey

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Type of setting 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*.

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Description of the setting

Cherry Tree Montessori Playgroup is run by an individual provider. It opened in 1996 and operates from two rooms in a converted house. Children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is situated in East Dulwich residential area within the London Borough of Southwark. It is open each weekday from 8:00am to 6:00pm all year round, with the exception of bank holidays.

This provision is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 19 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 24 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part time places. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 3. One member of staff has recently received Early Years Professional Status. The setting operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds?.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Staff are experienced and have a developing awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall, children are settled and making steady progress in their learning and development. There are some appropriate measures in place to ensure children's safety and promote their health. Well established relationships with parents/carers and effective links with other agencies ensure that the individual needs of children are met well. Systems to evaluate practice are effective in supporting the management and staff to improve outcomes for children. There is a suitable awareness of where weakness in the provision exists and a commitment to take improvement plans forward.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- provide children with appropriate support and opportunities to help them develop their communication, language and literacy skills by using observation and assessments to identify children's interests and achievements so that children are able to make the best possible progress from birth towards the early learning goals (The assessment arrangements)

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- conduct a risk assessment that identifies aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis and maintain a record of these particular aspects and when and by whom it was carried out. Regularly review the risk assessment, at least once a year (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).

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

- provide regular opportunities for staff and children to practice the emergency evacuation procedures so that they become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency
- improve fire safety by ensuring that all fire control equipment is regularly maintained
- assess the risks to children in relation to the unguarded radiators and pipes and take action to minimise these
- improve the arrangements for recording accidents to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are well informed about their role and responsibility in safeguarding children and there are clear procedures to follow in line with requirements. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensures that staff working with children is suitable to do so. Staff have taken reasonable steps to manage and eliminate some risks to children. However, the radiators and pipes are hot to touch and easily accessible to the children. This poses an element of risk to children's safety. Records of risk assessments do not include all the information as stated in the specific requirements. For example, these do not identify aspects of the environment that need to check on a regular basis, include information on who conducted it, date of review or any action taken following a review or incident. There are clearly defined procedures in place for emergency evacuation of the building. However, regular evacuation drills are not carried out. As a result, staff are not fully aware of the procedures, such as the designated meeting point. Furthermore, some of the fire control equipment, such as, extinguishers is not regularly maintained. There are adequate procedures in place to ensure children's health is maintained and prevent the spread of infection in most areas. Sufficient staff holds a current first aid certificate. This ensures that staff can act in the children's best interest in the event of an accident. All required documentation is in place; however, the recording of accidents does not ensure confidentiality is maintained.

Self-evaluation involves parents' and staff. There is a commitment to improve the quality of service to children and families with an open acknowledgement and willingness to address identified weaknesses. Managers communicate ambition and drive and have been successful in making improvements. For example, the setting has received funding from the Graduate Leadership Reward Scheme. They have

purchased a range of information technology equipment for the children and staff. Staff have had training on how to use the equipment so that can support children in this area of learning. The outdoor area had been refurbished with new impact absorbing surfaces, climbing equipment and soft play mats for babies. Regular training needs analysis has enabled some staff to achieve an appropriate early years qualification and others to work towards a higher professional qualification or degree in Early Childhood Studies.

The setting has effectively established relationships with parents ensuring each child's needs are met. Staff seeks the views and suggestions of parent's through parent partnership meetings and ensure that these are used to make decisions about the provision. Parents are involved in reviewing policies and there is a parent coordinator representative for the setting. The setting helps parents to support their children's learning in different ways. For example, parents of children who speak English as an additional language are encouraged to take part in activities, such as, singing and stories using their home language to help children settle, whilst staff learn key words in the child's home language. There are clear and accessible channels for parents and staff to communicate. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child during the settling-in period and the regular use of home/school dairies and termly review meetings keeps parents inform of their children's progress. Although there are no children attending the setting with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there are effective systems in place to ensure that staff are able to liaise with external agencies or services to ensure that a child gets the support he or she needs.

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

Staff use a reasonable range of teaching methods, identify children's achievements and interests through regular observations and use these to plan for each child. However, assessments are not sufficiently evaluated against the six areas of learning in order to show a clear picture of progress or provide a secure basis on which to plan for children's next steps in learning as they progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, older and more able children learning and development is not always sufficiently supported or challenged enough in particular areas, such as, aspects of communication, language and literacy.

Baby's early communication skills are supported extremely well by staff. Older children engage easily in conversations with adults and each other, and confidently introduce themselves to visitors. They show an interest in things around them, express their ideas and experiences well, using good vocabulary. However, staff do not always question children appropriately to help them organise their thoughts and extend their ideas, feelings and events. Children understand that print carries meaning. They have opportunities to recognise their names on place mats. Children are developing their pre-writing when taking part in mark making and creative activities. However, this is not extended within the play environment to increase their awareness of the different purposes of writing.

Babies receive lots of warmth and affection. This supports their emotional well-being and gives them the confidence to explore new experiences. Children's self-esteem is built upon by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well. They behave well, learn to share and take turns, and are polite and considerate to others. Children are encouraged to be independent as they choose between activities, help serve meals and take care of their personal needs, such as, washing their hands after using the toilet. However, children do not learn the importance of washing hands at other times to prevent the spread of infection. For example, before eating. Children are developing a sense of how to stay safe. They take responsibility for putting away activities after use; however, have little opportunity regularly practise emergency evacuation so that they become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. The outdoor area is safe for children to enjoy fresh air and play with a variety of equipment that is suitable for their ages and needs, and help to develop their physical skills.

Children benefit from good support to help them count, problem solve, recognise shapes, colours and sizes when taking part in activities such as, singing number rhymes and stories, and when playing with programmable resources, puzzles and construction. Children make models using recycled materials and are confident in using information and communication technology. They demonstrate good mouse control when using the computer. Children learn about themselves and the world around them through planned celebrations and themed topic work, such as, 'all about me'. Trips in the local community and further a field are used well to stimulate children's interest in the natural world. They observe plants and mini beasts. Babies respond with all their senses to many experiences. They experiment with sounds by pressing buttons, pulling levers or shaking musical instruments, touching a range of contrasting textures, listening intently to stories and observing the puppets used as props.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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