

Little Tree Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Little Tree Montessori Nursery opened in 1991. The provision is owned by a private individual and located in Crouch End, in the London borough of Haringey. They operate from three playrooms in premises that are attached to a church and community centre. The areas also used include the kitchen, toilets and an enclosed rear garden. The nursery serves the local community, with a number of children attending from neighbouring boroughs. The nursery operates during term time. Morning and afternoon sessions are from 9am to 12pm, and 12:30pm to 3:30pm. Full day care is between the hours of 9am to 3:30pm.

There are currently 56 children on roll. The children attend a variety of sessions each week.

The nursery employs eight staff, of these seven staff hold Montessori teaching qualifications in addition to degree and other childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher and follows a Montessori curriculum which reflects the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff work very effectively as a team to create an organised, friendly and supportive environment which meets children's individual needs very well. Children's health and safety is promoted well and risk assessments are thorough, including the outdoor assessment that has been recently formalised to cover all areas. Policies and procedures required for the safe management of the provision are well-maintained, however the parent handbook is not always reflective of current procedures. The setting's partnership with parents is a key strength of the setting; informal and some formal information sharing serves to foster children's self-esteem and emotional well being to a very high standard. The setting has completed a thorough self assessment in order to evaluate their provision accurately and to develop the quality of provision the children receive. All children and parents are made to feel very welcome as part of the setting's commitment to provide an inclusive service.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the additional child protection policy in the parents' handbook so that it reflects the setting's main policy
- develop further the assessment records, to include reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance so that learning in relation to this is clear

as well as in relation to the Montessori curriculum and further encourage parents to add to these records.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The designated staff member with responsibility for child protection has completed recent safeguarding training and has updated the staff team on safeguarding matters. All staff are secure in their knowledge of the settings policies and procedures. Children are further safeguarded by well kept records and risk assessments; however, the summarised safeguarding policy in the parent's handbook does not currently include all detail included in the settings' main procedure document. Staff are vigilant in their supervision and maintain a safe play environment. Staff are aware of any hazards in the setting, such as, children learning how to negotiate the stairs safely and the closeness of the main road, and take appropriate measures, including regular risk assessments, to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Children benefit from a well organised and efficiently run provision. All staff are suitably vetted and are very experienced in childcare and education. They receive a thorough induction when joining the setting, often as students, and are encouraged to train and attend short courses to develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding of childcare and education. The owner has developed an effective operational plan, and a good range of policies and procedures that are relevant to the setting. The owner ensures high adult to child ratios are always maintained; this allows staff to continuously support children's play and activities and provide individual care and attention. Staff have a strong vision for the future and development of the setting. Weekly staff meetings are used to help build a strong team where all staff are valued and encouraged to contribute. The setting has fostered strong links with the local community. They visit local schools for special events and in order to provide a smooth transition for children.

Children settle well and receive an excellent level of care because an effective key person system is in place; staff work closely with individual children and their families to establish effective levels of communication. The setting's practice is inclusive; children and their families benefit from the very well established communication systems with outside agencies and local schools. This ensures highly effective systems for working in partnership are in place.

Children learn the importance of washing their hands before eating, or after using the toilet, and staff use effective processes when changing nappies or preparing snacks to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Parents provide children with healthy lunches and staff liaise very well with them, ensuring that any children's special dietary requirements are appropriately met. Through topic work and daily discussion children learn very well about healthy living and the importance of exercise. Each day children have extremely good opportunities to enjoy physical activities and practise their co-ordination skills. They thoroughly enjoy the garden as they climb and balance on the climbing frame, use wheeled toys and hide in the

newly developed wooden house that surrounds the back of the garden.

Children can rest according to their needs as the setting provides comfortable seating in the book corners. If children are ill or have accidents they are well looked after as staff have current first aid training, and good knowledge of medication and accident procedures. Children are cared for in a safe, welcoming and secure environment. The group rooms are spacious, allowing children to move and play freely between areas. Children's work and photographs of their activities are displayed, catalogued and available for parents, this makes the environment friendly and welcoming to children and their families.

The special needs co-ordinator ensures all children are able to learn and develop appropriately in the setting. For example, individual learning plans are put into place and staff liaise well with outside agencies when necessary. Good methods of communication are fundamental and staff are highly skilled at ensuring appropriate measures are in place. Children learn that others have different needs and have good relationships with each other.

Parents are very involved in the activities of the setting and are welcomed in. They help on occasions and take part in fund-raising, contribute to topic work and share their skills. Children benefit from this open and close partnership. The owner and staff are always available to talk to parents ensuring children's individual needs are met. There is a parents' handbook giving information about the curriculum offered, about the topics for the term and the planned learning objectives. Parents are invited to spend time in the setting observing their children's progress and settling them in at their own pace.

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

Staff work extremely hard to provide an environment where children feel valued. Children arrive happily and are eager to learn and to take part in the activities available. Activities are well planned and include strategies designed to help all age groups learn and progress. Children relish being in the setting and are actively encouraged to have fun. Staff relate very well to the children; children respond by greeting them with hugs and smiles as they arrive and go home at the end of the session. All areas of children's learning are well promoted, particularly children's social and emotional development. The setting has devised a good system based on Montessori teaching and the early years foundation stage of learning to record the progress of children attending. They have identified this as an area in which they are keen to develop. This is in order to simplify the current planning and assessment system so that parents and other practitioners can easily access and contribute to it.

Children are extremely confident with high levels of self esteem. They respond extremely well to the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. They work very well together, for example, they co-operate and take turns with the activities and resources. They make firm friendships and enjoy each other's

company. They are learning to be independent, have good opportunities to choose what they do and to select their own resources; they are always busy and purposely occupied. Children behave very well and their positive behaviour is encouraged by the staff, who offer continuous encouragement, praise and rewards acting, as good role models.

Staff are given key roles in the group they also have some non contact time in order to concentrate on observing and monitoring children's play whilst other staff work closely with the children. This commitment helps ensure each child's progress is monitored and their learning is encouraged on an individual basis.

Children are motivated to learn and gain skills for the future. They understand when they should concentrate and listen; they are very attentive at story times and enjoy books and rhymes. They participate and contribute well in group activities such as music sessions when they sing, follow actions and play musical instruments. Children explore and investigate using their senses as they take part in activities with sand and water. They are interested and persevere, for example, as they complete puzzles, build, create and listen to stories. All children spend their time purposefully as they choose from the choice of books, toys and table top activities on offer. They particularly enjoy singing and engaging in action songs and role play.

Staff plan interesting activities often in small group work, which encourage children's language and communication skills and mathematical development. During their daily play and routines children count and use numbers, for example, they count the number of children present each day and discuss the date and month their birthdays fall in. They enjoy recognising numerals during counting and memory games they count through rhymes and songs using the song sack and props. They also have many opportunities to develop their creativity, for example, they can paint and draw freely and have access to a variety of tools and craft materials, which also help to develop their small muscle control. The children love to celebrate each others' birthdays and are made to feel very special for their birthday celebration during circle time. They light a candle and share photos, with a tribute read out which has been written by their parents; this means that staff and their friends are able to learn something very special about them.

Children learn about their lives, the environment and about the lives of others through interesting topic work and themes. There are resources in the setting that help children to begin to learn about their own and other different cultures and beliefs. Children make at least good individual progress because staff have a secure understanding of how children learn effectively and use children's self-chosen play to extend their learning. Staff adapt their questioning techniques, according to the age and ability of the child, and implement Montessori teaching methods to introduce an exciting range of activities and experiences to all children. Staff encourage children to lead their own learning and this is successfully achieved by a well developed routine, with a good balance of child and adult initiated activities. Children co-operate and negotiate roles, for example, when acting out their imagined ideas in role-play; they value one another's ideas. They listen with great excitement to stories and suggest their own endings. They confidently search for items beginning with the same sound and notice letters in familiar words around the room. Children independently use a range of tools and

materials and freely access a variety of resources from the different presentations being worked on in the room.

Effective use is made of time and resources to provide children with opportunities to engage in physical activities, including play in the garden with bikes, cars and trikes. Children can transport each other around and work as a team as they negotiate the course.

Children know and follow the routines of the day well and show confidence as they approach adults to ask questions or talk to them. They explore creativity using a wide range of media such as paint, chalk and sand. They show great interest in examining objects brought in to explore, which leads to discussion about how to care for the environment and they are very involved and included in the recycling project. They learn about themselves and their families through discussion and topic work and talk about their local community and the wider world. Realistic expectations of children and good individual knowledge helps them to consolidate their learning before moving onto the next stage. As a result, the curriculum is tailored to individual children's needs and abilities, which ensures effective support and sufficient challenges are provided to help children achieve their individual potential.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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