

Pillar Box Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	03/02/2011
Inspector	Catherine Greene
Setting address	107 Bow Road, Bow, London, E3 2AN
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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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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

Pillar Box Montessori Nursery opened in 1995. It operates from a five storey Victorian house situated on the Bow Road in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. The premises is used solely for childcare. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 42 children may attend the facility at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6:55pm throughout the year. There are currently 37 children aged two to five years on roll. This includes funded three and four year old children. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. All members of staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from an Early years advisor.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are looked after by a caring staff team within an environment that is generally clean and safe. Although, all areas including the garden, group rooms and the hallway and stairs are in urgent need of renovation. Each child is respected as a unique individual and staff work in partnership with parents to ensure their children's needs are met. Children make suitable progress in their learning and development as they engage in interesting activities. The setting has the capacity to maintain continual improvement, and the manager is developing systems to monitor its effectiveness.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- create an indoor and outdoor space containing well-maintained and valued resources to provide children with a rich and varied learning environment and achievable challenges to support their learning and development
- ensure all staff are able to observe and assess the children effectively so that the next step in their learning journey is tailored to meet their individual needs with reference to planning and assessment. Develop planning and assessment to show areas of Early Years Foundation Stage and Montessori curriculum and include parents contribution
- ensure risk assessments are reviewed regularly, include areas of the indoors and outdoors that need to be addressed such as exposed shelving and

broken and missing fencing and old, broken equipment stored in the garden

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and her staff have a sound understanding of child protection matters. The procedures for reporting concerns are known by all staff. Security within the provision is good. Entrance can only be gained by a speaker phone and the reception is always staffed. Fire detection and control equipment is in place, and evacuation procedures are held to ensure children and staff are able to leave the setting safely in the event of an emergency. Visual risk assessments are conducted daily to ensure there are no obvious hazards to endanger the children. However, although there is a system to record findings and review them regularly, some areas are yet to be addressed, particularly in the garden where fencing, gates and the surface are in need of repair and overall improvement.

Rigorous recruitment procedures are used to ensure that all adults in the setting are suitable to work with children. The manager and several key members of staff are new to the team at this established nursery. The manager and deputy who is also newly in post have some very good ideas for future improvements. As the handover of the existing self evaluation was limited the new system is in its infancy. The manager has identified areas of practice, as well as areas of the nursery, that she wishes to enhance for the benefit of the children and is pro-actively working towards achieving these good outcomes. The newly introduced parent suggestion book and weekly newsletter are to be used as a forum to engage the views of parents and to feed into the evaluation process.

The key person system works effectively and ensures that all relevant information about a child is shared between the setting and parents. Parents are able to see their child's developmental records on request and currently receive a daily feedback sheet, although this is currently under review because it is time consuming and repeated in other areas.

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

Children engage in activities that enable them to make progress in all areas of development. However, although observations are carried out and the interests of the children identified, staff are planning to introduce a new more efficient system that will clearly identify children's development, with the aim of distinguishing areas of Early Years Foundation Stage and the Montessori curriculum, this is not yet fully in place.

Children have sufficient space to explore the play materials, and independently select items of their choice. The furniture and equipment in the rooms used by children are satisfactorily maintained but are sparse and in need of refreshing. The building as a whole is in need of renovation. For example, group rooms and the

hallway need repair and decorating and resources and books in particular need replacing.

Children enjoy being together and have formed some close friendships. They benefit from the layout within the rooms and the newly set up book corners that encourage them to sit and spend time with their friends. The book corners have some cushions which make comfortable seating with books easily accessible. Children visit this area throughout the day and encourage their friends to join them.

When playing with junk modelling materials children use descriptive language to outline what they are doing. As younger children play, staff talk to them, describing what they are doing. This assists children in linking words to actions. Children's choices are well respected by the staff team and children understand that they can have a choice in what activities they would like to do. Children are given equal access to all resources regardless of gender. For example, girls and boys who play very well together in mixed groups state what they would like to play with. The member of staff present skilfully supports this choice and adapts her plan flexibly to accommodate this. Children learn to value and respect diversity within society as a range of positive image play resources are accessible to them. This includes Chinese New Year celebrations when children enjoyed a circle with a parent who brought props, a Chinese New Year calendar and a celebratory cake to enjoy. In addition, a variety of world faith festivals and languages are acknowledged. Children were able to sing with pride a welcome song in nine different languages, which represent the children, staff and families of this nursery

Staff offer good support to the children as they play and learn. Children are able to make connections between objects and they are provided with practical Montessori activities to develop their literacy and problem solving skills. Children enjoy being imaginative, they are provided with an imaginative play area and a variety of small world play equipment. Staff are very creative and resourceful having regard to sustainability by re-using and adapting equipment that can be used for many purposes. Children play co-operatively with their peers during imaginative play which helps them to develop some very complex storylines. Children also benefit from their work being labelled by staff who ask the children to describe their creation and then label exactly as the child has described.

Young children benefit from the support of a staff team who respond very well to them. For example, the younger children who become tired after lunch are allowed to rest according to their needs. For all children mealtimes are a relaxed and social occasion. Staff sit and eat with the children around small tables; this creates a social and homely atmosphere. Children's independence is promoted as all children serve themselves, pour their own water and clear away their plates at the end of the meal. The older children are provided with a flexible snack time and the opportunity to make healthy choices. Clear records are kept of children's allergies, ensuring that they never have any adverse reactions to what they eat.

Children have opportunities for physical play in the garden. They benefit from regular physical activity that offers them appropriate challenges. They are able to run at speed and change direction with ease. They have developed good eye and hand co-ordination skills as they ride their bikes in a circuit. Although because the

surface at the back of the garden is not weather proof and becomes wet and slippery they are restricted to the concrete front section. Resources stored in the shed and in and around the garden such as benches and home corner items are old and weather worn and the garden in general is in need or urgent repair.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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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	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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