

# Playhouse Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY339849  
**Inspection date** 22/02/2011  
**Inspector** Mauvene Burke

**Setting address** 1a Dunbar Avenue, London, SW16 4SB

**Telephone number** 0208 7642564

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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

Playhouse Montessori opened in 2006 and changed the name in January 2007. It operates from a detached house in Norbury, situated in the London Borough of Croydon. Children have the use of three play rooms on the ground floor and a further two rooms on the first floor. There is an enclosed area for outside play both at the front and at the back of the setting. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 52 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 32 children aged from nine months to under five years on roll, some in part-time places.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting partly incorporates 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 good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where they are able to make progress towards the early learning goals. They have a varied range of activities that challenge and hold their interest, although these are mostly indoors. All of the required paperwork is in place, although it is not always used effectively. Partnerships with parents are good and information is shared effectively. The setting is committed to making ongoing improvements as there is a strong drive towards improving the process of evaluating their quality and self-evaluation.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that written permission is obtained from parents for each and every medicine before medicine is administered (Promoting good health) 08/03/2011

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

- develop a system to ensure all staff have an up-to-date understanding of every policy and procedure, for example, food hygiene procedures and all aspects of the safeguarding policy
- provide more opportunities for all children to engage in a good range of well-planned and meaningful outdoor activities and enable children to have easy

- access to a range of different media and materials to encourage creativity
- improve the use of observations and assessments to identify children's learning priorities and to plan relevant learning experiences for each child

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Despite many setbacks since taking over this provision, the owner/manager remains wholly and completely committed to raising the standards in this setting. She is absolutely passionate about providing good outcomes for children. Staff retention has, in the past, been an issue at this setting, but the provider is confident that she now has a dedicated team who equally share in her passion and vision for the setting. Children are safeguarded as the manager and staff demonstrate a good understanding of their role and responsibility to protect children in their care. However, not all staff are fully aware of the procedures that would be implemented if an allegation of abuse was made against a member of staff. All staff have a daily responsibility to ensure that any hazards throughout the nursery are identified and minimised. Annual in-depth risk assessments are completed and reviewed thoroughly by an outside agency; this also includes the checking of fire detection and fire fighting equipment and all electrical appliances. This ensures children are kept safe and their welfare promoted. The comprehensive policies and procedures are mostly effectively implemented to ensure the smooth day-to-day running. All records relating to children's individual health and safety are maintained.

Staff are deployed well to support children and this ensures routines run smoothly. As part of the Montessori ethos equipment used by the older children is easily accessible. Children can choose what they want to play with and are very aware that once they have finished playing with a piece of equipment it must be returned before choosing something else. In the main, rooms are organised well; babies have plenty of space to move around freely on the carpet area whilst messy activities take place on the wooden floor area of the room. Staff are encouraged to attend training produced by the local authority, attend team meetings and have annual appraisals. Whilst the cook is away on leave, staff have been in charge of preparing and handling food, however, not all staff have been trained in basic food hygiene, which could put children's health at risk.

The nursery promotes inclusive practice and works well to ensure that each child and family is fully included in the life of the setting. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs. They recognise and value children's differences and display information about other cultures. All children are able to access a good selection of resources to learn about the wider world and other cultures through their play and take part in celebrating various festivals.

Good relationships are developed with parents and carers and they are happy with the setting and in particular the friendliness of the staff and the service provided. Parents have access to written information about the setting's policies through an information pack given at the start of each placement, through newsletters and through the notice board. Parent's views are sought as part of the settings

evaluation of the setting. Parents are issued with child profile forms to complete in order to provide the staff with information about their child's needs, interests and abilities. These are used by staff to gain a more complete picture of the children. Staff share information regarding children's learning and development with parents to ensure continuity of care and the setting has strong links with the local school nursery which some children will go on to attend. They also receive support from the local authority.

The manager demonstrates a commitment to improving practice and has a clear vision for the future to maintain continuous improvement. Self-evaluation of the setting shows she has a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. There are future plans to extend rooms within the setting to provide better outcomes for children, such as providing a sensory room and providing more space for the younger children to move around. Most of the previous recommendations have been appropriately addressed and staff are due to attend various training courses to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure that they all keep their practice up-to-date.

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

Most children separate from their main carers well. Those that are a little tearful are soon made to feel welcome as both the staff and the children make a fuss over them. Practitioners reassure crying babies who are settling in with physical contact such as hugs, cuddles, and through verbal communication. Children benefit from good child to staff ratios. As a result, children have much individual attention and show good levels of concentration, which helps their development. Most staff contribute to the planning of activities. This includes information on the six areas of learning. However, not all practitioners have a secure knowledge of how to observe and assess children's progress or how to plan effectively for next steps in children's individual learning. This means that there are some gaps in children's learning and they are not always fully challenged to extend their knowledge and understanding in every area of learning.

Nonetheless, children's personal, social and emotional development is a key strength in this setting. Children confidently express their own needs and relate very well to each other. They organise themselves well and play with each other independent of adults. For example, a group of children was observed building an aeroplane out of wooden blocks. Each child was able to contribute to the construction of the plane. Children used words such as 'pilot', 'co-pilot' and 'take-off' and all agreed to position the 'suitcases' underneath the aeroplane as 'this is where suitcases go'. They used props from around the setting to place in their aeroplane, such as the 'toilet' from the small world area. The children spent a considerable amount of time at this child-initiated activity and only involved adults when they wanted to show them what they had done and their plane was now ready for 'take off'. Children in the pre-school are learning to take turns and respect the views of others as they are each given the opportunity to answer

questions. They are developing independence as they help themselves to food at snack time and pour their own drinks. All the children have access to creative play whether it is sand, painting or imaginative play. However, pre-school children are not able to independently access a wide range of media that would enable children to explore and create using different colours and textures.

Babies and toddlers have fun during 'Tumble Tots' time, where they have opportunities to develop their physical skills and become excited by their increasing mobility. They roll and tumble over the soft mats with good supervision and support from adults; balance on the stepping stones and climb up the steps on the small slide. They are beginning to move to music and listen to and join in with rhymes and songs during the singing sessions.

The multi-cultural nature of the nursery enables children to develop an awareness of the world around them. They consider different cultures, family backgrounds and customs and celebrate cultural festivals such as Holi, which is the celebration of colours. Children were involved in making geometric patterns. Older children independently wash their hands after using the bathroom without any encouragement from the adults, they are learning about the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles as they learn about good food and bad food. A visit from the dentist helps them to look after their teeth. However, there are few opportunities for children to be involved in well planned outdoor play activities.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	3
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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