

Learning Tree Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	137819
Inspection date	12/04/2011
Inspector	Katie Dempster

Setting address	309 Preston Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 0QQ
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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

Learning Tree Montessori was registered in 2000 and it is run by a private provider. The setting operates from a converted house in Harrow in the London borough of Brent. There is access to a four classrooms, outside annex for arts and crafts activities and a separate lunch room. Children also have access to a large secure outdoor area. The nursery provides a service for children from the local and wider community. The setting is open each week day from 8.00am to 4.00pm for 44 weeks of the year.

It is registered to care for 40 children in the early years age range and there are currently 52 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week. Systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 5 full-time and 2 part-time members of staff. Of these, four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register.

The setting follows the Montessori ethos and employ four members of staff with Montessori qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are confident, settled and making good progress in all areas of their development. Staff create a safe and secure environment, where children are valued to make the most of their abilities. Plans for children's next steps are in place, relating to the Montessori method of teaching; however they are not yet linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage development matters. Children have opportunities to learn about diversity and the wider world and gain social conscience as they help raise money during charity events. The nursery has a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement as the staff team work together to create an effective self evaluation, highlighting areas they wish to make improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop current plans for children's next steps and planned activities to ensure links are made to the Early Years Foundation Stage
- review sleeping arrangements to ensure children who wish to nap are made comfortable

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and know how to implement these effectively to protect the children. All visitors are required to sign in and out of the visitor's book, to ensure a full record of everyone coming into contact with the children is maintained. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all adults working at the setting are suitable to do so. The play and learning environment is safe and secure at all times, full and thorough written risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly to ensure the safety of the children.

The management has a positive attitude and clear vision for the nursery. Self evaluation involves the staff team as they work together to build on the good practise and make plans for future improvements. Staff deployment is good, ensuring all children are fully supervised and receive support and encouragement throughout the day.

Children benefit from the good relationship between the nursery staff and their parents. Information is shared openly and parents have spoken positively of the setting, commenting on the high levels of feedback they receive about their child's care and education. Daily diaries are used to keep parents informed on a daily basis and consultation meetings provide opportunities for a full overview of their child's development. Parents' questionnaires are used to seek the views of parents and many of their suggestions have been put in place, for example, installing artificial grass in the outdoor area.

Children have access to a vast range of resources and materials that are suitable for their age and stage of development. These are largely based on Montessori related activities. The equipment is stored at the children's level to ensure those of all ages can access the resources independently, promoting their freedom of choice and decision making skills effectively. Diversity is promoted well within the setting. They use a range of resources to learn about other cultures and the wider world as well as taking part in interesting celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Black History Month and St.Patrick's day. Staff engage children's imaginative skills as they pretend the leprechaun from the story has been into the setting to cause mischief.

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

Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and use the Montessori method well to coincide with meeting children's development needs against the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff spend time observing the children and use this information to identify their individual next learning steps. The next steps are then used to assess and track their progress alongside the development matters and

activities are planned accordingly. Written plans are not yet linked sufficiently to the Early Years Foundation Stage; however this is largely compensated by the clear progress children show in their development. The setting follows the Montessori ethos and so the environment is prepared with materials designed for children's self-directed learning. They confidently choose activities they wish to explore from the wide range of resources available. Staff get to know the children well and they are aware of their individual needs. As a result, interaction and conversation is purposeful, supporting the children, extending and challenging them as necessary to ensure they continue to make progress.

Staff facilitate children's learning well as they introduce complex learning opportunities according to children's interests. For example, when discussing a group building activity staff suggest first drawing up plans for their building. Children quickly get to work drawing buildings and other structures, excitedly telling one another and staff what they are drawing on their plans. Once they have built their structure staff encourage them to compare it to their plans. These activities give children a greater understanding into learning concepts. Children use their creative skills as they participate in story time, the manager uses interesting props and invites children to get involved by dressing up and getting into character. Children have access to a variety of reference and fictional books and know how to handle them correctly, they enjoy sitting in the cosy book corner and relax as they read their chosen book. There are many activities to support children's problem solving and reasoning skills as they sort objects, copy patterns and use counters to match numbers. Children show particular advances in these activities, sitting and concentrating for some time sorting counters to very high numbers. There are many opportunities for physical play, as children run, jump, balance and negotiate space as they steer wheeled toys. The outside area incorporates all areas of learning, for example, children have access to water play, mark making and imaginative play. Most recently children have enjoyed making a farm outside. They have a den and thoroughly enjoy digging areas. This high importance placed on learning outside gives children wonderful wider learning experiences.

Children begin to learn the importance of keeping themselves safe through discussion and routines. For example, children are reminded to cross their legs so to avoid tripping somebody and engage in road safety activities outside where they practise using the zebra crossing and pedestrian lights. Furthermore, children and staff practise regular fire drills to ensure they all know how to evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. Children learn about and are encouraged to adopt healthy habits, they are reminded to use tissues and talk about why it's important to wash our hands. Children are given areas to sit quietly and relax, soft cushions and blankets allow children to nap if they wish, however the area is not sufficiently prepared to ensure children are comfortable and their individual needs met.

Children's behaviour is managed well, staff are clear and calm when speaking to the children, explaining the outcome of their behaviour and asking them to think about their actions. Children respond well as they quickly apologise and offer a cuddle. They are polite and are often heard saying please and thank you, praised by staff. Children are making friendships as they engage in conversations over lunch, telling one another stories from home. Children's independence and self help skills are highly supported. Children use their independence throughout the

day, washing their hands, pouring their own drinks, and selecting their chosen activities. These opportunities greatly help develop children's skills for the future.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	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	2
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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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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