

# Ladbroke Square Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspection date</b>	10/05/2011
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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**

Ladbroke Square Montessori School is a privately owned nursery school registered in 1992. It operates from a four storey building in the Notting Hill area in Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It consists of eight classrooms, nine children's toilets, one adult toilet, a kitchen and office. The ground floor is accessible to wheelchair users and there are toilet facilities available to meet the needs of disabled users. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children also use the park and play opposite the school.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 77 children at any one time. There are currently 104 children from two to five years old on roll. 68 children in the setting are in receipt of funding for children who are three or four years old. Children attend for a variety of sessions, but the afternoon sessions are mostly for younger children. Parents provide packed lunches for children attending all day.

The setting open five days a week, 33 weeks of the year, from 8:55am to 3:15pm during term time. There are 17 staff members who work directly with the children, all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The nursery mainly provides for children in the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Montessori teaching methods are followed. In addition children are visited weekly by French teachers, a Ballet teacher, a computer club and a Pianist who accompanies them during their singing lessons.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Exemplary practice across the nursery school ensures the staff team promotes all aspects of children's learning and welfare. Staff members working with all age groups are qualified and experienced and they are devoted to the ongoing wellbeing of the children in their care. The provision for inclusive practice is excellent, and the unique qualities of every child are highly valued and respected overall. Every child is making excellent progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points. The provider and staff accurately evaluate and reflect on the quality of the provision for children in the setting, and the steps they take to implement improvements are effective and ongoing. They constantly strive to update and improve the provision, showing exceptional capacity to maintain continuous improvement. Although number and letter provision is comprehensive in all classrooms, it is limited in the outdoor courtyard garden.

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

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- improve visual number and letter provision in the outdoors environment.

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

Children are successfully safeguarded because staff members are knowledgeable of legislation to protect them. Staff members have very good awareness of child protection issues and procedures. They know what signs or symptoms indicate that children may be ill-treated, and the reporting procedures to fully safeguard children.

Scrupulous monitoring of accident and injury records contributes to children's safety, and effective risk assessments help to keep them safe in the nursery school and on outings. Rigorous recruitment procedures are followed which ensures that all members of staff are checked for suitability at the time of their employment. In this well established nursery school, staff routinely work side by side which ensures that they are effectively monitored, supported and guided with the settings policies and procedures. Staff members attend regular refresher courses about first aid and child protection which helps to keep the children safe.

There is an excellent aptitude for continuous improvement; through the reflective self-evaluation system. The nursery school's self-evaluation is accurate, identifies areas for further improvement, and is seen as an ongoing exercise. Management strongly encourage a culture of reflective practice in the setting involving staff, parents, children and outside professionals. Regular appraisal exercises help staff to identify their strengths and areas for development. They are encouraged and actively supported to study for further qualifications for their own professional development and to improve the quality of the provision for children.

Partnership with parents is very strong and effective systems are in place to ensure they are fully informed about the running of the nursery school. Staff members use the information parents provide about their children's capabilities on the initial registration and 'happy anticipation questionnaire' to successfully plan for their children's learning. News letters are sent out regularly as the need arises and there is a notice board with excellent childcare information. Key persons pass on daily information about their key children to parents. Parents are clearly aware of the systems in place that ensure they are very much involved with monitoring and contributing to their children's ongoing learning. There are effective systems to allow parents to comment on the service they receive. Parents were included in the self-evaluation process and attend a variety of workshops to help them in further supporting their understanding of how children learn.

Parents report that they are delighted with the nursery and all that it provides for

their children. They are particularly happy with the care and nurturing their children receive from staff, calling the setting a 'warm happy place'. Parents say that their children settle in happily and they leave feeling confident that the children are in very good hands. Formal and informal meetings and written reports ensure that parents are well informed about their child's ongoing progress.

The setting has very strong, well established links with other professionals and agencies to seek advice and support. The effective leadership ensures staff members are sufficiently supported to do their job meeting children's individual needs.

Resources are successfully deployed indoors and outdoors to enable all the children to see what is available and make independent choices. Children confidently carry items to other parts of the room so they can extend their play. All activities are beautifully presented on tables and on brightly coloured mats on the floor.

The promotion of inclusive practice is excellent. Staff show respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds of every child attending. They engage very well with parents and carers to find out about languages spoken at home, cultural matters and each child's particular needs and achievements. Staff plan and provide an excellent range of multi-cultural activities, which are carefully chosen to reflect both the background of the children they care for, and celebrations enjoyed in the wider community and around the world.

Useful information is posted in the entrance area for parents. Wide-ranging policies and procedures meet requirements and promote the children's welfare, and are well maintained and confidentially stored.

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

Children are cared for in a particularly welcoming and child-centred environment, which ensures that they are safe, secure and very happy. Staff members have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. Consequently, they plan and deliver a range of interesting activities based on the six areas of learning to meet the varying needs and interests of individual children. Children show that they feel safe and secure in the nursery in their relaxed body language, their curiosity, and in their eagerness to use their imagination to direct their play and explore the learning environment. Staff members are attentive; they talk to the children and treat them with great kindness and understanding.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through learning basic rules such as not running indoors and not holding scissors by the blades. They also learn to keep safe through discussion before outings and through learning to walk sensibly on the footpath and crossing the road carefully. Children learn about excellent personal hygiene and healthy ways of eating. Staff members follow well established routines and procedures to maintain good standards of hygiene. They are offered healthy options for snack with of a choice milk or water. A choice of

fresh fruit snacks such as banana, grapes, oranges, strawberries, apples and pears is offered. Children help to set the snack table, tidy up and wash their plates in the child sized sinks in the classrooms. They learn to wash hands before eating and to put tissues straight into the bin after use. There are recycling bins in every classroom, so the children are aware of the importance of recycling for the future and how to get rid of waste appropriately. Children's nappies are changed as often as needed to keep them clean and comfortable, and the staff members follow hygienic routines.

Staff members observe the children in all groups carefully and they note their responses to activities and then make excellent use of their notes to plan next steps for each child. Staff members use photographs to record special moments to share with parents. Children in all groups make choices and decisions in their play and freely from the wide selection of good quality toys at their disposal. They benefit from being in small groups with sensitive, caring staff who make their introduction to nursery a pleasant and happy experience, much to the delight of parents. For example, younger children attend afternoon sessions to initiate their settling in process. This enables staff to plan age and developmentally appropriate activities, and to organise the learning environment to meet their needs.

Plenty of activities that promote the development of literacy and numeracy skills, together with the regular use of a modern computer, a camera, and battery operated toys contributes effectively to children's future economic wellbeing. A range of activities that promote the development of children's literacy, numeracy and information technology skills contribute effectively to their future economic wellbeing. Children learn about numbers, counting, size, length and shape through carefully planned play indoors and outdoors. They know that the number 17 is more than 15 and that 18 is the number that comes after 17. However, although number and letter provision is comprehensive in all classrooms, it is limited in the outdoor quiet garden and basement garden.

Children use a range of interesting materials, for example to create Mexican maracas as an extension to music sessions. Children use their imagination to create racing tracks on the table - using masking tape they design an intricate maze of tracks; note the different surfacing, stating that there is a snow track, road track, and bumpy bump; and carefully denote the start and finish points with cards. Staff members are fully focused on the children throughout the session. They ask open ended questions to encourage the children to think beyond the obvious and extend their play, challenging them sufficiently. They also nurture language development by modelling clear speech, and by introducing and explaining new words.

Some children can already write their names using well formed letters. Staff place heavy emphasis on the development of children's vocabulary and understanding before moving on to the more formal aspects of literacy. A wide range of attractive books are accessible to the children, and they often choose to relax on a cushion and look at a book or use head phones to listen to stories. Many of the children are beginning to make the connection between the sounds and the shapes of letters of the alphabet. Children in all groups are gaining confidence and very good social skills. They know they must share and take turns with favourite toys and activities.

They are very helpful at tidy up time when they swiftly replace boxes of toys in the correct places. Above all, the children enjoy their activities in the nursery school and they are gaining independence and an enthusiasm that will serve them very well in their learning skills for the future. Behaviour management is a key strength in the provision. Staff members adopt a very positive stance; they help children to be considerate, to see things from different points of view, and to self regulate the using the golden rules.



## 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>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### 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>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
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	1
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
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