

Elizabeth's Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Elizabeth's Montessori Nursery is owned by Elizabeth's Montessori Nursery Ltd. It opened in 2007 and operates from the hall within the Baptist Church in Surbiton, in the London Borough of Kingston. There is a separate room for children to rest, as well as access to a small outside play area. Children are taken to the park which is close to the nursery. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children from two years to the end of the early years age range may attend at any one time. There are currently 34 children on roll in this age range. The nursery is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm for 50 weeks of the year and sessional places are available. It currently supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition there is a volunteer who works at the nursery on a regular basis. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The manager's enthusiasm, energy and commitment to meeting children's individual needs is a key strength of the provision. She provides an extremely positive role model for staff and consistently introduces changes to the provision that improve outcomes for children. Systems to evaluate practice are generally effective, although some aspects of good practice have been overlooked. Good communication with parents means children's individual needs are well met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the development of sustained shared thinking by offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions which support and extend children's thinking and help them make connections in learning
- improve the range of resources that stretch and challenge children's physical abilities
- improve the range of programmable resources to promote children's understanding of how things work, including information, communication and technology equipment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. There are effective systems in place to ensure staff suitability. Risk assessment records are used effectively in practice to reduce hazards and keep children safe. The nursery manager provides a strong role model as she works alongside staff. She is very observant of staff performance and shows confidence as she provides guidance to ensure children's individual needs are met. There are effective systems in place for evaluating most aspects of the provision. The manager is instrumental in driving improvement and uses meetings to consult with staff and encourage their reflection on the provision. Parents are invited to contribute their own ideas through the use of newsletters, a suggestion box and notices. There are plans in place for a volunteer parent to seek and co-ordinate parents views about the provision. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. In addition, the provision has successfully obtained funding for the provision of free early education, introduced a free flow system between the inside and outside play areas, provided additional extra curricular activities and expanded outings for children within the local community. However, some aspects of good practice have not yet been achieved, for example, the ability of all staff to ask children open ended questions, which means there are missed opportunities to extend learning during free play activities.

Staff are well deployed and work extremely well as a team to ensure children have the freedom to make independent choices within their play. There is a good range of easily accessible play equipment that promotes most aspects of children's development. However, there are limited resources that stretch children's physical abilities and develop their skills in using programmable resources and information and communication technology. Consequently, progress in these areas of learning is restricted. Staff have a sensitive approach to working closely with parents and local authority advisors to meet the individual needs of the children. They are alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and respond appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary. Accessible resources and activities promote children's understanding of diversity. Good partnership with the local authority means the nursery receives support when needed, for example, with planning, accessing grants, and any child development issues. Good links established with the local school mean that children are provided with "wrap around care". Exchange visits and sharing of information between the nursery and the school mean that children are provided with continuity of care and learning. Parental involvement is good. Parents are invited to organise "end of year parties" and take part in activities, such as making pizza's in a local restaurant. An open door policy and two progress meetings each year provide opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. Parents comments show they are happy with the provision. For example, they say "the manager is very good with the children and my child is very happy to come to the nursery".

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

Children are happy to be at the provision and are motivated within their play. They show very good independence and self-confidence, as they choose their own resources from well organised shelving. Children are very familiar with the ethos of the Montessori approach, which can be seen as they find small floor mats which they use to set up resources. They move freely between the inside and outside areas and show confidence as they tell staff about their intentions during their play. Children are extremely well behaved and co-operative and are very aware of the needs of others. For example, they spontaneously offer their help when younger children try to put on their aprons. They form good friendships and often include others in their play, for example, as they help them find a mat to sit on and say they are "working together". Children make good progress in relation to their developmental starting points, because staff have a good knowledge of their individual abilities and achievements. They provide children with support when needed and are observant of the choices they make. However, not all staff promote sustained shared thinking by offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions which support and extend children's thinking and help them make connections in learning. This restricts the opportunity for children to reach their full potential.

Children make marks and draw spontaneously. They enjoy looking at books independently and concentrate well whilst listening to stories. Some children use a wide range of vocabulary to describe their actions, for example, as they say they are "kneading the dough", and are encouraged to talk about the shape and texture. However, not all staff initiate discussions and ask questions during free play activities, which restricts children's ability to engage in conversation. Children learn to count in numerical order, for example, during registration. They show excellent concentration and persistence as they sort Montessori resources, such as cylinder knobs, and work out where the different sizes fit. Children independently explore a range of natural resources, for example, as they touch pieces of tree trunk on the nature table. They learn about the features of living things through topics such as "growth", where they plant beans and avocado seeds and take responsibility for watering them. Some children show great interest in using puzzles that help them learn about different countries of the world. Their enthusiasm for this learning can be seen, for example, as they talk about countries where they used to live and the tomatoes their grandparents grow. Children enjoy using large magnets and discovering what they can do, as they place them onto table legs, magnetic trains and drain pipes in the outdoor play area. Staff support children with using these resources in all areas of the provision.

Children develop their understanding of diversity as they take part in activities that celebrate different cultural events. For example, they make Chinese rice with a grandparent visiting the nursery to celebrate Chinese New Year. Children learn about the roles of people in the community, for example, as local community police visit the nursery, talk to children and let them try on their helmets and use the walkie talkies. Resources such as magnets, calculators, a shop till and torches help children to learn about how things work. Adult led activities, such as making toast,

using a CD player and a hand blender to make smoothies, support this learning. Children learn about their own safety as they take part in fire evacuation practices. Regular outings to the local park are used to promote children's understanding of road safety. For example, they learn to use the zebra crossing and not to talk with others when crossing the road. They engage in role play, listen to stories and enter into discussion to support this learning. Children are provided with healthy and nutritious meals. Their individual allergies and dietary needs are well known and adhered to by staff and the nursery cook. Children's independence and self-help skills are promoted, as they serve themselves at lunchtime. Good hygiene practice is followed during nappy changing procedures. Children crawl through tunnels and show good independence and control of their movements as they balance and walk along low level benches. Weekly yoga classes enable children to follow directions, learn new skills, develop self-confidence and flexibility and use their imagination. Children are taken on regular visits to a local park to use large equipment, although the range of resources within the nursery do not stretch and challenge all children's physical abilities. Children develop their creativity as they paint freely at an easel and make their own designs using old toothbrushes and paint. They play imaginatively, for example, as they push dolls around in buggies and make up their own games. Children are keen to take part in singing sessions, and laugh with enjoyment as they act out movements to familiar rhymes.

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

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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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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