

Beckett House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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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

Beckett House Montessori Nursery School is run by a limited company. It is situated in a residential area in Islington in the London Borough of Islington and mainly provides for children in the local area. It opened in 1996 and operates from one large room in a converted building. All children share access to a small secure and enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 20 children at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.30am to 5.30pm for 46 weeks of the year. There are currently 49 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The nursery receives funding for free education sessions for three-and four-year-olds. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs seven members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery follows the Montessori method of education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Overall, staff practice is generally sound and children benefit from appropriate levels of care and enjoy positive interactions with staff. However, weaknesses in the leadership and management of the setting have significantly impacted on several aspects of the provision and led to several breaches of requirement. The management team demonstrates an awareness of some of the areas for improvement, although they have yet to take appropriate action to address these. This demonstrates that they do not have a sufficient capacity for continuous improvement.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure that the safeguarding children policy and procedure includes the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 08/08/2011
- ensure that at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises at all 08/08/2011

- times when children are present (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)
- keep records of the information used to assess the suitability of staff to demonstrate to Ofsted that checks have been done (Suitable people) 08/08/2011
 - ensure that risk assessments are reviewed regularly, at least once a year or more frequently where the need arises (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 08/08/2011
 - ensure that record of risk assessment shows by whom it was carried out and any action taken following a review or incident (Documentation) 08/08/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- provide more opportunities for children to do things for themselves, for example, during snack and meal times
- develop further systems for observing and assessing children's progress and use them to identify learning priorities, with particular regard to ensuring that the next steps of learning are consistently identified and used to inform future planning
- make sure that all practitioners are able to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedure
- establish more opportunities for play and learning that acknowledge children's particular religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds and help children learn to value aspects of their own and other people's lives .

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

At present the nursery is not effectively organised or sufficiently managed. While there are monitoring systems in place, these are not used effectively to bring about change or improve outcomes for children. This is because steps have not been taken to address identified weaknesses, some of which are requirements and impact on the setting's ability to effectively safeguard children. For example, the safeguarding children policy and procedure does not include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff. In addition to this staff, including the designated person, do not have a sufficient knowledge of the procedures to follow if such an allegation is made. Record keeping is not organised effectively and, as a result, the nursery is unable to show the information used to assess staff's suitability to work with children. The nursery is also unable to prove that risk assessments are completed regularly as the current records are out of date and do not show who completed the checks or what, if any, action was taken. These breaches of specific requirements compromise children's safety and welfare.

The learning environment is well-organised and conducive to the needs of the children. Resources are organised well and in good condition, enabling children to make clear choices about their play. Staff are suitably qualified and are effectively deployed throughout the nursery and good adult: child ratios are maintained. Staff

supervise children well. They encourage them to participate in activities, engage with them in conversation and make effective use of questioning. However, weaknesses in the organisation have led to first aid qualifications for a number of staff lapsing and, at present, there is only one qualified first aider. This member of staff is not always present and this means that there is no qualified first aider present at these times. This puts children's health at risk. There is some planning in place and appropriate observations are being carried out on children. However, systems for observing and assessing children's progress are not fully effective. They are not monitored to ensure that observations are evaluated or that the next steps in children's learning are consistently identified. This means that it is difficult for staff to fully monitor and consistently extend children's progress.

Partnerships with parents are generally sound. Staff communicate with parents regularly each day, informing them about their child's care. In addition, newsletters and the parents' notice board keep them up-to-date with events and policies and procedures are shared in the prospectus. Parents are invited to attend children's profile meetings throughout the year. However, they are not encouraged to become fully involved in their children's learning by contributing their own observations and ideas. Although there is a key worker system in place, some parents are not aware who their child's key worker is. The children attending come from various different cultures. There is some effort to create an awareness of various cultural and religious festivals through marking various celebrations throughout the year. However, resources that show positive images of diversity are limited and little is done to reflect the individual cultural backgrounds of the children.

The management team has recently introduced a process of self-evaluation to encourage reflective practice amongst staff. They demonstrate a sound awareness of their strengths and are also beginning to highlight areas for further improvement. These include the educational programme, linking the Early Years Foundation Stage to the Montessori method and encouraging staff to consistently identify the next steps of learning. However, self-evaluation is still in its early stages and staff have failed to act on issues that they have identified as requiring improvement. This shows that they do not have a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

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

Children are content, well-settled and benefit from the positive interactions that they share with staff. They are happy on arrival, eagerly greet staff and are keen to settle into the activities available. They are making positive progress in their learning and development and are generally supported well. The staff know them well and provide a range of activities and experiences to suit their interests. However, effective observations and assessment systems are not yet fully in place and practice is not yet consistent amongst staff. This means that observations are not used fully effectively to plan for the next steps in each child's learning. The management team is aware of this and is currently working with staff to achieve a

consistent and effective approach.

The play environment is well-resourced, providing children with an appropriate range of play experiences across all areas of learning. Communication, language and literacy are actively fostered. Children have good opportunities to listen to stories and the book area provides them with a comfy place to sit where they enjoy and learn to appreciate books. There are some opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills. Effective use of questioning encourages children to think for themselves, as well as further developing their communication skills. Children are supported well in developing problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy skills through everyday activities such as cooking, mixing paints and weighing and measuring. However there are a number of missed opportunities for children to further their independence and self-help skills. For example, they do not take part in preparing the tables for meal and snack times and there are limited opportunities for them to serve themselves.

Children have fun as they take part in creative play. They engage in their own imaginary games as they pretend to be pirates in their home-made pirate ship. Although the setting has only a small outside area staff try to make the most of opportunities to visit other outdoor play areas through regular visits to local parks, the woodlands and other places of interest. Children are beginning to learn about the natural environment as they engage in activities and go on visits to the rainforest.

Meals are sufficiently nutritious and the individual dietary needs of children are well-known and supported. Drinks are made freely available to ensure that children do not become thirsty. Children are encouraged to develop an understanding of good hygiene practices. They regularly wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day as well as brushing their teeth after lunch. Behaviour is good and children respond well to staff who provide them with clear and appropriate explanations. Children feel secure due to the positive relationships they have with staff. They learn about personal safety by practising the emergency evacuation drill although this does not take place regularly. Weaknesses in leadership and management mean that the nursery is unable to fully safeguard children and this impacts on children feeling safe.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
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	4
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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	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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