

St Patrick's Montessori Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	144712
Inspection date	27/09/2011
Inspector	Tracy Weight
Setting address	91 Cornwall Rd, London, SE1 8TH
Telephone number	0207-928-5557
Email	elizabeth@stpatricksnursery.com
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

St Patrick's Montessori Nursery School opened in 1994 and operates from a Victorian building in the Waterloo area of Lambeth. There are three rooms for babies, toddlers and pre-school children. All children share access to a garden room and an enclosed outside play area. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm all year around, except for one week at Christmas and three staff development days per year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 66 children in the early years age group may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 84 children from six months to four years on roll, including children who speak English as an additional language and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery provides free nursery education sessions for three- and four-year-old children.

A team of 26 staff work with the children. Of these, 21 staff hold either Montessori or early years qualifications and a further three staff members are currently training. The teaching method incorporates Montessori into the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery is accredited by Montessori Education (UK) Limited.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

All children are motivated learners. They develop well in this caring and stimulating environment in which they show that they feel extremely safe. Staff provide an inclusive, good quality learning environment that helps all children to make good progress. They have generally effective systems in place to observe children and plan for their next steps. Overall, they have good systems in place for working in partnership with parents and others. The nursery's capacity for ensuring continual improvement is good. The dedicated managers and staff take well-targeted actions to continually drive forward improvements in outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further systems to use assessments to plan consistently for the next steps in each child's developmental progress in all six areas of learning and monitor these systems to ensure that any gaps are identified
- develop further systems to maintain a regular two-way flow of information with other providers, with particular regard to developing a single record of

children's learning journeys which can be passed on to ensure a shared approach to children's care and learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The energetic and motivated manager has high ambitions for the nursery and is effective in maintaining a well-motivated staff team. The nursery has robust processes in place which help ensure children are cared for by appropriately qualified and vetted staff. There are highly effective child protection procedures in place and staff have a detailed knowledge of what to do if they have concerns about a child. All staff show a caring attitude towards children and they use risk assessment effectively to help ensure that children are kept safe, while at the same time allowing them to explore and take risks as they learn. They give children useful strategies to help them to take increasing responsibility for their own safety.

The nursery has a good range of monitoring activities overall and is taking positive steps to continually improve quality. Staff review and improve practice by using parental feedback and through liaison with other agencies. Managers and staff use meetings well to evaluate the provision and the actions they take has a positive impact on outcomes for children. Staff enthusiastically take part in training to improve their knowledge and skills and use what they learn to drive forward further improvement. However, monitoring of the assessment system has not picked up some inconsistencies in the recording methods staff use. This leads to fewer targets for some children in some aspects of learning. Regardless of this all children make good progress overall.

Staff promote equality and diversity effectively across the nursery. They support all children's learning well by joining in their play. They talk to them to extend their communication and thinking skills, including those children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is exceptionally well equipped and the accommodation very well organised to help all children to make progress at their own rate. The effective management of resources ensures that all groups of children have access to a very wide range of indoor and outdoor learning experiences that help them to learn.

The nursery has developed an effective partnership with parents and carers. Well-developed systems ensure continual communication between staff and parents about children's needs, routines, interests and learning achievements. A particularly good system of communication is in place when children first start in the nursery and this helps them to settle quickly, so they are ready to learn.

The nursery has developed generally good links with schools and other professionals in the area. As a result, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-coordinated support and all children benefit from a shared approach to their care and learning. However, due to the various systems for recording children's progress across the nursery there is no single record of children's learning to pass on to other settings. This does not fully support

continuity for children.

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

Children eagerly enter the nursery each day, enthusiastically engaging in active play within this secure, vibrant and enabling environment. They are motivated learners because staff know them well and provide stimulating and interesting learning experiences which follow their interests. Sensitive leadership of group activities enables children to gain a high level of confidence and self-esteem. As a result, they show that they feel extremely secure and make an exceptionally good positive contribution to the nursery. Behaviour is very good and children respond well to the gentle guidance from trusted adults. They show a high level of cooperation with each other. For example, three children squeal with delight as they work together to make the rocking boat move.

Staff make relevant notes of their observations of children's learning and they use these generally effectively to help them plan the next steps in children's learning. However, there are inconsistencies in this process across the nursery which leads to some minor gaps in planning. This means that some children, or groups of children, make more consistent progress than others.

Children are particularly motivated to learn in the newly refurbished, stimulating garden. The area is a hive of activity as children share books, paint, make marks in the sand or build simple words using magnetic letters. They delight in energetically riding their bikes, climbing, balancing or hiding from each other in the tepees in their 'secret garden'. They are developing a good awareness of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. They happily eat a healthy range of foods at meal and snack times. They learn about which foods are good for them through active discussion with staff. Babies and younger children are settled and contented, showing that their individual needs for sleep, food and play are being met well.

Children demonstrate increasing independence as they carry out small tasks. For example, they tidy up, take themselves to the toilet and serve their own lunch. They are confident at organising their own play as well as taking part in a variety of adult-led activities. They really enjoy using books and can often be seen sharing stories both with adults and their friends.. Older children recognise letters and the sounds they make, and some are starting to build simple words. Children delight in retelling the story about three bears, enthusiastically exploring mathematical language, 'big', 'medium-sized' and 'small'. They count and solve problems in their play, for example, as they build with construction toys or count the number of teddies in the sorting bowls. Attractive displays throughout the nursery show children enjoy using a wide range of creative materials and they really enjoy splashing around in paint within the garden room. Babies enjoy the wide range of sensory activities provided, showing curiosity and enjoyment as they explore the coloured netting in their sensory area. Children use a good range of tools and small Montessori equipment and, as a result, they have well-developed pencil

control.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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