

Mars Montessori Bilingual Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	131709
Inspection date	31/10/2011
Inspector	Catherine Greene
Setting address	4 Collins Yard, London, N1 2XU
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Mars Montessori Bilingual Nursery was registered in 2000. It is a private nursery and operates from the ground floor of a building in the Angel area of the London borough of Islington. Children access two rooms and an enclosed outdoor play space. The nursery serves the local community, full and part time places are offered. They open each week day from 8am until 6pm for 47 weeks of the year. The setting is registered on the Early years and voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare register. They are registered to care for no more than 24 children under eight years, of these, not more than 24 may be in the early years age group. There are currently 36 children on roll all in the early years age range. Children are in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs ten staff and a cook. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Service in Islington and received a Quality Assurance award in 2006. The nursery uses the Montessori method of teaching combined with traditional early years practices.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are thoroughly settled and completely supported by the dedicated staff at this setting. Well-considered and highly positive partnerships with parents and others contribute to staff knowing and respecting each child's needs highly effectively. Overall, children are making excellent progress in their learning and development. A stimulating and enabling environment is provided where children's independence is fostered exceptionally well. Staff, parents and children contribute to improvement processes which are reflected in high quality self-evaluation. The setting is driven by a highly motivated and organised team.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase available resources to support children's awareness of diversity through everyday play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded through good measures that promote their welfare and safety at all times. Safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff are key priorities. Recruitment procedures are rigorous and very effective. Staff have received appropriate safeguarding training and role model good practice. Leaflets for parents and information documents for staff reinforce safeguarding messages. Risk assessments including the required records and comprehensive policy documents are in place. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in following the thorough policies that underpin robust safeguarding procedures at the setting. These measures all ensure that children's safety and welfare remains the setting's priority.

The manager demonstrates an exemplary commitment to driving improvement, recommendations set at the last inspection have been met and she is working closely with the local authority and directors to seek further improvement. This is reinforced by high quality self-evaluation that includes the views of parents and children. Staff are deployed very effectively to ensure that children are offered consistent care and security. Ongoing professional development and regular training is prioritised to support staff in further developing their knowledge and skills in early years and Montessori practice. As a result, staff are confident in supporting children's needs and knowing what to do if they have any concerns over their development. The setting is very well organised, the environment inspires learning and is cleverly designed and safe. Children can free flow between rooms and into the garden. All areas are very well resourced and maintained to a high standard providing children with a clean, comfortable and safe learning environment. Daily safety checks, which involve the children, are completed to ensure that hazards are removed and children can play safely.

High quality resources, which reflect all areas of learning and also the Montessori approach to learning, are easily accessible to the children promoting their independence and understanding of diversity in the wider world. The deputy manager, who has the lead for diversity, has identified this as an area in which they are keen to improve. Positive image resources currently, although of good quality, are not as readily available to children as they self-select and play. The managers are aware and very keen to remedy this.

Children's needs and routines are well known by the staff through the close and strong relationships formed with parents. Parents are very complimentary about the setting and how well and quickly their children settle and cannot wait to get to nursery. Discussions with parents reveal that they are extremely happy, their comments include: 'my child enjoys making good friends, staff are so friendly, flexible and supportive' and 'we are provided with progress reports that we are able to send to grandparents who live in another country'. Plenty of useful information is easily accessible and well presented notices are on display to keep parents informed. In order to encourage parents to feel even more involved with the setting, social events are organised and parents are invited to join their children on trips, such as, to the local park.

Staff have a highly developed awareness of supporting children's individual needs. They work very closely with other professionals to ensure that every child receives high quality care and education. The setting is committed to on-going partnerships, such as, when they are asked to attend strategy meetings to support on going educational needs for past children. This shows a great commitment to continuity and providing extra support for the children and parents using this setting. Parents really appreciate this and especially the support offered during transition to school for the older children.

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

Children really enjoy attending the setting and make excellent progress in their personal, social and educational development. The voice of children is highly valued, their likes and dislikes inform the planning of activities which are well thought out and based on what the children enjoy. They really enjoy playing with natural resources, singing and music and making and exploring the sensory activities, such as glitter and play dough. Their communication skills are fostered well as staff sensitively read their body language and verbalise or repeat emerging language. Children really enjoy reading books with the staff and listening and making links between the words and pictures in memory card games. They are clearly very settled, happy and content, making close and lasting friendships at this setting. They express themselves really clearly as they learn French alongside English. This enhances both their language development and cultural awareness. They are developing excellent communication skills and are able to ask assertively for help when it is needed.

Systems are in place for observation and assessment of children's progress and information gathered is used really efficiently to plan for their next steps in learning. Children make excellent progress, staff measure this, using key performance indicators supplied to the local authority. This system measures attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child's learning is attractively documented in files which contain samples of work, photographs and observations which are shared with parents, who are invited to make comments and contribute to this process. Profiles and diaries clearly show how each child will be challenged appropriately across all areas of learning including the additional Montessori area sensorial. This system monitors how well children are progressing in each development area.

The routines of the setting support children's access to the stimulating outdoor area throughout the day. High staff ratios mean that children are able to decide for themselves when they want to play and learn outside which allows them an enormous amount of autonomy. The development of a growing area contributes to children's understanding of the natural environment and encourages them out to enjoy fresh air and contact with the natural world. They develop their mobility and co-ordination really well negotiating the space and climbing through and under the frame, hiding from each other. Children develop their balance and control, while others roll and catch balls. Small world and creative resources are provided

outside and children sit on chairs and concentrate for some time looking at the various figures and creating fabulous glitter pictures. Their imagination is fostered as they create their own play in the home corner using props and dressing up clothes.

Children sleep according to their individual needs, and are checked regularly by staff to maintain their safety whilst asleep. All children have access to the different areas of the setting. Children benefit from playing with mixed ages, learning from each other and promoting a family environment. Children behave exceptionally well at the setting and parents and staff have observed the very positive impact their participation in nursery activities has had on their behaviour. They understand what is expected of them as they play and have lots of fun.

During the outing to the local park, a planned activity gives children direction such as looking for leaves and mini beasts with magnifying glasses. This encourages children to recognise, describe and compare the shape and size of the various leaves or look at the detail of the insects they find. Children begin to take measured risks as they balance on one tree stump and decide if they can step onto the next one controlling their movements. Children feel very safe at the setting and during outings. Safety arrangements are very robust and rigorous this ensures that children and adults work and play in a very safe environment. Staff promote road safety during the walk to the park, clear direction and other safety awareness is promoted through modelling and role play and this enhances children's awareness and understanding of risks and dangers.

Indoors children self-select activities from the range of Montessori resources, with children setting up their own 'work' area independently. They become engaged and concentrate well as they struggle to fit the right shape cylinder into the graded slots. Other children draw and colour, using the craft materials to design and make their own projects. Songs are sung in different languages and as the setting have a diverse group of staff they can talk to and help children to learn about other languages and cultures such as French and Italian.

All areas of the setting are clean and very attractively presented, keeping children safe and healthy. Children follow good personal hygiene routines, which are promoted by the staff's good role modelling. Healthy, freshly prepared meals are offered which the children really enjoy. Staff eat lunch with the children and use this as a wonderful opportunity to talk about food and have conversations with children. At meal times children manipulate tongs and pour their own drinks developing control and co-ordination, as they make healthy choices from the nutritious fruits and vegetables on offer.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met