

# The Dolphin Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspector</b>	Jenna Hamilton-Heward

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<b>Type of setting</b>	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**

The Dolphin Montessori School registered in 1989. It operates from one large hall with two adjacent rooms. It is situated in the London Borough of Camden. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 20 children at any one time. There are currently 23 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. It is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm, term time only. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. It receives funding to provide some free early education to children aged three and four years. The nursery employs three members of staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager holds a BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies. The nursery receives support from the local authority advisory teacher and the area special educational needs co-ordinator. The nursery is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and make good progress overall due to the nurturing support they receive from the dedicated team of staff. The nursery's strong overall commitment to promoting equality and diversity enables all children to develop high levels of self-esteem, together with care and respect of others. Excellent relationships have been established with parents and, together with strong partnerships with outside professionals, ensure all children's needs are well supported. Effective self-evaluation makes sure that priorities for development are identified and acted on. Consequently, outcomes for children are good and staff demonstrate a strong capacity to maintain improvement.

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

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

- encourage children to take further responsibilities and to join in by helping with manageable tasks that interest them
- extend further children's access to a range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, to allow them to acquire and practice useful skills for their future lives as often as possible.

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

Staff share a good range of fully inclusive policies and procedures with parents, and these are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain effective and reflect current practice. Detailed information about each child is obtained and accurately recorded. These effective systems mean that children receive safe and individualised care. The vigilant staff team check the environment is safe and secure due to an effective risk assessment process and good staff deployment. They consistently make sure all areas of the premises that are accessible to the children are checked each day. This thoroughness enables the children to make good use of the space and move around safely. The staff attend safeguarding training so that they are always up to date in their practice. Effective procedures are in place for identifying any child at risk of harm, including liaising with the appropriate agencies. The required checks for adults working directly with children are carried out and children are always appropriately supervised. Consequently, the arrangements for safeguarding children are robust.

Children benefit from the high aspirations of the manager and staff team who all have a clear vision to establish themselves as a community nursery that helps children prepare for life, as well as possible. A positive equality and diversity policy anchors a commitment to be fully inclusive and ensures that all children have good opportunities to achieve, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. The staff regularly reflect on their practice, embracing new ideas and ways of working. Staff appraisals encourage team members to review how they work, and staff discuss any concerns and plans for improvement at their regular meetings. The nursery has made a number of improvements since the last inspection; it continues to review the provision, planning further useful improvements.

Staff welcome the input of outside advisory services and attend 'cluster meetings' with other early years professionals in the area to further drive improvement through sharing good practice. With effective self-evaluation and a useful action plan, the manager has successfully considered many of the nursery's strengths and identified areas for development. Both planning and use of the premises are continually developed and improved, both indoors and outside; consequently, the available space is used effectively to support children's learning and development. Overall, resources are of high quality and used to provide enticing environments, although, staff offer ICT resources less frequently.

The nursery has excellent partnerships with parents as they, and other carers, are warmly welcomed into the nursery and excellent relationships have been forged. Parents discuss their children on a daily basis and staff keep them informed of any changes or concerns. Parents are fully involved in their own child's learning and development and have nothing but praise for the staff. They report that their children are flourishing and that they feel able to support development, as staff are always on hand to give ideas and suggestions for how to extend learning at home. Staff provide parents with regular informative newsletters, invite them to share coffee mornings, and parents come into the nursery regularly to read stories in their home languages. Children's experiences are enhanced because of these

highly effective communication systems.

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

All children achieve well overall across each area of learning and greatly enjoy their time at nursery. The children delight in using in a very well resourced outside area. The outdoor spaces are set out with a large selection of interesting activities. Children choose from an extensive range of other good quality resources kept in low storage units positioned around the garden. They readily engage in activities such as water and sand play, or play imaginatively in the role play area; they happily use the resources including arts and crafts materials and books. Staff are attentive and readily join children at their chosen play when appropriate.

Children form secure relationships with enthusiastic, well-motivated staff; all show genuine pleasure when they greet each other at the start of sessions. Young children receive close and supportive attention to assist them in attaining new skills, smiling proudly when they successfully complete a task. Staff use positive and encouraging vocabulary to encourage and build children's confidence and self-esteem. Their good use of questioning stimulates children's language, especially those who learn English as an additional language. Consequently, children concentrate and persist at chosen activities, use their imaginations well and produce highly original ideas. Children thoroughly enjoy circle time together and show great delight in choosing from a variety of musical instruments. The staff encourage children to listen carefully to the music and try to play their instruments to the beat. There is a constant flow of conversation as children engage in regular discussion with their friends and staff, while engaged in play. All these activities help children develop the skills they need for future learning effectively overall, although they have fewer chances to practise their developing skills in ICT, as the necessary equipment is not offered so regularly.

The staff team has an effective system in place for observation and assessment for each child. This includes completing attractive and highly individualised 'learning journey' records that effectively reflect children's progress and achievements. Children are gaining a good understanding of the wider world. They have regular access to a wide range of books and toys that show positive images of diversity, and they take part in activities linked to various cultural festivals or traditional events. Outings are also regularly made into the local environment to develop children's understanding of the natural world and the community in which they live.

Children are friendly and very sociable. They develop good levels of independence overall, such as managing their self-care routines with confidence and minimal support; however, staff miss some opportunities in the daily routines to encourage children to take on small tasks, such as serving themselves drinks, as jugs provided are too heavy for them to lift. Children understand the need to use tools, such as cutlery, responsibly. They follow important safety routines, such as emergency evacuation drills, carefully.

Children's health and well-being are promoted well as staff consistently encourage good hygiene practices. For example, they remind some children to wash their hands before eating, explaining why this is important, but older and more capable children already understand the need to do this. Staff help children learn about the food cycle encouraging planting activities outdoors. When fruit and vegetables are harvested, children learn that these must be washed before they are eaten. The nursery also runs weekly cooking sessions for the children to follow recipes. Parents receive useful advice on the provision of healthy lunches.

## 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>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### 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>	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	1

### 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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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**

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