

Step By Step Montessori - Mill Hill

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	02/07/2012
Inspector	Helen Steven

Setting address	2 Belgrave Close, LONDON, NW7 3QG
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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

Step by Step Montessori - Mill Hill is one of two provisions privately run. The nursery registered in January 2012 and opened in April 2012. It operates from a purpose-built building, affording children three rooms and an adjacent outdoor play area. The nursery is in Mill Hill, within the London Borough of Barnet. It is open each weekday from 9.00am to 4.00pm for 48 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 41 children in the early years age range may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 24 children on roll. The nursery is also registered to care for children up to the age of eight, although there are currently no children on roll in this age range. However, there are plans to provide out of school provision in the future.

The nursery operates a Montessori educational philosophy and provides funded early education for children. They support children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language.

There are five core staff members, including the manager, who hold relevant qualifications. In addition there are specific sessions during the week run by other adults, facilitating activities such as Mandarin, French, cooking, 'stretch 'n' grow' and music and movement.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children thrive in a safe and welcoming environment. Overall the nursery is well organised and resourced to enable children to make good progress in their learning. The management and staff team are friendly and enthusiastic; they have good systems in place for reviewing and reflecting on their practice to continually improve the quality of the provision. The staff team have excellent relationships with parents and other agencies so that children can receive the care they require. Comprehensive systems are in place for documentation, although required information is not all in place for each child.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure written parental permission to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment

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in the future is in place for each and every child
(Safeguarding and welfare)

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

- develop the environment and strengthen planning for learning opportunities to encourage children's interest and curiosity across all areas of learning in the outdoor area
- create areas in which children can sit and chat with friends, such as a snug den.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Although this is the first inspection for this registration, it is an established nursery which moved to new premises. The staff team and children are settling in to their bright and welcoming new setting and are still in the process of organising and developing some of the areas. Children are protected because staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures and know when to take action to protect children in their care. Ongoing training is organised to ensure the team keep their understanding of safeguarding updated. Robust recruitment procedures are in place and appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers. Risk assessments are in place for the building and the provider has a system in place to reduce hazards when they begin to undertake outings to enhance children's learning.

Overall there are comprehensive policies and procedures in place for the organisation, which the provider is reviewing to ensure they reflect this specific provision. There are systems in place for required documentation to meet the welfare needs of children. However, emergency medical consent is not in place for each and every child. This is a breach of a specific legal requirement. Involvement in a quality assurance programme has enabled the staff team to identify strengths and areas that they wish to develop. The provider ensures staff have access to ongoing training. As a result, they are demonstrating a commitment to making ongoing improvements.

The indoor learning environment is largely very well organised and the rooms are bright, clean and welcoming. The low level shelving throughout the nursery enables children to self-select from a vast range of good quality Montessori resources. However, the adjacent outdoor space is not used to its full potential. Currently, it is not resourced, organised and planned effectively to fully enhance children's development in all areas of learning.

Children's individual needs are known by their key workers through detailed records taken at the start of the placements. Children are taught to treat everybody equally and with respect. They are encouraged to talk about their own backgrounds and learn about families whose culture and beliefs are different to their own. The setting is highly committed to working in partnerships with others and takes a lead role in establishing effective working relationships. Transition processes are excellent as channels of communication between schools are forged in order to support children's seamless transition. Relationships with parents and

carers are very positive. Parents' views are sought through questionnaires and these show that parents are very happy with the setting. They have the opportunity to attend regular coffee mornings and some are directly involved in offering learning experiences for children, for example, teaching them Mandarin. They have opportunities to view their children's profiles and contribute at regular parent conferences. They value the ideas given to them to enable them to support their children's learning at home. Parents comment that it is a 'really good environment' and they like the Montessori approach. They feel that the staff are 'really nice', 'thorough, firm and nurturing' and they are 'focused on the children'.

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

Children have settled well into the new nursery premises. They are confident and have a strong sense of belonging. They work exceptionally well independently, and with their peers, showing excellent negotiation and co-operation skills. Children behave very well and show an excellent awareness of responsibility within the setting. They make choices about their play, put items back when finished and clean up after themselves. Staff are excellent role models and speak to the children and each other calmly and with respect. They explain their expectations and offer meaningful praise and lots of encouragement.

Children throughout the nursery make good progress towards the early learning goals as staff plan and provide interesting and challenging activities indoors. There is a balance between child-led activities and adult-led activities. Information from parents and staff's observations help to establish children's starting points.

Photographs illustrate children's involvement in a wide range of activities and demonstrate their development towards the early learning goals. There are good systems in place for monitoring children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals and Montessori targets.

Children have many opportunities to develop their mathematical skills as there are vast numbers of resources which support this. For example, children are completing puzzles, sorting numbers, counting wooden rods and working out simple calculations. Children shows visitors their new invention 'The wheeler wash', they place a metal cup on a washing up brush and swirl it around so it cleans the entire inside. They are introduced to the pleasure of books as they read independently and enjoy group stories with staff. However, no 'cosy' areas have been developed to encourage children to communicate amongst themselves to further develop their communication skills.

Children explore items from the nature table. They investigate the shapes and texture of shells and examine pine cones with a magnifying glass. Books, maps and artefacts help children learn about the lives of others. All children have the opportunity to learn French and Mandarin. Some positive images are on display throughout the setting, although community languages are not overtly in evidence. Children are soon to have access to information communication technology, such as laptops, and an interactive whiteboard is being made accessible. This will further develop their skills for the future.

Children's creativity is enhanced by opportunities to paint freely on the easel, although some arts and crafts are adult directed. Children freely use scissors and

stick glue to display words they have written on coloured paper. There are opportunities every day for children to have time for physical play and fresh air. Although the outdoor space is adjacent, there is not currently a free-flow between the areas; however staff are looking at ways to address this. Children develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, for example, they self-select fruit and prepare these themselves when they are hungry. They are aware that they need to wash their hands prior to eating their snack and are diligent in cleaning and washing up in preparation for the next person. They access drinks throughout the day and those who stay all day enjoy nutritious lunches provided by their parents. Staff are aware of children's dietary restrictions, in order to support their individual needs. Opportunities to grow delicious strawberries to eat introduce children to sustainability. Children's understanding of safety issues is demonstrated through their play as they tuck chairs under tables and pick up toys that they notice on the floor. They are beginning to understand how to keep themselves safe in an emergency as fire drills are being undertaken.

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	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	1
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

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	1
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