

The Maria Montessori Children's House

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	138248
Inspection date	23/03/2009
Inspector	Helen Deegan
Setting address	122-124 Kingston Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 1LY
Telephone number	020 8543 6353
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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.

Description of the setting

The Maria Montessori Children's house became registered in 1999.

It operates from St John's ambulance hall in South Wimbledon. The group have sole use of the premises during the day, which consists of a main hall, kitchen, 2 bathrooms and an enclosed outdoor play area. The Children's house serves the local area.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children aged from two to five may attend at any one time. There are currently 30 children on roll. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:30 until 15:00 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and from 9:30 until 12:30 on Tuesday and Friday.

There are six members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to level three. Three staff also have a Montessori Diploma. The setting receives support from local authority advisors. The setting operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Children's individual learning needs are well supported by the experienced staff team and appropriate systems are in place for observation, assessment and planning. Staff create an extremely enabling environment in which children can independently access a stimulating range of activities. Children behave well because staff manage behaviour positively. Staff informally evaluate their provision but do not have clearly identified targets in place for ongoing improvement. Children gain positive messages about diversity as they play with resources which reflect different race, culture and disability and all children are fully included within the setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop children's opportunities to access the outdoor area
- continue to develop self-evaluation in particular to target specific areas for development

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff:child ratios are easily met at the setting and all staff are qualified. They meet together regularly as a team and staff appraisals take place. Staff are supported to attend ongoing training to develop their knowledge. An effective key person system is in place and staff know their key children well. This ensures that all children are well supported.

Managers have thoroughly addressed weaknesses raised at the last inspection. They continually evaluate their provision and make changes as necessary, however, they have not formalised this into a working document as yet.

Children's safety is protected because two staff have first aid training and appropriate procedures are in place for the recording of accidents, incidents and medication. Furthermore, staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and an appropriate safeguarding policy is in place. Risk assessments are completed and a safe environment is maintained. Children's health is supported by the healthy snacks and drinks that are provided. Children can play outside during the session, however, outdoor play is restricted to five children at a time until a group outdoor session takes place later in the session. Staff take indoor activities into the outdoor area but opportunities to explore and learn about nature outside are limited.

Parents are well informed about the setting via newsletters, notice boards, regular written feedback about their child's progress, one to one feedback sessions with their child's key person each term and open mornings. Information about the setting's policies are available to them in the entrance area. Parents are asked to provide detailed information about their child's care and development when they begin at the setting. This enables staff to meet their individual needs appropriately. Parents are also regularly invited to complete written feedback about the setting.

The staff team are skilled in responding to the children's needs and interests and support play well. They ask open ended questions, which encourage children to think and allow children to be independent and try things out for themselves. They are highly effective in managing behaviour positively. For example, when, towards the end of a group music activity a couple of children began to talk to each other, the staff member gently sang "are you listening, are you listening x?" the children responded well by focusing again on their music activity.

Children learn about diversity as they play with good quality resources and see images which positively reflect different race, culture, language and disability. Staff liaise with parents and local authority advisory staff to ensure that they fully meet the needs of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. They also invite parents to share any knowledge or skills they may have with the children. This has included parents sharing information about religious festivals that they celebrate.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children have good opportunities to make progress in all areas of their learning and development. Staff record observations of the children and use the information effectively when carrying out planned activities to ensure that sufficient challenge is provided for all children. Children are enabled to become independent learners within the setting because the environment is extremely accessible and stimulating. Children confidently access the wide range of interesting activities that are available to them and play purposefully. They are clear what is expected of them and behave respectfully to staff and each other. For example, when children choose to have their snack and drink they independently wash their hands. They then take a plate and help themselves to fresh fruit and bread and butter, pour themselves a drink of milk or water and sit down to eat. Conversations take place as the children eat and when they have finished they wash their plate and cup and return to their play. Within each area of play are a wide range of activities such as spoons, jugs, containers, water and lentils for experimenting with pouring, filling and capacity in the 'practical life' area.

Children learn about the world and nature as they grow plants and explore natural objects such as shells, rocks, moss, teasles and branches with budding leaves and flowers. They talk about the day, month, season and weather at group time. When a child celebrates their birthday they do the 'birthday walk' whereby they walk around a sun once for each year of their life and look at photos of themselves when they were younger. Children speak confidently to staff and each other, they independently access books and handle them appropriately. Children's physical development is promoted as they play outdoors on the slide, rockers, and wheeled toys. They enjoy using a measuring tape to measure objects and use mathematical language, such as long and short, when using the Montessori maths equipment. Children learn to use electronic equipment as they independently play tapes and CDs and put on the headphones to listen to them. Staff hold regular meetings with the children to find out what they like or dislike about the setting. If children request changes staff adapt the provision accordingly. For example, one child requested a change of snacks and asked for cheese and biscuits which the staff provided. This shows children that staff value their opinions and helps them to feel confident within the setting.

Children receive healthy and nutritious snacks and drinks which support their individual dietary needs. Parents are asked to provide a packed lunch for children who stay at the setting over the lunch time period. Staff complete risk assessments and are effective in maintaining a secure, clean environment in which children can play safely. Parents speak very positively about the setting and are well informed about their children's progress.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	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