

# Sakutu Organisation Montessori

Independent School

Inspection report

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DfES Registration Number	304/6078
Unique Reference Number	132068
Inspection number	307257
Inspection dates	1-2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Eileen McAndrew AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

The Sakutu Montessori School is an independent, co-educational school for pupils aged five to eleven. Admission is non-selective. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. At the time of the inspection there were six pupils on roll. It is situated in a residential part of Dollis Hill in north London. The school was originally registered in other premises in 2001 by the present proprietor who is also the headteacher. The school reflects the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori. The school aims to increase pupils' 'independence and intellectual development offering the maximum freedom within a structured environment.'

## Evaluation of the school

The Sakutu Organisation Montessori School successfully meets its aim. The educational provision is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and interesting and the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a thorough understanding of pupils' strengths and needs and encourage them to pursue aspects of a subject which really interest them. Pupils make good progress and become increasingly effective learners. The personal development of pupils is a strength. Some aspects of the welfare, health and safety of pupils are inadequate because policies are out of date. Pupils are happy to be in the school and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and pleased with the education their children receive. The school meets most, but not all of the regulations.

## Quality of education

The school provides a satisfactory, broad and interesting curriculum. It is modelled effectively on the Montessori philosophy of individualised education matched to the child's assessed needs. The curriculum is well supported by planning and appropriate materials. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and, where appropriate, links are made to the programmes of study. The 'sensorial' curriculum strengthens learning through the consistent use of a wide variety of apparatus and materials.

Detailed curriculum planning draws together elements from various subjects to form projects, helping pupils to make effective connections between different areas of

learning. These topics are revisited throughout the primary years at levels appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. English, mathematics and science are also taught as discrete subjects, ensuring good progress in literacy and numeracy.

The curriculum is extended by specialist teaching in music, physical education, swimming and French. Visits out of school to museums and galleries contribute exciting and enjoyable experiences which enhance learning.

The quality of teaching is good, resulting in pupils making good progress. The teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subjects taught, and are highly experienced in planning the Montessori curriculum. The teaching is effectively planned to cater for the needs of individuals while maintaining a strong emphasis on social development within the class group. The number of pupils is small and teachers know the pupils well, so they are able to give them precise targeted support. Teachers pose searching questions, improving the quality of pupils' thinking. Pupils are lively and active learners, able to concentrate for extended periods and to choose specialist apparatus to support and reinforce their learning.

The strong focus on speaking and listening helps pupils to become articulate and confident speakers. Teachers apply the principle that pupils should take the initiative and pursue areas of personal interest, and this contributes significantly to pupils becoming independent learners. Teachers successfully plan the yearly cycle of topics to ensure that pupils build on previous knowledge skills and understanding through repetition and exploration. In response, pupils understand that they must make their work reflect their increasing age and maturity by improving its quality and complexity.

Systems for assessment are satisfactory. Marking is regular and conscientious. Weekly planning specifies the target learning for each child in core areas, and teachers assess progress, systematically compiling a record of the progress and identifying what will be learned next. This process helps teachers to plan effectively. The school usefully carries out some validated tests to compare pupils' performance with children of the same age nationally.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good. An ethos of mutual respect pervades this small school. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good. The staff encourage and support the pupils, who respond by trying hard at their work and behaving very well.

Pupils become increasingly self-reliant, adopting greater responsibility for their work. They believe they make good progress which will help them as they grow up. They take pride in their work and satisfaction from their achievement. Older pupils show maturity and unselfconsciously support younger ones in the classroom and at play.

They contribute to the life of the school and the wider community through their creative contributions to events such as Cultural Days.

Behaviour is outstanding. The 'Golden rules' give pupils a clear moral code and they are able to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is consistently very good. Snack and lunch times are enjoyable social occasions where older and younger children talk animatedly of things which interest them.

Pupils begin to appreciate diversity by studying other people's beliefs and the festivals of major world faiths. The 'cultural' curriculum provides good opportunities in history, geography and science for pupils to investigate their own and others' cultural heritage and values.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The staff have very positive relationships with pupils, creating an ethos in which pupils feel valued, confident and secure. Nonetheless, the provision for the welfare health and safety of pupils is inadequate overall. The child protection policy identifies a designated person, but neither she nor other members of staff have received appropriate training. The policy covering the health and safety of pupils on visits out of school does not take sufficient account of Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance. In addition, where the school has adopted policies from other institutions, it does not always ensure that these are accurately customised to the circumstances of this school. The school has recognised the need to update policies and this work has begun.

Some aspects of welfare and safety are good: fire prevention and fire-fighting procedures are comprehensive and equipment is regularly checked by specialist providers. Records are securely kept. First-Aid is well supported by a clear, detailed policy and qualified staff.

Aspects of nutrition and healthy eating are explored in curricular topics and reinforced through daily snack and lunch times. Similarly, the importance of exercise as part of healthy living, and the avoidance of potential dangers to health are well understood by pupils.

The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff have been subject to satisfactory clearance with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level. However, the school does not carry out other essential checks before staff appointments are confirmed. These omissions are itemised later in this report.

## School's premises and accommodation

The premises have been extended providing an attractive learning environment for pupils. Teaching areas are organised well so that materials and resources are readily available to pupils helping them to develop good habits of independent learning. In two areas the carpeted flooring is uneven and presents a trip hazard.

Improvements have been carried out to provide grassed outdoor play space for pupils, but the work is not yet complete. Small pieces of rubble present a hazard to pupils' safety and the shed awaiting demolition takes up much needed space.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a range of good quality information for its parents. The prospectus includes a useful introduction to the Montessori curriculum and lists the range of policies which support the school's provision.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints policy meets some, but not all, of the requirements.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils in the school in compliance with DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- improve and implement the policy on the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school, having regard to DfES guidance *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* (paragraph 3(2)(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, carry out appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and where appropriate, qualifications and professional references (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

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- refit the carpet in the teaching areas and ensure that the edges and joints are secure (paragraph 5(s))
  - remove all rubble from the grassed area and demolish the shed in the corner of the site (paragraph 5(t)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- provide for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))
- ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g))
- ensure that the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that the complainant, the proprietor and headteacher, and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7 (i)).

## School details

Name of school	Sakutu Organisation Montessori		
DfES number	304/6078		
Unique reference number	132068		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 2000		
Age range of pupils	5 - 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 2	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: Nil	Girls: Nil	Total: Nil
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4,500-£ 5000		
Address of school	346 Dollis Hill Lane London NW2 6HL		
Telephone number	07961181162		
Email address	No email		
Headteacher	Mrs Filmah Doherty		
Proprietor	Sakutu Organisation		
Reporting inspector	Eileen McAndrew AI		
Dates of inspection	1-2 May 2007		