

St Andrews Montessori

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Anneliese Fox-Jones

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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

St Andrew's Montessori is a nursery run by Little Acorn Nursery Schools Ltd. It opened in 1999 and operates from several rooms in an extensively modified church hall. It is situated in a residential area in Thornhill in the London borough of Islington. All children share access to an enclosed garden area. The nursery is open each weekday for 33 weeks of the year for morning, afternoon or full day sessions. Morning sessions are from 8.45am to 12pm and afternoon sessions are from 1pm to 3pm except on Fridays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. They are registered to care for no more than 70 children under eight years, of whom none may be under two years. There are currently 55 children on roll in the early years age range. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year olds. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eleven members of staff including the Principal and the Head of Nursery. All hold appropriate early years qualifications and the Montessori Diploma. The Head of Nursery holds an advanced Montessori Diploma and one member of staff has Early Years Professional Status. The setting is a Montessori accredited nursery.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Expert knowledge of each child's needs enables staff to successfully enhance their welfare and learning. Children make outstanding progress in most areas and staff take positive steps to keep them safe and exceptionally secure. Overall, the positive partnerships with parents and other agencies are significant in making sure that the needs of all children are met. Regular self-evaluation and high expectations ensure that priorities for development are successfully identified and acted on. The nursery takes excellent steps in order to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- providing further equipment and resources that offer physical challenges to children at different levels of development

- involving parents further in their child's continuous learning and development, with particular regard to encouraging them to make a contribution to assessments and planning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's well-being is paramount. Robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure that staff are experienced and suitable to work within their roles. Staff take full responsibility for informing management if they are concerned that others are not suitable to work with children. They are very confident in the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. All staff are responsible in ensuring that children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. This is supported through robust risk assessments of all areas. Children are cared for by experienced staff who are dedicated and hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Senior management are exceptionally successful at inspiring the team and this ensures staff are motivated in their roles.

Children access a stimulating and inclusive learning environment. They explore an extensive range of high quality resources that are set out in Montessori style to promote their independence and self-exploration. Staff provide high levels of support as they are effectively deployed throughout the provision. They effectively help children to learn about and understand the society in which they live. Children learn to develop friendships and respect others, regardless of their individual backgrounds. Toys, resources and experiences promoting positive images of diversity are plentiful and help children learn about differences. There are excellent support systems in place for children attending with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The nursery promotes reflective practice through rigorous self-evaluation systems. For example, all staff are responsible for evaluating the experiences that they provide for children. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss all aspects of the provision along with areas for improvement. Effective partnerships between staff, parents and the children support their ability to share ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Children benefit from staff's positive partnerships with parents which contribute to their individual needs being met effectively. The nursery uses various methods of communication to keep parents well informed. For example, parents receive detailed information about the educational programme and reports on children's achievements and progress. Parents have weekly opportunities to observe their children and regular meetings with staff to discuss their progress. These close partnerships help to promote a shared approach to children's care and learning. Although parents share knowledge about their child, they not contribute fully to their ongoing assessment records which would involve them further in their learning. The nursery works closely with other schools and professionals in order to ensure a consistent approach to individual children's care and education.

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

Children flourish in this stimulating and calm environment. Staff know the children exceptionally well and are aware of their individual needs, interests and preferences. They strive to ensure that children have fun and enjoy all aspects of their time in the nursery. Children have built excellent and trusting relationships with staff. They eagerly participate in an extensive range of exciting and stimulating activities which cover all areas of learning. Their work is attractively displayed which gives them a sense of pride and belonging. They display exemplary behaviour. They are polite and respectful and their behaviour is supported through clear behaviour management strategies. They show the ability to share, take turns and manage their own behaviour highly effectively

Staff support the individual choices made by the children very well. As a result children sort and count various objects and enjoy opportunities to build and construct using large building blocks. Staff have a very good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, how this links to the Montessori curriculum and how young children learn. As a result outcomes for children are excellent. Staff monitor children's progress highly effectively as they continually observe their achievements and use these findings to plan for their unique learning needs.

Children use their time in the nursery very well and show willingness to explore possibilities for themselves. Staff effectively follow children's interests and develop their ideas through mini-topics. There are various opportunities for children to explore creatively, expressing their own ideas in painting and investigating materials. They thoroughly enjoy music and imaginative play. They benefit from regular visits by various teachers in French, ballet and computers. They are developing excellent communication, language and literacy skills. For example they share books, experiment with mark making in various forms and have many opportunities to become familiar with the written word. Children use an extensive range of equipment to help them progress in their numeracy and problem solving. They count, sort various two and three dimensional shapes and use many puzzles to reinforce their understanding of number, patterns, position and sequences. Staff skilfully encourage children to use their senses to explore their surroundings and make sense of the world. For example, they pour, sweep and use various fabrics and natural materials in their play.

Children feel very safe and secure. They are encouraged to think about their personal safety as they practise fire evacuation procedures. Staff help them to gain an excellent understanding of safety issues by inviting police and fire officers into the nursery. Children follow a healthy lifestyle by participating in regular outdoor activities. They enjoy being outdoors, where they enthusiastically play with toys such as hoops and musical instruments. However, activities and resources are not sufficiently physically challenging for all age groups. Children are supported to develop a positive attitude to keeping fit and healthy. They are offered healthy nutritious snacks which supports their good health.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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	2
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