

Shining Stars Montessori Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY364505
Inspection date	15 July 2008
Inspector	Elizabeth Ellen Mackey
Setting Address	Pratts Bottom Village Hall, Norsted lane, Pratts Bottom, Orpington, BR6 7PB
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Registered person	Natural Learners Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Shining Stars Montessori Pre-School was registered in 2007. It is a privately owned group managed by the owner who has a Montessori childcare qualification. The pre-school operates from a village hall situated in the London Borough of Bromley. There is a large hall with associated toilets and kitchen. A secure small garden is available for outdoor play. The pre-school opens 38 weeks a year during term time only. It opens from Monday to Friday between 09.15 and 12.15 each day. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered for 26 children between two and under five years at any one time. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently 35 children on roll, of whom 15 receive funding for early years education.

The setting employs five childcare staff, all of whom either hold an appropriate Early Years qualification or are working towards one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in very clean and well maintained premises. Their growth and development is promoted extremely well. Parents supply a variety of fruits for children to enjoy at snack time, which they eat when they choose to. Children demonstrate they understand which foods they should eat to keep themselves healthy by talking about the fruit kebabs they are making to take home. Children's dietary needs are known and a record is maintained of any allergies. Children access fresh water independently from a jug that is kept on a low table throughout the session, this ensures they remain hydrated.

Children receive excellent adult support and guidance in their personal care routines. Children are developing a good understanding of personal hygiene and a real desire to be independent in their personal care. This is evident as they independently use a water barrel in the room when they need to. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate, which means there is always someone on site to deal with minor accidents and injuries.

Superior policies are in place that underpin the excellent practice to promote children's health. These include a comprehensive risk assessment and accident and medication policy.

Older children move confidently and show good coordination. Their hand to eye coordination develops well and is supported by easy access to tools to develop their fine motor skills including Montessori materials, brushes, pencils and computer mouse.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use a wide range of toys and resources that are stimulating, clean and maintained in good condition. The environment is planned and organised to ensure children can independently access resources and therefore be independent in making choices about their play. This is enhanced by the free flow system which enables children to play in the secure outside area when they choose.

Superior policies and procedures underpin the safety aspect of the provision and include effective risk assessments and a daily checklist to ensure any hazards are quickly identified and dealt with. Children are learning to keep themselves safe on outings as they practise road safety, they are mindful of others in the setting and respectful of the boundaries in place. Fire safety checks are in place and evacuation is practised with the children so they are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency.

Children are safeguarded because the staff have attended relevant training and have a good awareness of their role and responsibility in safeguarding children's welfare. There is a comprehensive policy, which includes the procedure for allegations against staff and parents are aware of it.

Recruitment is rigorous and thorough to ensure the suitability of staff; there is a detailed induction programme in place. The staff's professional development is very well supported through the appraisal system and access to training. Staff are very well deployed and the setting ensures the staff ratio is above the requirements. This ensures there is a member of staff overseeing the session. Their role includes ensuring resources and activities remain organised

and not accessible to the younger children. The pre-school more than meet the required ratio of qualified staff and further training is actively encouraged.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and settled in the setting and have excellent relationships with staff. This is fostered by the high adult to child ratio and the skilful deployment of staff. Key workers know their children very well and through discussion and team planning all staff are aware of children's individual needs. Staff make extremely good use of questions to extend learning, such as 'what do you think will make it work?', 'how shall we do that?', 'happens if?' or 'how many more do you think we need?' As a result, the children are motivated and spend long periods of time engaged in meaningful play. Children concentrate very well and persevere with challenges including physical challenges, for example when practising the obstacle race for sports day. Children are helped to build on their existing skills by being able to access an extensive range of resources and activities. These are stored at low level and set out to encourage the children to initiate their own play, for example in the role play seaside café, children pretend to serve snacks and drinks. The environment is stimulating, encouraging exploration and discovery and the free flow enable children's autonomy.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff team have a good awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework and they actively ensure their Montessori framework incorporates both, so all aims are met. The team are well supported by the enthusiastic management team, the provider who is also the manager, has just gained early years professional status.

Planning is superior and clearly identifies and incorporates aims for individual children in the group. All staff make observations as children play or participate in planned activities. These are used by key workers to assess children's progress and identify their next steps, towards the early learning goals. The planning is clear, concise and it ensures there is a balance across the six areas of learning.

The children are very confident and keen to get involved in the activities. They have their own tray where they can put work to take home or store personal items. This helps them develop a sense of pride. They eagerly bring their belongings to show their parents when they arrive. Children gain independence as they enjoy the free flow approach in operation and they can independently move around the setting, which they confidently manage. Children show care and consideration towards others and are happy to help. For example, they collectively complete a puzzle and share books together. Children happily talk about themselves and their lives, showing interest in others.

Children's communication skills are well supported. There is lots of communication during activities and staff help children's pronunciation and their enjoyment of sound and phonics. Children listen well to stories and enjoy joining in with familiar books. There is easy access to writing materials and children are able to access a range of interesting resources during outdoor play or role play. As the children differentiate and recognise sounds, they begin the process of word building and then blending sounds into meaningful reading. A graduated reading programme takes children from small simple phonic words through to larger non-phonetic words.

Children count confidently throughout the session as they play or during activities. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They recognise the properties of simple shapes. The older children are easily able to say what number is one more, helping with their learning about simple calculation.

There are opportunities for children to explore different materials and textures. They gain a sense of place as they study topics, such as 'passport to the world', where they explore the cultures of different countries and learn about how others live around the world. Topics are made more exciting by the imaginative planning. For example, children experience through play, a Japanese tea party, Indian dressing up and a Chinese café, this helps to bring the topics alive. Parents and children contribute to this and bring things in from home to share. Children also contribute to items on the interest table, this is currently linked to the seaside theme and has a colourful range of interesting items for children to explore, including seaweed, shells and stones. Children enjoy spending time in the garden, where they paint, play with the water and enjoy physical challenges. The outdoor area lacks some of the imagination and interest that is inside and a recommendation is made for this area to be developed to extend the learning environment outside. Children form very good friendships, there is lots of fun and laughter and the children demonstrate a sense of belonging in the group. The setting has to be packed away daily, however staff work hard to ensure that this does not hinder the creation of a child centred environment. Children's artwork is creatively displayed, which shows them it is highly valued.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel at home in the nursery because the staff understand their varying needs. They help children to feel good about themselves and encourage them to show a caring attitude towards each other by their meaningful use of praise. For instance, the adults frequently say 'well done!' or 'that's clever' and they talk to children about their achievements. Children show pleasure when showing staff and their parents what they have done, which helps to develop their self-esteem. All children are able to access a range of age-appropriate resources that contain positive images to encourage them to value diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are confident, polite and able to make friends easily. They have planned opportunities to learn about the faiths and beliefs of others through discussing festivals, such as Chinese New Year and St Georges Day. Children behave very well and the staff are positive role models, creating a calm and consistent environment, this helps children to be aware of the boundaries in place and accepted behaviour.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support to meet their additional needs because the staff are committed to working in partnership with their parents and other professionals to achieve appropriate individual education plans. There are well-developed procedures in place to guide staff if children appear not to be making progress and there are identified members of staff to co-ordinate care for children having additional needs.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents and carers are made to feel very welcome and they receive plenty of information about the setting and curriculum information. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's

learning, however this does not happen at the initial stages, therefore a clear baseline assessment of children's starting points is not obtained. Parents are informed in advance of the planned themes which gives them an opportunity to contribute. For example, they might be asked to bring in something from home or to look out for something of interest on their way home. Parents speak positively about the pre- school and say 'it's always very friendly and the children have so much choice. They are pleased about their children's progress and they comment 'my child loves coming here, it's a lovely environment, I can't praise it highly enough'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being looked after by a committed, enthusiastic staff team. They enjoy their time at the setting, which is bright, interesting and welcoming. Children receive excellent support because practitioners are focussed on the children and strive to ensure individual needs are met. Staff show commitment and dedication to enhancing children's care and development as they plan and effectively implement the Birth to three matters framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The nursery manager and her deputy have worked conscientiously in providing training and support to improve practitioners knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning. Superior planning demonstrates their understanding, with emphasis on personal, social and emotional development running through key areas of learning. Practitioners are very knowledgeable and share ideas for future plans, incorporating the individual needs of children. Planned and focussed activities are very well organised, inclusive and engage the children. This enhances the quality of children's learning. All practitioners are qualified or working towards a qualification. The management team are committed to developing the service they provide and they have made rapid progress since opening at the end of last year.

All of the documentation, policies and procedures required for the safe and effective management of the nursery are in place, which contributes to the welfare of the children. The procedure for checking staff suitability is robust and all staff have submitted to the vetting procedure. Overall accident records are well documented, however some children and staff's surnames have been omitted in some entries. This means the record is incomplete. The child protection policy has been updated to include the latest guidance, in order to safeguard children. There is a detailed complaints procedure in place that is shared with parents. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the system for recording accidents

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- extend information gained from parents at the start of the Foundation Stage to form a baseline assessment that can be used as starting points for learning and teaching
- develop the outdoor area to provide richer learning experiences

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