

# Littlewick Green Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108416
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Joanne Graham
<b>Setting Address</b>	School Lane, Littlewick Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 3QY
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	L G Montessori School Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](http://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?

Littlewick Green Montessori School has been registered for many years. The current owner took over in 1999. It is a privately run nursery school situated in a Victorian village school in Littlewick Green, near Maidenhead in Berkshire. The nursery school serves the local community. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery school at any one time. The nursery school opens five days a week for 48 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 08.00 to 18.00. There is a fully enclosed outside play area for the children to use.

There are currently 60 children on roll. Of these, 33 are in receipt of nursery education funding.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has provision to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs nine staff, of whom two hold the Montessori International Diploma, five hold a level 3 childcare qualification and one is working towards a level 3 childcare qualification. The nursery school also employs a cook and a cleaner.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for if they have an accident as staff on site have first aid training and the first aid boxes are easily accessible. They record details in full and ensure they inform parents. However, staff do not have specific training from a qualified health professional to equip them to administer individual specialist medication and treatment. Children are protected from cross infection through staff following good hygiene procedures, for example, separate bedding and cleaning of sleeping mats after use, wiping tables before and after eating, wearing gloves and aprons to serve meals. Effective cleaning routines benefit children's good health, for example, well ventilated areas, clean equipment and good hygiene practices are implemented.

Staff understand the importance of providing nutritional snacks and meals therefore reinforcing children's understanding of a healthy diet. Children benefit from the provision of regular freshly prepared healthy snacks and home cooked meals, which take into account their dietary needs and religious requirements. All relevant people are aware of these needs when preparing and serving meals. This promotes children's welfare.

Children regularly enjoy a range of activities that contribute to their health and develop their physical skills. For example, they run freely and explore in the garden, move spontaneously around the setting, are confident and competent with large climbing and balancing apparatus and build with dexterity using small equipment. They especially enjoy walking around the large tractor tyres improving their balancing skills.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. The staff monitor who enters the premises, the garden is gated and the pond is made inaccessible to the children. This promotes the children's welfare. There is adequate space for registered numbers and children move around freely and play comfortably. The premises are welcoming to children as they are brightly painted and staff attractively display the children's own work and creations. Staff actively assess most hazards and reduce risks quite well. This helps to keep children out of harm's way. The setting has heater covers, fire exits are clearly marked and there are bark chippings underneath large climbing equipment. However, the garden hose pipe is accessible to children and the computer mouse is positioned so children need to stretch to use it.

Children have easy and safe access to toys and resources that are stimulating and suitable for children's ages and stage of development, although some equipment has missing pieces. Children learn to keep themselves safe through sensitively implemented rules. For example, only running on the grass outside and not pushing others when waiting in line to go outside. Children and staff practise the emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis and fire exits are clearly marked. This helps children become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency.

Staff are aware of child protection policies and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Staff receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse and most staff have attended recent training. This safeguards children's welfare.

## Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make positive relationships and relate very well with the staff and other children. They enjoy social occasions such as circle time, meal times and the music session. They comfortably play alongside one another, together in small peer groups and often invite staff into their play. They are confident to express their views and ideas as they know they are listened to. They positively 'grow' when staff respond to their interests and achievements. Staff have a good knowledge of early childhood curriculum and plan activities to support most children's learning well. However, on occasions some activities are not developmentally appropriate for the younger children.

Children are happy, comfortable and keen to participate with activities. They confidently select their choices from the open shelving and settle well to these activities. Although the resources for the older children are complete so children can successfully achieve, some equipment in the younger room is lacking all the pieces. Children are involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and learning. For example, moulding wet sand, rolling autumn biscuits, painting, colouring, cutting and singing. This supports their maths, language and creative development well.

### Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate they have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and children's individual learning levels through their sensitive support and effective questioning; this helps children achieve. Children are very interested, keen to participate and have choices. For example, they choose if, and when, they want to play with the activities from the open shelving and join in with planned activities such as moulding the dough, using the computer or making jigsaws. Children demonstrate developing concentration skills and participate at activities for extended periods. For example, one child perseveres to transfer water from one vessel to another, using a large pipette. Staff maintain children's records regularly through observing their play and achievements and use this information to aid future planning. Children's achievement records are regularly updated and shared with parents. However, staff do not ensure the activity sheets are fully completed therefore not fully differentiating these planned activities to support children's developmental needs.

Children are able to explore creative media, such as painting, drawing, sticking and cutting. Their creative work is displayed attractively but this work is often over directed, reducing the children's opportunities to express themselves creatively. Children are polite to each other and are developing good social skills. Staff frequently give praise and encouragement to help build children's self-esteem. Children ask and answer questions displaying a confident air knowing their responses and requests are valued and taken note of. For example, during the music circle time children make suggestions about what is inside the maracas to make the noise. Staff effectively foster children's curiosity and children are keen to participate in new experiences. Children have opportunities to develop independence skills; they put their own coats and shoes on for outdoor play and clear away their own plates after lunch. Opportunities to mark make for purposes relevant to play are available throughout the setting and some children 'record' their telephone calls to the 'doctor' whilst in the role play area. Children recognise their own names and those of others.

Children access everyday technology regularly and they benefit from learning additional computer skills from the computer coach who visits once a week. Children's hand and eye

co-ordination skills are developed from accessing small tools such as the computer mouse, scissors, cutlery, rolling pins and cutters. They handle these safely and with increasing control. Children use number in everyday activities, for example in songs and rhymes, when laying the table and counting how many children are present and use their mathematical skills to problem solve. They enjoy music and singing sessions and tap out beats and rhythms by clapping and using musical instruments such as wooden claves and maracas.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children feel settled, happy and comfortable as they are welcomed and play a full part in the setting. They feel secure as staff treat them all with equal concern and compassion. Their individual needs, cultures and differences are valued and respected. Staff ensure children have sufficient time to eat, play and rest, organising the routine to support all children's needs. Staff boost children's self-esteem and egos, helping them feel good about themselves and to show respect for others, through positive praise and encouragement. Children are forming strong relationships with adults and each other and join in enthusiastically with group activities. Staff have a very good knowledge of children's family context, home spoken language and culture and each child has their own peg to hang their possessions. This promotes children's feelings of belonging. Children learn important social skills such as sharing, turn taking and sitting down to eat and drink, for example, waiting for their turn to use the musical instruments and to bake autumn biscuits. Their behaviour is good, and at times very good. Staff are consistent in managing boundaries and children respond positively to their sensitive support and high expectations. Staff increase the children's understanding of right from wrong, they respond to gentle reminders to care for the environment, the nursery's resources and one another, for example, tidying away the toys and equipment before mealtimes and after use.

The children have opportunities to learn about themselves, each other, the local community and the wider world through imaginatively planned activities, visits to the local community and celebrating different festivals. Children access a wide range of resources, which depict positive images of race, culture, disability and gender. They are able to dress up with authentic clothes worn to celebrate Diwali and to taste typical foods and sweets eaten during the festive times of Diwali and Eid. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

The partnership with parents and carers is good and this particularly contributes to children's wellbeing in the nursery school. Parents have opportunities to speak with their child's keyworker to exchange and share information regarding their child's achievements at home and nursery, promoting continuity of care. Staff actively seek views from parents about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing, through daily verbal exchanges, regular newsletters and extensive notice boards containing useful information. In addition, the parents with children under three years old, receive written daily details, which inform parents of their child's routine.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff who are very caring. Staff attend compulsory training in child protection and food handling. Leadership and management are

good. The manager holds regular team meetings and evaluates staff's practice to assist with improving the quality of care and education they offer to all children. Although there is an appraisal system in place, this is not being used, especially to identify staff's training and developmental needs. The manager supports the deputy to organise the education and Montessori programme to support children's learning. Staff have regard for children's welfare and maintain ratios at all times, positively supporting their learning and play both inside and outdoors.

Organisation of time, space and the routine contribute to children's health, safety and ability to take an active part in the setting. Staff ensure there is sufficient time for children to enjoy activities at their own pace. Written policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety and achievement, although some lack up to date information. Record keeping systems contain sufficient detail and are used well to meet children's needs. All regulatory documentation is in place and kept for required periods. These are stored securely and confidentiality maintained. The certificate of registration is on display during operational hours. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provide.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection an action was given to ensure staff working with babies had relevant training. The setting decided to not take children under 18 months old and staff working with the younger children have sufficient experience to do so. Four recommendations were also identified. The complaints policy now includes details of the regulator and the child protection policy includes details of procedures to follow in the event of an allegation made against staff. The manager has introduced a daily risk assessment check list for each room and ensures these are completed and most risks are sufficiently identified and minimised. This protects and supports children's welfare. However, staff have not attended appropriate training from a qualified health professional, to equip them to administer individual specialist treatment or medication and this remains a recommendation.

At the setting's last nursery education inspection, three key issues were raised. Staff provide opportunities for children to practise emergent writing in a variety of everyday practical situations, such as in the role play area and when using the dough. Children's mathematical development increases through challenges to explore number and simple calculation during everyday activities. They count whilst laying the table for lunch, during singing number rhymes, using the calendar and calculating if there is sufficient space for all the children to join in circle time. Staff have improved systems to share information regularly with parents. Staff inform them of the topics through parents completing an activity at home with their children and using the prepared paperwork to support this exercise; they receive information about the 'show and tell' topics and can access their children's records of achievements as they are easily accessible in the main room. This contributes to the children's continued development.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection 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.

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### 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):

- make sure staff have specialised training to administer specific medication to meet individual children's needs
- ensure the computer mouse position supports children's welfare and the hosepipe is made inaccessible
- develop procedures to ensure all equipment available to the children is whole to enable them to successfully complete the task
- ensure staff effectively support and plan activities to make sure they are developmentally appropriate for the younger children.

#### 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):

- make sure activity sheets are fully completed and clearly establish differentiation to determine children's developmental needs
- allow children more freedom to express their own creative ideas on wall displays
- make sure the appraisal system is fully implemented to help identify staff's training and developmental needs.

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