

# Beckett House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131668
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Tom Radcliffe
<b>Setting Address</b>	98 Richmond Avenue, Islington, London, N1 0LL
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7278-8824
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Beckett House Limited
<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?

Beckett House Montessori Nursery School is a nursery run by a limited company. It opened in 1996 and operates from one large room in a converted building. It is situated in a residential area in Islington in the London borough of Islington. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.30 to 17.30 for 46 weeks of the year. All children share access to a small secure and enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 receive funding for early education. The nursery mainly provides for children in the local area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members of staff are working towards additional qualifications. The nursery follows the Montessori method of education.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

The nursery provides children with a very clean and well organised learning and play environment. Staff ensure that the setting is ready for children as they arrive, all facilities throughout the nursery are maintained to very high standards of cleanliness and hygiene. The setting has good procedures in place to ensure that medicines are administered correctly and any accidents are minimised and dealt with effectively. Staff record all details appropriately to share with parents and to facilitate processes of self review in order to modify future practice. Children can be cared for if they sustain minor injuries while in the setting as there are always qualified staff on site who have access to appropriate first aid equipment. The spread of infection within the nursery is reduced as the setting excludes children who may be infectious. The nursery also promotes effective hygienic practice during the day; for example, children are encouraged to regularly wash their hands and brush their teeth and staff follow safe nappy changing routines. The good health of the children is also promoted by the nursery as it has obtained parental permission to obtain emergency medical treatment or advice, should it be required.

Physical development is good. The children are given a range of purposeful activities that are designed to enhance their physical development. The nursery provides for activities indoors that develop children's large and fine motor skills. Staff set out large indoor play apparatus every day where children can take part in vigorous exercise by climbing, balancing and running. Children enjoy these activities and respond very well to taking exercise. The nursery has very limited outdoor space but the setting augments its facilities by regularly using the outdoor play facilities of a local school and taking the children on regular walks to local amenities. The setting also provides children with regular activities that are undertaken by visiting teachers so that children are given additional opportunities to take part in exercise. While indoors children have access to a very large range of activities that promote physical development. These include mark making, playing with finger puppets and using resources specifically designed to promote this aspect of the children's development. Children are able to thread shapes, mix paints and dough and play with locks and keys. Staff support the children very well as they undertake these activities which enables the children to make steady and significant progress. The setting has a quiet time at mid day where children are able to sleep or rest according to their individual needs. All the children's meals and snacks provided are freshly prepared and very nutritious; for example, fresh fruit, vegetables, pasta and chicken. Children are able to exercise choice at meal times and learn about the value of balanced diets. Children are also able to become involved in the sort of food that they eat as planned activities are designed to allow this; for example, children prepared their own meal of pizzas. The children enjoy taking part in such activities and it also gives them chance to learn about healthy eating. Meals are prepared by the nursery cook who works in a well equipped and well maintained kitchen. The setting provides all parents with a menu that is regularly changed and the setting ensures that it meets the dietary needs and requirements of all children very well. Children have free access to fresh drinking water which they can independently access at appropriate times during the day.

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

The provision is good.

The nursery arranges its premises to make them very secure and safe for children. All external doors are securely locked and access to the building is only with the authorisation of staff. Children are kept very safe by the setting's effective procedures for the arrival and departure

of children. Parents are welcomed into the nursery as they spend varying amounts of time settling in their children, staff are vigilant at these times and maintain good levels of supervision while still facilitating this important interaction. The setting has in place a clear written statement of its procedures to safeguard children. All staff are familiar with this and can therefore protect children as a result; for example, their understanding enables them to be aware of potential concerns and all staff have a clear understanding of how to pass on these concerns to the relevant authorities. Children are kept very safe in the case of an emergency as the setting regularly undertakes practice evacuations and has in place proper fire detection and control equipment. The nursery undertakes regular and effective risk assessments; this ensures that children do not face unnecessary danger from hazards. There are many examples of these; for example, gates are in place to ensure that children do not use the stairs within the building, the door to the kitchen is always kept locked, children's toothbrushes are periodically disinfected and all facilities are checked daily to ensure their suitability. The setting has good toilet facilities which are scrupulously maintained, children can access these independently and through the day children could also wash their hands and brush their teeth with minimal supervision. However, the toilets are arranged in a way that does not promote privacy amongst the children. The nursery makes very good use of its available space and how it arranges the various activity areas and stores its equipment. All of these factors impact positively upon the environment in which the children play and learn; for example, free movement is promoted, independent access to resources takes place and the activity room remains safe as it is uncluttered and set out thoughtfully. In addition the staff are deployed well at all times to ensure that supervision is appropriate and children's safety promoted; for example, when children are playing on indoor play equipment or making pizzas for their midday meal. The nursery also has a very good range of furniture which accommodates both a range of activities and the different ages and sizes of the children. There is a very good range of toys and resources in use within the nursery that are well maintained, clean and capable of promoting children's development in all areas. The nursery premises are light, spacious and provide a stimulating place for children to be. The visual impact of the nursery is very positive, there is good use of displays to; celebrate children's achievements, give information to learners and inform parents about the work of the setting.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are vertically grouped within the setting as they undertake a range of stimulating and challenging activities. All play and learning takes place within one large and well equipped activity room with children having a balance of free choice and adult led activities. The setting maintains this balance and all staff work effectively to ensure that children are engaged purposefully as they spend their time in the nursery. Children's self esteem is raised through the displays of their work and by staff giving them opportunities to express choices to follow their preferences and interests. As a result children start their time in the nursery with free choice activities that include; experimenting with mathematical equipment, sharing stories with adults, playing with role play materials and playing with puppets leading to singing together. Staff supervise children very well as they play in this way, guiding and intervening where necessary, children remain on task and spend appropriate amounts of time engaged with the activities. The staff are very sensitive to the needs of the children; for example, when a child first arrived she was reluctant to undertake an activity but a member of staff shared a story with her until she was ready to exercise her choice and decide what to do. During free choice time there is a very good atmosphere in the setting, staff and children engage in meaningful conversations where questions are asked, opinions are expressed and ideas shared. The children take pride in the setting and take great pleasure from helping to tidy away resources and

prepare for snack time. Adult led activities include; story telling, physical development on play equipment, circle time and practical work such as pizza making. Children enjoy sharing stories in the nursery and there is a good range of material available to them. Children are assessed by staff throughout their time in the setting this allows their achievements to be recorded and then shared with parents. Children undertake activities that are carefully planned and, in the case of the younger children, linked very well to Birth to three matters framework. As a result children's development is very well planned for with children being prepared for future work based on the Foundation Stage curriculum. The setting makes very effective use of the Montessori methods of education which impacts positively on children of all ages within the nursery.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff ensure that children continue to develop as they move onto activities that are planned from the Foundation Stage curriculum. The activities that children undertake are a good balance between child chosen and adult led tasks. Staff support of children is very effective and their interventions are well considered as they respond to the needs of the children; for example, when children use puzzles, undertake writing activities or experiment with number and mathematical ideas. Children thrive with this support and show that they can apply themselves to their activities for appropriate periods of time. During story time children became very involved with the story, they used the indoor play equipment very enthusiastically and enjoyed making their own midday meal. Staff assess the children as they undertake their activities, this is based on their careful observations of children on what they do, say and achieve. This information is collated to be shared with parents and also informs the future planning of activities for the children. While staff have a clear idea of children's starting points, a good grasp of individual children's strengths and weaknesses and a good knowledge of where they want children to go next, they do not always use assessment data thoroughly enough in their planning processes.

The children form positive relationships as they play together, share and take turns. The nursery gives the children many opportunities to be independent and staff listen to children at all times. The children respond well to this as they select activities, decide what they have to eat and share ideas and discussions. The children in the nursery are very confident speakers, they freely talk about what they are doing and can use appropriate vocabulary to describe their ideas; for example, a small group of children talked about which towers were the tallest and which the shortest. Children work in a very language rich environment where writing is given a high priority and children understand that it has meaning through extensive use of labels and where conversations form an important part of the learning environment. Children undertake a large range of mark making activities and older children are starting to write their names and make simple labels; for example, children had made labels to explain about the flowering plants within the nursery. Children concentrate and listen to stories. The setting has a very good range of mathematical equipment that is used to consolidate the children's grasp of key mathematical concepts; for example, children were counting to ten and sequencing numbers. Children are also given other practical opportunities as they count pieces of fruit, work with varying quantities when constructing towers and understand number as shown on a calendar and the ages of adults and children. Some children, while playing a simple board game, became involved in a discussion about making numbers larger or smaller and were able to apply their knowledge of number to solve simple problems. Children explore simple technology through the use of everyday equipment, such as DVD players. Children have access to computers to support their

learning. Children have access to a very wide range of well prepared and carefully constructed activities that enable them to develop their fine motor skills; for example, construction games, threading activities and using small apparatus to sort by size. Children also have good access to art and different materials to work with imaginatively. The nursery supports children's learning very well in the Foundation Stage.

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

The provision is good.

The nursery has a very good relationship with its parents which ensures that detailed background information is provided by them. The nursery for its part responds positively and effectively in the interests of parents and children. Staff know the children very well and are well placed to meet a range of their needs: for example, parents feel that the nursery knows each child as an individual and so responds to individual needs. The setting ensures that all relevant information is obtained so that they can maximise their effectiveness; for example, the nursery works well with parents where children may have English as an additional language. The nursery is well placed to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, should the need arise. The nursery's physical environment limits its ability to accommodate all children but it has an inclusive approach with resources and equipment that would enable all children to develop and it has staff committed to fulfilling the needs of all children. The atmosphere in the nursery is excellent. The staff and children create a very positive environment of learning and play, children are well supported by caring staff who present children with challenging and interesting activities. The staff are very positive role models who consistently apply simple rules that children both understand and follow. Staff manage behaviour extremely well by engaging children's interests, meeting their needs and involving them in developmentally appropriate conversations. The nursery uses resources that reflect positive images of diversity; these include, dolls, photographs and written material. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents work very closely with the nursery to ensure that it offers high standards of care for children; for example, parents value the individual attention given to the older children in the term before they go to school. Parents enjoy the informal contact that they are able to have when leaving or collecting their children but they also value the chance to see written records and attend parent evenings or open days. Parents consider that the staff stimulate the children very effectively and that development needs are met very well. The parents also think that the nursery provides a comprehensive range of information which enables them to have a good understanding of its work, policies and procedures.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The provider has established very robust recruitment procedures, these help to ensure that staff employed at the nursery are suitable to work with children. The staff at the nursery are very well qualified, with some staff working towards additional higher qualifications, experienced and have a long association with the setting. All staff, including those working as volunteers, have a very good understanding of how young children learn. This is as a result of their qualifications and the on-going training that is made available to them. The setting has policies and procedures in place to ensure the effective and safe management of the nursery. Staff deployment is very good, the resources available are of a high standard and the accommodation

is spacious and exciting. The nursery responds well to children's needs. Children's wellbeing and care is given very good attention. Children are given important skills in order that they can make healthy life choices, stay safe and achieve well. The nursery's organisation makes this possible, however children can occasionally be in situations where their privacy is not given sufficient attention.

The leadership and management is good. The setting's Director and Headteacher have a clear understanding of the nursery's strengths and areas that require development. They both have created a good team who share their vision for the nursery. Each member of staff has a very good idea of their roles and responsibilities within the nursery and they all carry out their duties very effectively and conscientiously to the great benefit of the children. The director carries out informal supervision of all staff and provides training that she considers necessary. This policy is under review with the director now considering more formal systems of staff appraisal on an annual basis. The planning that is in place covers all areas of learning and is in part informed by assessments made on the children's work and overall achievements. However, the setting does not always make sufficient use of this information when planning future work for the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

The last inspection made the following recommendations for the nursery to follow; to ensure that the written complaints statement contained all relevant information and to request written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. Since that time the nursery has undertaken work to fulfil these recommendations fully.

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

Since the 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet 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**

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 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):

- promote more privacy for children when using the toilet facilities.

## **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):

- ensure that all information that is obtained by the nursery through its effective assessment policy is used to inform future planning processes more thoroughly.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)