



## **Blackheath Montessori Centre**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	129010
<b>Inspection date</b>	29 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Debra Davey
<b>Setting Address</b>	Independents Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 9LF
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8852 6765
<b>E-mail</b>	blackheathmontessori@yahoo.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Blackheath Montessori Centre 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?

Blackheath Montessori Day Nursery became registered under the Children Act in 1992 but has been in existence for many years. It has sole use of a large church hall in Blackheath Village. The premises consist of four class rooms, three of which are used as group rooms and the other for additional lessons. There is a large communal indoor play area, storage facilities and office, toilet and kitchen facilities.

The nursery is open each week day from 08:00 to 18:00, for 48 weeks of the year.

Children attend for a variety of full or part-time sessions. Children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The curriculum is based on Montessori method of education. There are additional French, music and dance classes for all children.

The nursery is registered to care for 36 children. There are currently 52 children on role. This includes 41 children who are in receipt of funded nursery education. The nursery supports children attending with special needs and others who speak English as an additional language.

In addition to the manager, six full-time staff work with the children. All staff working have early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from good hygiene routines to help them learn about personal care and the importance of a clean environment. For example, children help to set up and clean away after snack, they wash their hands before lunch and when using the bathroom. There are clear systems in place to prevent cross infection such as the regular cleaning of chairs, tables and toys. Measures are taken to ensure that children are kept at home when they are ill and this is discussed with parents.

Children enjoy the meals and snacks provided by the nursery cook; all food is freshly prepared and nutritious. Staff have good knowledge of all the children's dietary needs and ensure these are met. Meal times are happy, social occasions where the staff sit with the children.

Children enjoy a range of physical activity to help them learn about what happens when our bodies are active such as, dance classes involving stretching and movement. They help themselves to drinks using a drinks dispenser when they are thirsty, and to fresh fruit. There are daily discussions to help children learn about how to keep healthy, this is further enhanced by visits from the doctor and the dentist to help children develop an understanding of how to care for themselves and keep well.

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

The provision is good.

Children select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment which meet safety standards. Attention to safety education is good; children know the rules and use them such as not to run in the nursery. This means that all children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. Activities that carry an element of risk, such as woodwork or cooking are well supervised and carried out in small groups; this ensures that children are free to explore their creativity as safely as possible.

There are comprehensive risk assessments used to assess the whole building and

equipment for hazards; as well as outings. Action is taken to ensure that repairs are carried out or equipment replaced. There is a soft play safety surface in the garden, ensuring that children are able to enjoy valuable outdoor activity safely. Access to the premises is well managed using an intercom system to identify callers.

All required procedures and documentations are in place to ensure that children's welfare is promoted. For example, the health and safety policy is shared with staff and fire drill and accidents clearly recorded. Staff are qualified in first aid and have updated training in issues relating to child protection.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a vibrant, child centred environment where they are able to make friends, have fun and enjoy learning. Children are enthusiastic when they arrive in the morning and separate easily from their parents and carers. During the day, children frequently initiate conversations with adults and laugh and smile, showing emerging confidence and self-esteem. The day is well planned to include a good balance of adult and child led activities including, art and crafts, music, French lessons, woodwork, cooking and outdoor play. The variety of activities enables children to make choices in their learning and follow their own interests. This ensures that children make good progress physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Children are made to feel secure with a clear nursery routine which includes time for freely chosen play, group times and Montessori focused activities. Adults and children relate well to one another; staff are very well focused and highly skilled at encouraging children to engage in purposeful, harmonious play.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the foundation stage which ensures that an age appropriate curriculum is provided. They have developed a system for assessment and planning where the Montessori method and the stepping stones of learning merge well, with all areas of learning covered. Achievements and learning intentions are accurately recorded and staff are highly supportive of the children. As a result, children are offered an interesting and varied range of activities to capture their interests and help them learn; adults and children become equally engrossed in activities which ensures that children concentrate well. For example, when children make the background for the Christmas play: staff explain clearly how to use the glue tubes, glitter and sequins, sit side by side with the children and give choices throughout "shall we have the baby Jesus with his eyes opened or closed?"

Children make good progress in all areas of learning. The interesting and broad based curriculum ensures that children are excited and motivated to learn; for example, children enjoy their French class which is well planned to include a selection of songs, games and active re-affirmation of what the children have learnt and can do. This ensures that they have the opportunity, in small groups, to show what they know and have pride in their achievements in French, by naming animals,

colours, singing songs and discussing opposites such as cold and hot. Children show a sense of belonging as they warmly greet staff and each other. They learn to care for others as they look after younger children in the class. They show a high level of competence as they pour their own drinks and select resources. Many children choose to work with numbers and shapes. They are able to accurately count and match, recording what they do in their maths books. They make sense of written language when using books for information, for example, using recipe books during cooking lessons. Children explore the natural environment when looking at creatures in the garden and making models of the spider's web. They learn about nature when growing sunflowers in pots and discussions on how to be healthy. Imagination is used to design and construct a range of models using art materials. Children show emerging confidence when using tools such as scissors, rolling pins and threading rods. Creativity is fostered well; children enjoy sand and water, modelling and role play during classroom activities. However, the home corner area in the main hall is uninviting and rarely visited by children. This means missed opportunities for good quality role play. Colourful artwork is displayed and music is available for children to explore during free play and music classes.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and included in the setting because staff know and value them. They are skilled at knowing who may need extra attention, for example, by encouraging shy children to join in discussions at circle time. The nursery provides a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the world such as books, posters and dolls that show people from different cultures and occupations. Social events encourage children to meet families of other children attending and form friendships.

The nursery provides good support for children attending with special educational needs. The experienced and trained support worker engages effectively with parents and other professionals to ensure that children's additional needs are met. This means that children are able to develop at their own pace and participate in all the activities.

Staff provide positive role models for children. As a result children behave well in the nursery and are learning to manage their own behaviour when taking turns and sharing resources. For example, children show emerging confidence when helping to design the background for the nativity play, selecting colours and materials they think would work best.

Parents are welcomed into the setting and are able to contribute to their child's learning when they share nursery books at home and join in with nursery outings. Some parents become involved with fundraising and the organisation of social events. Parents are pleased with the nursery and feel that their children settle quickly and make good progress.

Children with English as an additional language are supported by staff through the use of keywords and bi-lingual books. In addition, children learn another language in

the setting which helps them to understand that we communicate in different ways. Multi-faith festivals are celebrated in the nursery and families encouraged to participate. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

The partnership with parents is good. There are systems in place to ensure that information is shared with parents about their child's progress through parents evenings and records of achievements; parents of children who receive funding for nursery education have comprehensive information as they attend parent evenings, receive regular newsletters and access developmental records. This helps parents to become involved with their children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

There are sound systems in place to ensure that staff working with children have been checked and are suitable. Individual files demonstrate staff's suitability to work with children. There is a clear induction procedure for new staff to ensure that policies are discussed and understood.

Children are grouped in mixed age and ability classes. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure that sufficient staff work directly with the children when in their class and during free-play times. This ensures that children have good support as they are cared for by staff they know well.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff are led by a highly committed manager who is a cheerful and positive role model. As a result, staff work well as a team to provide a stimulating and challenging environment for children. For instance, whilst all children are included in the preparations for Christmas, older children learn the story of the nativity and are able to talk about it. There is a clear daily routine and staff plan well for children's learning; classes in French, music and dance are planned in advance so that each child attends; within the lessons, activities are adapted for younger children to ensure that all participate. Children quickly learn the routine of the day which helps them to feel secure and help them learn.

The good quality of the provision means that the nursery meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the nursery was asked revise the daily registration system to include times of children's arrival and departure. The registered person has made this improvement by ensuring that each classroom has their own register and all times of arrival and departure are clearly recorded. This ensures that children are kept safe within the setting.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education section below.

### **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):

- improve the organisation of the home corner area to extend the range of imaginative play (also applies to care)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)