

Little Cakes Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Jane Mount

Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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

Little Cakes Montessori school registered in January 2011 with the new provider but has been in operation for many years. It is a privately owned nursery and operates from the Youth Club building within the grounds of the Chorleywood House Estate, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire. The nursery have use of one large room with a kitchen, toilet and storage facilities. A defined outside play area is not available but the setting ensures children have daily access of the extensive grounds and fields. The premises are on one level with a ramp to access for wheelchair users. The nursery is open each weekday from 9am until 1pm, term time only. On Tuesdays the nursery operates from 9am until 3pm. A lunch club is also available.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to care for a maximum of 20 children from the age of two years to under eight years. There are currently 15 children on roll and of these, four children receive government funding for early years education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

Little Cakes Montessori school operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy of teaching. It employs three members of staff, including the owner who is also the manager. All of the staff team hold either Montessori or early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

A child centred and inclusive environment is provided to all. Positive partnerships with parents and carers ensure children's individual needs are met. A committed staff team effectively implement the setting's policies and procedures to ensure children are safe and their welfare is protected. Staff support children well in their learning and development and children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The provision has a positive attitude to improvement and overall, they are aware of their key strengths and the areas they wish to develop further. Systems to effectively monitor the quality of the service provided and to ensure continuous improvement, such as self-evaluation, are in the early stages of development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further a quality improvement process, such as self-evaluation, to more closely monitor and extend effective practice to ensure continuous

improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure and children's welfare is protected. Clear management responsibilities in relation to child protection have been established, including having a named designated person responsible for ensuring the correct safeguarding procedures are followed if there was a concern. An informative safeguarding policy is in place and recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and ensure staff are suitable to work with children. All staff undertake safeguarding training and therefore fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Children's safety takes high priority with staff who closely supervise children and the security of the premises ensures no unauthorised person can gain access and that children cannot leave unsupervised. Effective safety procedures, such as ensuring all children wear high visibility jackets when on outings and walks in the surrounding grounds and fields keep children safe. All required documentation to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place and shared appropriately.

The leadership and management of the setting is strong which results in staff who are clear about their roles and responsibilities and who work very well together as a team. Continuous professional development is positively encouraged and staff are able to attend a variety of early years courses and workshops to ensure they are well-informed and their childcare knowledge is kept up-to-date. The staff team are led by a manager who has a clear vision for the setting and they all work hard to provide a good quality service. Overall, they are aware of their key strengths and have some systems in place to monitor and assess the quality of the provision, such as seeking the views of parents. They also use regular staff meetings to evaluate practice. A self-evaluation system to systematically identify the settings strengths and the area's they wish to develop further is in the early stages of development. The setting plans to develop this further and aims to actively use this as a way of ensuring continuous improvement.

Good use of space, resources and effective staff deployment, ensures an environment that is safe and fully inclusive. As a result, children are happy and confident in their play and quickly develop a strong sense of belonging. All children and their families are valued and included with staff who are approachable and friendly. Positive relationships with parents and carers ensure children's needs are met with information effectively shared. A key person system and daily verbal communication ensures children receive continuity in their care and learning. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's progress and achievements with children's development records regularly shared. Parent's feedback about the nursery and staff is very positive. Parents are also encouraged to take an active role in the setting and recently parents have come in to read stories to groups of children. The nursery networks and liaises with other early years providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and have established links with some of the local schools to promote the integration of care and learning and to help the

transition when children move on to school.

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

Children's learning and development are promoted and children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff understand that every child is unique and are effective in ensuring that all children are fully integrated and supported. The nursery is based on the Montessori philosophy and the staff team effectively combine this with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage ensuring that children's needs are met. A key person system is used and staff monitor closely children's learning through regularly observing and assessing children to identify their achievements and progress over time. Children's development records show how they are progressing and this information is then used to inform future planning. Child-initiated and adult-led activities are well-balanced to encourage children to be active learners and children enjoy their surroundings and show a keen interest in what they do. Their independence is promoted as they are able to make their own decisions, with the environment organised to encourage them to make independent choices in their play. Children take an active role in snack-time, independently deciding when they want to have a snack. They confidently pour their own drinks, select fruit and butter their own bread. Children are encouraged to put on their own coats and to change their shoes when going outside and they take responsibility for putting away resources they have played with.

Activities and play experiences cover the six areas of learning and take account of children's interests. Staff work hard to provide a child-centred environment and children arrive happy and quickly settle and engage in activities. They have regular opportunities to explore varied art media and enjoy investigating the changes when painting or the sensory experience of playdough as they roll and cut and make shapes and models. Children use their imaginations to express themselves, such as when playing in the green grocers shop and taking it in turns to 'buy' fruit and vegetables. Children respond with enjoyment when listening to stories and enthusiastically join in with songs and rhymes. They learn about the wider world and about other cultures and have many opportunities to talk about their families and home life. Full use is made of the outdoor space. Children enjoy daily walks to explore the surrounding environment, regularly going to visit the nearby horses or alpacas, or the apple orchard to pick apples or to explore the nearby fields and woodland. Children develop a strong interest in nature and the environment through activities including talking about the weather each day at the morning welcome or nature walks to find local wildlife including ladybirds. They learn about the local community and have had a librarian visit and other visits, such as a dentist are planned for the immediate future.

Staff promote children's good health and well-being and take effective steps to prevent the spread of infection. Children have regular opportunities to learn about how to stay healthy and personal care routines. They are aware of the need to wash their hands before they eat and after visiting the toilet. Healthy eating is

encouraged and children are provided with healthy food choices at snack time and are learning about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. They recently talked about different foods and enjoyed making pictures to show foods that are healthy and unhealthy. Children's physical development is fully promoted and they learn that physical activity is good for them and can be fun. Plenty of fresh air and exercise keep children fit and they delight in participating in regular walks where they can run and climb and explore. They enjoy music and movement and love to dance and sing.

Children demonstrate a strong sense of security and are confident and self-assured in the setting. Positive relationships between staff, children and parents enable children to feel secure. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe as they explain and practise simple procedures, such as not running when indoors in case they fall and hurt themselves. Children participate in regular fire drills and therefore learn how to stay safe in an emergency. Children behave extremely well with behaviour managed in a positive manner by staff. Children are learning how to play together and are encouraged to show care and concern and to behave considerately towards others. They take an active role in the setting and particularly enjoy extra responsibilities, such as giving out the lunch boxes to children staying for the lunch club. Praise and encouragement from staff ensure children develop high levels of self-esteem and children show real enthusiasm for what they are doing and talk with eagerness about their achievements.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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