

# Little Learners Montessori School

St Helens Church, St Helens Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 2DA

<b>Inspection date</b>	24/09/2014
Previous inspection date	11/01/2010

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

### **This provision is good**

- Children receive a broad range of educational programmes that are tailored to their needs and interests. Teaching and learning are of a good standard and staff fully respect how individual children learn and develop.
- Children are happy and settled in this warm and welcoming setting. They develop secure emotional attachments with staff and build friendships with other children.
- Children are safeguarded because the manager and staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for child protection.
- Effective partnership working with parents means there is continuity of learning between the setting and home, which contributes to the good progress children make.

### **It is not yet outstanding because**

- Staff do not always successfully organise the transition time when children move between the indoor and outdoor environment, to ensure there is a continual flow of learning experiences.
- Staff are not always consistent in their approach to reinforcing children's behaviour.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments and accompanied the manager and children on an outing to a local woodland area.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including policies and procedures and children's learning records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

## Inspector

Trisha Turney

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Little Learners Montessori School has been registered since 1995 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is privately run and is situated in St Helen's Church in the centre of Solihull. The setting has the use of two playrooms and associated facilities. Children have the use of the church grounds for outdoor play. The setting is open each weekday, from 8.30am to 3.15pm, during term time only. There are currently 29 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range and attend for a variety of sessions. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. In addition, three members of staff hold Montessori diplomas and the owner/ manager also holds Early Years Professional status.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

#### To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- review the organisation of periods in the session when children move from indoors to outside, to improve the continual flow of learning experiences for all children
  
- provide children with clear and consistent guidance on acceptable behaviour, by making sure that staff have a good understanding of the agreed strategies to support this.

### Inspection judgements

#### How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff successfully combine the Montessori ethos with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage because they have a good understanding of how children learn. The indoor learning environment is well organised with a wide range of quality resources, which are easily accessible from the shelves. Children are purposefully engaged in various self-chosen activities and staff are at hand to support their learning. They find their own work space and settle down to a chosen activity. For example, they choose to share books with each other, cut up paper with scissors and practise fastening and undoing buttons and zips. The arrangements for the move between the indoor and outdoor environments are less effective, particularly at times when large groups of children are going outside. For example, staff tell children they can play outside, but some children are left waiting for some time as staff's attention is diverted to help other children get ready. As a result, children can become restless and they do not benefit from a continual flow of learning experiences. Children who speak

English as an additional language are supported effectively. Staff use dual-language books and learn key words in home languages to help children. This shows the value placed on children's cultural backgrounds and language, while continuing to promote their acquisition spoken English. Some individual also staff use their knowledge of other languages to communicate with children, and this helps considerably in making children feel confident and developing their 'have a go' attitude.

Children develop their vocabulary as staff encourage them to talk about the pictures they see in books. Children persevere when trying to fit puzzles together and receive good praise from staff, which supports their developing self-esteem and confidence. Staff take children on a walk in the local area and encourage them to identify numbers and letters in the environment. Children are enthused as they look for letters in their names on road signs or match numbers on refuse bins to house numbers. Consequently, children are developing early literacy and mathematical skills. Staff challenge the children to think critically and come up with their own answers. For example, when children ask why some puddles have dried up, staff ask the children why this might be. Children are thoughtful and then answer confidently, informing staff that they have noticed that the puddles in the sun have gone but the puddles in the shade are still there. The quality of teaching, the delivery of fun activities and the staff's knowledge of the children they care for support the good progress children make across all areas of learning. Staff accompany children on a trip to a local woodland area where they observe birds and wildlife and explore the area with excitement. Children are engaged and motivated to learn as they run, jump and stomp through mud with delight. Staff extend their learning in all areas as they ask them to talk about what they can see or what they have found. For example, when staff ask them what they can hear, children clearly identify birds and aeroplanes, honing their listening skills.

Staff deliver consistent practice, observing, assessing and planning effectively for each child's progress with a clear knowledge of their needs and interests. Staff know children extremely well and speak confidently about their levels of development and what interests them. A tracking system is used to record children's starting points and subsequent progress. This is used to identify where any gaps may occur in children's learning and development. This also helps to identify any children where additional challenge and extension are required to maintain their interests and further their learning. Consequently, children make good progress towards the early learning goals and gain sufficient skills for the next stage of their learning, such as starting school. Staff gather information from parents about children's existing skills and activities at home when children first attend, so they are fully aware of their capabilities. This helps them provide effective support from the outset. Staff create informative records of the progress children make, and parents take these home to view at the end of every half term. Formal arrangements are offered throughout the year to provide opportunities for parents to share the children's records with key persons in more detail. This helps parents understand how they can work effectively with staff to fully support children's learning at home and in the setting.

**The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

Children form positive relationships with their key person and other members of the small staff team. The setting has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Children demonstrate that they are happy and settled at the setting and have developed strong bonds with staff. For example, young children cuddle up close to their key person when they are tired and need comforting. Transition for children into setting is managed very effectively because of the information and knowledge obtained about them from parents prior to them starting. Parents are invited to stay with their child for initial sessions as they settle in. As a result, children settle in well. The effective links with local schools encourage children to settle when they move into full-time education. This is because staff prepare children well through discussions about their schools and invite teachers into the setting to meet the children.

Staff promote children's independence very well and this helps them to become independent in their self-care and eating habits. For example, children help to set out their own trays, plates and cups for their lunchtime meal. They learn to put on their coats and wellington boots. They develop self-confidence and good self-esteem because staff constantly praise children in all that they do. Most staff encourage children to become aware of how to keep themselves safe through careful explanation. However, there are times when staff are inconsistent in their approach to children's behaviour. For example, some staff tell children about not running around indoors, while other staff fail to reinforce this when children do act in this manner. This means that staff do not always explain to children why such behaviour is not acceptable. Care practices are good and support children to understand about their own self-care and well-being. For example, children wash their hands before meals and use anti-bacterial gel.

Children confidently move around the room selecting activities and show high levels of sustained concentration on their chosen activities. Well-established routines mean that children know how things work in the setting. For example, they choose an activity, work mat and work space. On completing an activity, children roll up their work mat and put the mat and equipment away. Planned activities are organised to raise children's awareness of differences within the wider world. Children feel safe and secure as there are warm and caring relationships in place with staff, which ensures they are eager and are well motivated to learn. Children have good opportunities to play in the outside area, where staff provide a wealth of resources to stimulate their interests. For example, children use spades to dig in the mud and engage in role play with dolls and pushchairs. They develop their physical skills as play on slides and climb trees. As a result, they are developing their balance and coordination skills while they benefit from fresh air and exercise. This supports children's emotional and physical well-being very well. Staff have a good understanding of how to safeguard children. They monitor their activities closely and remind them how to play safely. Outdoor play is managed well as staff supervise children effectively and ensure they are safe.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision**

The manager demonstrates very good leadership and management skills. She has a robust understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years

Foundation Stage and demonstrates passion, drive and a strong commitment in carrying out her role and meeting her responsibilities. Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are able to identify the signs or symptoms that may be a cause for concern and have a secure knowledge of the safeguarding and child protection arrangements to follow. There are robust systems in place for the recruitment, vetting and induction of staff, ensuring that only those suitable to do so work with children. Staff implement thorough risk assessments, which include daily checks on the indoor and outdoor areas. Staff are well deployed throughout the setting, which further promotes children's safety. Staff follow clear procedures for dealing with accidents, administering medication and responding to children's health requirements. Every member of staff is trained in paediatric first aid. All the required documentation is in place and maintained appropriately. Children's record forms, as well as discussions with parents, provide staff with the information they require to meet children's individual needs. These effective practices help to promote children's safety and well-being.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are well maintained and made available to parents to ensure they are clear about how the setting runs and how their children are cared for. The setting is welcoming, bright and well organised and has a varied range of stimulating and fun resources which support children in their play and learning. Rigorous strategies for monitoring ensure planning and assessment are consistent and that staff have an accurate and precise understanding of children's skills and abilities. Staff monitor children's progress well and provide good opportunities for future learning, based on children's interests and what they can do. All of the staff have an early years qualification and most have additional Montessori qualifications at a higher level. Ongoing training is sought through in-house sessions and with external organisations, helping to keep staff up to date with current thinking on teaching and learning for both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Montessori principles. A system for observing practice, team meetings and individual supervision is in place and is being constantly reviewed to drive continuous improvement.

The manager and staff team are committed to their work with the children. This is reflected in their enthusiasm and the enjoyment they demonstrate when interacting with the children. The manager has the commitment to make improvements to the setting and regularly reflects on the practice and provision. Priorities for improvement are clearly identified by the provider and through effective self-evaluation in partnership with parents, children and staff. Staff constantly reflect on their practice and make continuous improvements, striving to provide the best possible care and education for children. There are strong partnerships with parents. Parents' views are sought through informal conversations, parents' evenings and the completion of questionnaires. Parents spoken to at the inspection were extremely happy with the service provided. They compliment the staff on their friendliness and ability to nurture their children. They are very happy with the progress that their children make and attribute this to the experiences they have at the setting and the dedication of the staff team. The setting has strong links with local authority services. They use the visits to add to and develop action plans for improvements. This also enables them to access additional support and advice and to direct families to the appropriate services when needed.

## The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.



## Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children’s learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	250087
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	871428
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	37
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	29
<b>Name of provider</b>	Pratibha Surelia
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11/01/2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	07778 467103

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## Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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