

Inspection of Little Cedars Montessori

42 Cedar Road, Whiston, Prescot L35 2XA

Inspection date: 26 August 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children of all ages are extremely happy, safe and secure in this warm and welcoming, homely environment. They are developing firm attachments with staff who are patient, kind and caring in their approach. Staff adopt a curriculum that reflects children's interests. They gather detailed information from parents so they can build coherently on what children know and what they can already do. Children are making good progress in their learning and development, including those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children are very well behaved and know what is expected of them. They enjoy helping staff with small tasks, such as collecting eggs from the resident chickens and helping to tidy up ready for lunch. Children show kindness and concern for their friends and play collaboratively together. They listen well and respond quickly to the instructions given by staff.

Children's personal, social and emotional development has been a strong focus since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Staff have recently concentrated on developing children's confidence in their social interactions. Consequently, children enjoy spending time in the company of others. They demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and well-being. They are excited to explore and are motivated to learn.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The dedicated and passionate manager has a clear vision for improvement. She leads a highly qualified and enthusiastic staff team who together identify the setting's strengths and areas for development. This united approach helps staff to continually improve outcomes for children.
- Children have wonderful opportunities to learn about the natural world around them. For example, children grow produce in the garden to enable them to understand where food comes from. Staff support children to harvest tomatoes and strawberries and talk to them about the importance of healthy eating. Furthermore, children gain an understanding of how to care for living things as they take responsibility for watering the plants.
- Children of all ages demonstrate a love of literacy. Staff read to children with enthusiasm and ask questions about what might happen next. Staff have implemented a 'Book of the Month' to further promote the importance of reading and to help them to gain skills for the future. Older children repeat familiar refrains and talk about the characters in their favourite tales. Furthermore, children are encouraged to take home books to share with their families. This practice supports children's early literacy skills.
- Children enjoy spending time outdoors. Their physical development is particularly well supported. Staff encourage children to take safe and controlled

risks as they play, which in turns develops their confidence and independence. For example, children concentrate intently as they balance on a beam. Staff offer gentle reminders about looking where they are going and to take careful steps. Consequently, children are developing a positive can-do attitude.

- Overall, staff actively promote children's communication and language skills. They provide a running commentary as children play, which helps to give meaning to what children are doing. Furthermore, staff use descriptive language and use repetition to reinforce understanding. However, occasionally, staff do not always model the correct pronunciation of words in order to successfully support children's emerging awareness of language.
- The manager supports staff effectively through supervision meetings and observations of their practice. Staff are able to access online training and are encouraged to reflect on their practice. However, arrangements to support those staff who are less confident and less experienced are still in their infancy.
- Throughout the COVID -19 pandemic, parents have not had access to the setting as they normally would. However, they talk extremely positively about the steps staff have taken to ensure that communication is maintained. For example, they appreciate the dedicated application that the manager has put in place, alongside their daily discussions at the entrance to the setting. Parents feel well informed and know what their children are learning and enjoying throughout the day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her staff team demonstrate a very secure understanding of the procedures to follow in order to keep children safe from harm. They confidently describe the possible signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child is at risk of abuse or neglect. All staff attend regular training to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain up to date. Furthermore, the subject of safeguarding is always discussed at staff meetings. The manager implements robust recruitment arrangements and conducts regular checks to ensure that staff remain suitable to carry out their role. Effective staff deployment ensures that children are well supervised throughout the day.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- continue to sharply focus supervision arrangements to help less-experienced staff to grow in confidence and develop their knowledge and skills even further
- assist staff to understand the importance of pronouncing words correctly in order to support children's emerging communication and language skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY561869
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10191726
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Little Cedars Montessori Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP561868
Telephone number	01514939011
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Cedars Montessori registered in 2019. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am until 6pm, all year round. The setting currently employs nine staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 5 and six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Karen Cox

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- A learning walk was completed with the manager to discuss the curriculum intent and how the provision is organised.
- A joint evaluation of an activity was completed with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She reviewed a variety of documents, including qualifications, first-aid certificates and policies.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children during activities and assessed the impact of teaching on children's learning.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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