

Inspection of Dulwich Montessori Nursery School

St. Stephens Church, College Road, London, Surrey SE21 7HW

Inspection date: 11 July 2022

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| 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 enjoy their time at this Montessori nursery, where there are high expectations for all children. The manager and staff provide a wide range of experiences for everyone. Children benefit from extra-curricular activities, such as phonics videos, sports and weekly forest school sessions. This builds on their interests and helps them acquire skills for life. Children have a good understanding of the nursery routine. They say goodbye to their parents and carers at the door. Welcoming staff greet the children. They support them to find their name tag to hang on the tree before engaging in the range of activities on offer. The manager greets every child individually. All children make good progress in their learning and development. They access a wide range of activities. For example, they use their senses as they walk along textured mats blindfolded and put their hands into 'feely boxes' and are encouraged to describe what they feel.

Children behave well and follow the rules for the setting readily. This helps to ensure that they feel safe and secure. Children develop a love for books, which they extend to parents as they borrow books from the lending library. When stories are read to children, they listen intently and answer questions with increasing confidence. For instance, children show good recall of the different number of fruits the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar' eats on each day of the week. This helps to support their comprehension of the events in the story.

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

- The manager has an ambitious vision for children's learning and development. The staff team has created a curriculum that balances the Montessori approach alongside the seven areas of learning effectively in the early years foundation stage. Staff share this vision and promote it well in their practice. They demonstrate a clear understanding of how both approaches complement each other. This means all children, including those in receipt of additional funding and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well prepared for the next stages of their learning, including the eventual move on to school.
- Staff provide children with a variety of activities which they are eager to join in with. Overall, staff deliver good interactions with children, who make steady progress from their starting points. However, staff do not consistently recognise when the less confident children need to be supported in their play and learning. Therefore, some children do not fully benefit from the learning on offer.
- Children demonstrate their natural curiosity and are excited by learning. They are fascinated by insects, particularly snails. Children learn about the different stages in the life cycle of a snail. They experience real-life snails and consider what they may eat. Children eagerly engage in building homes for the snails and use magnifying glasses to watch how they move. This supports their

understanding of the world around them.

- Children develop good language skills. Staff communicate regularly with children and help them to expand their vocabulary. They introduce new words and label items to extend children's understanding. Children learn to repeat sounds as they join interactive activities to support early literacy skills, use new words and confidently ask questions. However, at times, staff do not ask questions to encourage children to make predictions and share their ideas to support their learning.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are helped to make connections in their learning. For instance, staff use a variety of resources, such as home-made books, to help children to develop in English and their home language. They use these along with visual aids for routines to help children's understanding.
- Parents speak highly of the nursery. They report that their children have made good progress since starting and that there is good communication from the staff. Parents are kept well informed about their children's learning and day at nursery, and their children love attending. Parents enjoy receiving information that will support their children's learning at home.
- Self-evaluation is successful. The manager considers the views of staff, children and parents when making improvements to the setting and curriculum. She regularly seeks the views of parents for suggestions to improve. Following recent discussions, partnership workshops are to be held to support parents to enhance their understanding of the nursery's ethos, as well as supporting parents of bilingual children further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding and know about the signs and symptoms of abuse. They recognise how to record and report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead for the nursery. Staff are required to complete regular training to ensure their knowledge of safeguarding issues remains up to date. The manager and staff complete effective daily risk assessments in the nursery. The premises are secure and well maintained, which contributes to keeping children safe. The manager employs a robust process to ensure all staff have been appropriately checked and vetted and remain suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to understand when children need support to access activities to enhance their learning

- encourage staff to develop their questioning techniques further, to provide children with opportunities to make predictions and share ideas to enhance their language development.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | 2567117 |
| Local authority | Southwark |
| Inspection number | 10239127 |
| Type of provision | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Registers | Early Years Register |
| Day care type | Sessional day care |
| Age range of children at time of inspection | 2 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 47 |
| Number of children on roll | 52 |
| Name of registered person | London and Surrey Montessori Schools Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP531694 |
| Telephone number | 07342038830 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Dulwich Montessori Nursery registered in 2019. It is located in the London Borough of Southwark. The nursery follows Montessori practice. It operates from Monday to Friday, 8am to 3pm, term time only. The nursery employs nine members of staff, four of whom hold the Montessori teaching qualification. The nursery offers funding for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tracey Murphy

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector and the manager completed a learning walk to discuss the curriculum for the children.
- The inspector completed a joint observation of a language activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at various times during the inspection.
- Parents spoke to the inspector to share their views on the nursery.
- The inspector sampled relevant documentation, including staff suitability and qualifications.

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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