

Inspection of The Montessori School

102 Chestnut Grove, LONDON SW12 8JJ

Inspection date:

10 June 2022 - 17 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive in this nursery. Arrangements for settling new children and for those moving on to the next age group are specifically tailored to each individual child and their needs. Staff use visual cards to introduce and discuss adults in the setting when children first start. As a result, all children settle exceptionally well, including those who have had extended breaks from the setting.

All children have an exceedingly positive approach to their learning. They independently select their activities and are fully immersed in the wide range of experiences available to them. For example, children explore spray bottles and the marks the water makes on a mirror. They excitedly say 'oh!' as staff support them to spray for the first time and it takes them by surprise.

Children behave impeccably. They form exceptional relationships with staff, who are nurturing role models and set high expectations for what children can achieve. Staff carefully role model and coach children in how to navigate their own obstacle course safely. This supports their balance and understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Staff follow the children's lead and extend or adapt activities by listening to the children's conversations and making changes to support their engagement. For instance, staff lead activities to explore fruit and vegetables and how they are harvested. Children fixate on the use of combine harvesters and how they work. To support this, staff adapt their activity to build the vehicle and they carefully explain each part and how it works.

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

- Leaders and staff offer a highly ambitious curriculum that meets the individual needs of every child. They clearly focus on children's journey through their learning, rather than seeing learning as an end point. This means that children are continuously challenged, and their inquisitiveness to know more is stretched.
- Children demonstrate politeness and respect in all that they do. Younger children ask permission before using or borrowing resources from each other. Older children discuss being respectful of their neighbours and not making too much noise while playing outside. Staff support this even further. They say to children, 'I thought that was really nice how you worked together and took turns.'
- Staff ensure that all children have a wide range of rich and meaningful experiences that provide them with a range of knowledge and understanding about the world around them. For example, children and staff carefully harvest aloe vera gel from the plant before mixing it with other ingredients to make their own hand gel to take home. Other children explore how hydraulics work, using syringe pumps to move the arm of a digger and pick up items in the bucket.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities flourish. Staff fully

understand children's complex needs. Their exemplary teaching skills mean they are able to adapt routines and activities to ensure that all children are able to take part. Children access a smaller room with dedicated staff to work specifically on their social and communication skills. As a result, all children become skilful communicators.

- Parents and staff work closely together to teach children about families and communities beyond their own. Leaders demonstrate a sound understanding of children's backgrounds and how best to support children's understanding, mutual respect and tolerance. They encourage parents to attend the setting to share their experiences and family values with all children, widening their understanding of the cultures and communities around them.
- The leadership team in this setting is inspirational. It focuses on children being at the heart of everything it does. The manager knows all children individually and is confidently able to discuss each child and what is being provided to meet their needs. Her dedicated approach to reflecting on practice and self-evaluation means that staff are consistently learning from, and building on, their practice.
- Support for staff development is exceptional. The manager dedicates time to teaching new staff to be an effective Montessori teacher and how to understand and embed the curriculum ethos. All staff have a 'buddy' who they can call upon for support and guidance. This means that staff are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to continue the extraordinary development that all children make from their starting points.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders create a highly positive culture of safeguarding across the setting. They ensure that all staff know and understand how to keep children safe and how to recognise when they might be at risk of abuse and neglect. Effective recruitment practices make sure that all adults in the setting are suitable to work with children. Staff meticulously teach children to manage their own risk in their play, which teaches children how to keep themselves safe at all times.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY370786
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10112700
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	51
Number of children on roll	65
Name of registered person	The Montessori School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP527957
Telephone number	02086 738037
Date of previous inspection	29 January 2015

Information about this early years setting

The Montessori School opened in 1998. It operates in Balham, in the London Borough of Wandsworth. The nursery is open weekdays from 8am to 6.30pm, for 44 weeks of the year. It receives funding to provide free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 17 members of staff, including the manager. Of these, one staff member holds qualified teacher status, eight staff members hold Montessori qualifications at level 4, one staff member is qualified at level 3, one at level 2, and six are unqualified. The nursery uses the Montessori approach to learning, combined with learning through play.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Christel Brown
Danny Lydon

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the nursery manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was carried out by the nursery manager and inspector.
- The inspector observed the interactions between the staff and children.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy doing while at the nursery.
- The inspector held a discussion with the nursery manager in relation to the leadership and management of the setting. She looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of qualifications of staff and the nursery manager's suitability to work with children.
- Parents' feedback was obtained on the day of the inspection.

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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