

Inspection of Montessori Explorers

Greenhill Lodge, 327-327a Birmingham Road, SUTTON COLDFIELD, West Midlands
B72 1DL

Inspection date: 19 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

On arrival, children are greeted by staff at the door. While children separate from parents relatively easily, some become quite upset once inside. Staff are caring and nurturing, and lots of reassurance and cuddles are given to children. Despite this, some children who are new do not immediately settle and remain upset for long periods. This is because they and staff are still forming close bonds.

Children enjoy singing songs and playing with their friends. Babies enjoy sitting in a circle to take turns picking a toy or puppet out of a bag and singing the song that it represents. For example, children choose a finger puppet of a duck. Staff encourage children to sing 'Three Little Ducks' with them. Children are excited and this is familiar to them. Some purposefully find the item they want out the bag, so they can sing their favourite nursery rhyme. That said, first thing in the morning when all the children are arriving, there is very little for babies and other children to do. This is because activities are not provided which engage children's interest.

Older children enjoy exploring jelly in a large tray. They touch and feel it and squish it through their fingers. Children sustain a reasonable level of engagement in the activities led by the staff. They enjoy creating and making their own Chinese dragon to celebrate Chinese New Year. Children are confident. They approach the inspector and involve her in their imaginary tea party. Overall children behave well.

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

- The provider's curriculum is designed to give children the skills required for their next stage of learning. Staff know the children well, including what they want children to learn next. However, teaching is variable, and staff do not always have a clear learning intention for some activities. For example, an activity involving counters was not clear for children. Children with mixed abilities were all doing something different. Consequently, the focus of the learning intent was lost and some children did not learn as much as they could.
- Generally, staff promote children's health well. Children are asked to blow their own noses, are praised for 'catching their coughs' and asked to go wash their hands. However, at other times, children are seen eating food off the floor or walking while eating, because supervision is not as good as it should be, and staff have not realised. However, once staff notice, they intervene appropriately.
- Children enjoy fresh air in the spacious outdoor garden. Large climbing equipment allows children to manage their own risks. They enjoy climbing and sliding down the fireman's pole. Scooters and bicycles encourage children to practise their large-muscle skills. The provider has identified areas in need of maintenance, which are being addressed. Traffic cones around an area designed to keep children away become a resource and children use them in their role.

play. Children use their toy diggers to scoop up the leaves and rubble as they manoeuvre them around the cones.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Staff work alongside parents and any external agencies who may be involved in the children's care. This joined-up approach supports children to achieve the best they can. Staff ensure that children who struggle to socialise and play inside the rooms alongside their friends still have access to the same activities. They bring resources out to them in the area they are accessing.
- At times, the organisation of nursery routines and transitions between these are poor, and do not support children's learning. First thing in the morning, children are grouped together with little or no direction from staff. Staff become preoccupied with caring for those children who are upset, or providing support to individual children. Children become bored and disengaged as there is very little for them to do and the environment becomes loud and chaotic. Staff try to read a story but the noise level is too loud and the children who are trying to listen cannot hear, so some leave the activity. In the afternoon, after lunch or sleep, managers and staff do not organise who is responsible for providing activities. This results in children becoming very boisterous or playing without any interactions from staff.
- Lots of opportunities are provided to support children to be independent, such as getting their own coats and shoes and finding their bags to change independently. Children are given jobs to do, such as laying the table for lunch or helping to get snacks ready for their friends. However, at mealtimes, children do not have knives to eat with. Staff remind children to use their forks, but do not recognise that they need knives to do this properly.
- Staff report high levels of morale. They are supported in their professional development. They access training on communication and language to help support children who may be behind in their language skills. This helps staff to close any gaps in learning.
- Parents comment that they are happy with the care their children receive. They are kept up to date with their child's progress through parents' evenings and an online application. The provider has plans to bring parents back into the setting and involve them more in their children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a robust understanding of safeguarding. They know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about children in their care. Regular training and staff meetings underpin staff's knowledge and ensure that safeguarding is thoroughly embedded throughout the setting. Staff speak confidently about how they would report concerns about colleagues and their behaviour. Staff take appropriate measures if children have an accident. There are sufficient staff qualified in paediatric first aid on site to deal with accidents or emergencies. First aid treatment is given, and a record is made online to share with parents. The premises and facilities are safe and secure.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that children are supervised effectively around food	03/03/2023
ensure that the learning intent for the activities provided is clear and reflects what children need to learn next.	31/03/2023

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

- further support children's independence by always providing appropriate cutlery
- review the organisation of the transitions between nursery routines to support staff to maximise the opportunities for children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY501530
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10271370
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	EXPLORERS GROUP LIMITED
Registered person unique reference number	RP535499
Telephone number	01213505550
Date of previous inspection	4 April 2019

Information about this early years setting

Montessori Explorers registered in 2016 and is situated in Sutton Coldfield. The nursery operates all year round, from 7am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except for one week at Christmas. It offers funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff, all of whom are qualified between level 2 and level 7.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Johanna Holt

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.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as first-aid qualifications, risk assessments and accident and injury records, and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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