

Inspection of Maria Montessori Children's House

St. Johns Church & Hall, Spencer Hill, London, Merton SW19 4NZ

Inspection date: 7 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

At the start of the day, sensitive and caring staff greet the children warmly. They allow children time to settle, helping those who are reluctant to leave carers after the summer break, before guiding them towards play experiences. Staff create a welcoming, safe and inclusive learning environment. The curriculum they deliver ensures that children have access to a broad range of stimulating activities. The pre-school follows a Montessori approach to education, which helps to support children to become confident, independent and motivated learners. Staff provide children with good opportunities to learn how things work and explore the outdoor provision. Children have great fun at the water tray. They learn that the solar water fountain needs sunlight to pump the water through its spout.

Staff support children's communication and language skills well. Staff provide an environment that is rich in verbal and non-verbal language. For instance, staff ask children open questions, use Makaton signs and provide 'brain gym' activities. Children extend their vocabulary as staff introduce them to words such as 'solar,' 'sphere' and 'scoop'. This helps to encourage children's speech, listening and comprehension skills. Children's behaviour is good. They share resources and take turns as they play. Children follow staff's instructions well. They roll up their mats and put away activities before moving on from their play.

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

- Children have lots of rich opportunities to develop their hand-to-eye coordination to support their early writing skills. They concentrate intently as they access practical, real-life activities. For example, children develop finger control as they access spray bottles and sponges to clean the windows. They also have fun creating marks with chinks in the garden with staff.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator and staff work hard to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They liaise closely with parents and a range of outside professionals to ensure that plans and funding are swiftly put in place. This helps to enhance children's opportunities to reach their full potential.
- Children who stay for lunch have opportunities to learn about oral hygiene. For instance, they use toothbrushes and toothpaste after lunch to build on and extend their abilities in brushing their own teeth.
- The manager and staff have high expectations for children. The curriculum they provide helps children to develop the skills they need for starting school. Staff have a good understanding of what children can do, as they complete regular online observations and assessments of children's development. This helps them to plan one-to-one and small-group activities to support children to close any gaps in their development.

- Parents speak positively about the pre-school. For example, they praise staff for sharing regular feedback about children's daily care and learning through discussions and online systems.
- Children are offered a range of healthy snacks and lunches. Staff support children to learn how to complete tasks on their own during these times. Children confidently cut up and prepare fruits at snack time and pour out their own drinks from jugs. Mealtimes are a sociable occasion, where children enjoy delicious lunches, including vegetarian pasta bolognese. However, at times, staff do not provide opportunities to develop children's understanding of the importance of healthy eating and the effect it has on their bodies.
- The experienced and conscientious manager places a high priority on the well-being of staff. As a result, staff feel valued and enjoy working at the pre-school. They go on retreats, attend weekly meetings and have supervision sessions, and the manager supports their ongoing professional development. For instance, staff complete courses on Montessori learning, Makaton and manual handling.
- The manager is committed to self-evaluation and the pre-school has recently completed a Montessori accreditation scheme. This helps to improve outcomes for children. The manager regularly consults with staff, parents and children to devise ways to further improve the pre-school. Staff have revised systems to help children to settle into the pre-school. For example, they implement home visits and staggered settling-in periods to help children to transition into the pre-school with ease.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager follows robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure staff's suitability to work with children. Staff have a secure understanding of their role to keep children safe from harm. All staff attend safeguarding training. They can identify the signs of radicalisation and are aware of the whistle-blowing policy. Staff know the appropriate reporting procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child's welfare. They develop children's understanding of keeping themselves safe, such as by teaching them how to handle scissors and knives when cutting. Children's safety is further promoted because staff work as a team to ensure that the premises are safe and secure, both indoors and outdoors.

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 consistently help children to learn about the importance of healthy eating and the impact it has on their bodies.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY317701
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10304843
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	20 to 50
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	The Maria Montessori Children's House Wimbledon Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP907799
Telephone number	07932642643
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

Maria Montessori Children's House registered in 2006 and operates from St John's Church Hall in Wimbledon Villiage, in the London Borough of Merton. The setting opens Monday to Friday, during term time only, with sessions running from 9.15am to 12.15pm and 12.15pm to 2.15pm, and a lunch club from 12.15am to 1pm. Extended sessions are offered from Monday to Friday, from 8.45am to 9.15am, and on Monday to Thursday, from 2.15pm to 2.45pm. The pre-school employs 14 members of staff, of whom 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Trisha Edward

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 pre-school.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The deputy manager and the inspector carried out joint observations of an activity.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The manager held discussions with the inspector, who sampled records such as documents relating to the suitability of those working with children, including qualifications and first-aid certificates.

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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