

Inspection of Lemon Tree Montessori

St Mary's Church Hall, Purley Oak Road, Sanderstead, Surrey CR2 0NY

Inspection date: 15 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are safe and happy. All children are busy and engaged, they enjoy a broad curriculum and explore purposeful activities to help with their learning and development. Children self-select a set of model dental teeth, they practise their dexterity by swirling a toothbrush around a pot of toothpaste. They examine the brush to see whether it is covered before fastidiously cleaning every tooth. They move the brush around, sequence their movements and repeat. They chatter away reminding themselves of the need to clean their teeth and stay healthy.

Young children practise their cutting skills with scissors. Staff provide paper perfectly sized for small hands. Children hold the paper and turn it around as they concentrate on snipping the edges. Staff watch from a distance; they do not step in when the children become stuck but offer smiles and words of encouragement to help build resilience. Children are motivated to try and keep going until they succeed.

Staff know children well and invest time in each child to build relationships. Bonds between staff and children are evident. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) feel safe to explore and become confident learners. Children are happy to lead their own play and discover new things. They frequently check in with key workers with a look or a few words, then return to their adventures.

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

- Staff are positive role models; they are kind and gentle with the children. In turn, the children learn to respect one another and use kind words and hands. Children learn about feelings and matching facial expressions to emotions. They learn to be aware of themselves and their friends. Children have ample opportunity to explore and play, they are highly engaged. However, sometimes staff are not always successful in their judgement of when to interact. Occasionally, they can interrupt the children at play and disrupt their concentration.
- Children enjoy playing in a large, enclosed garden full of activities that cover all areas of learning. Children have every opportunity to run, balance, jump and climb. They practise hand-eye coordination when throwing coloured hoops onto the cones with support from staff. Children do their best to aim and throw, then collect the hoops to try again. Younger children are encouraged to match the hoops together to practise colour recognition and counting.
- Children discuss ideas and problem solve together. They use language for thinking and talk through solutions. For example, children use their creativity to decorate a tepee using coloured chalk and discuss whether this is allowed.

Children find solutions by finding a water spray and reassuring friends it can be cleaned off. Children work together to clean the tepee and discover they can blend colours using the sponge.

- Children benefit from a wide range of open-ended activities that enhance development and progress. Children are absorbed in play and learning, they choose from different sized pots and fill them with sand, mud, and grass. They use their imagination as they scoop and mix the contents discussing what they are making. Staff respond to the children and join in the play, they create a menu together and enjoy pretend Halloween soup, birthday cakes and lunch.
- The enthusiastic manager works hard to develop relationships with staff, parents, and children. There is an ethos of valuing everyone, which extends to all. Leaders engage with the community and local services to ensure positive outcomes for the children. Long standing staff feel supported and are given training opportunities to help develop practice. Staff work well together and benefit from regular supervisions with the manager to talk through all aspects of work.
- Children benefit from consistent and well-considered routines. For example, children are called in gradually for lunch time and wash hands in different areas to avoid waiting times. Children sit with their key workers and groups to help build relationships. Staff talk to children to encourage language development and listening. They learn independence by pouring their own gravy from a suitable jug with a lid to stop spills. They learn to take turns and share.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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 know how and when to engage children, so not to disrupt their play and concentration.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY341292
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10300839
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	60
Number of children on roll	79
Name of registered person	Lemon Tree Montessori Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP525281
Telephone number	0208 651 5061
Date of previous inspection	8 June 2023

Information about this early years setting

Lemon Tree Montessori registered in 2006. The nursery operates within the London Borough of Croydon. It is open all year round, from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff, eight of whom are qualified to level two and above. The nursery receives funding to provide early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Zoe Duggan

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector observed the quality of the education being provided across the nursery, both indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector talked to parents, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity in the garden with the manager.
- The manager showed the inspector some nursery documents regarding suitability of staff.

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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