Little Cakes Montessori School

Unique reference number (URN): EY421321

Address: Chorleywood House Estate, Rickmansworth Road, Chorelywood, Hertfordshire, WD3 5SL

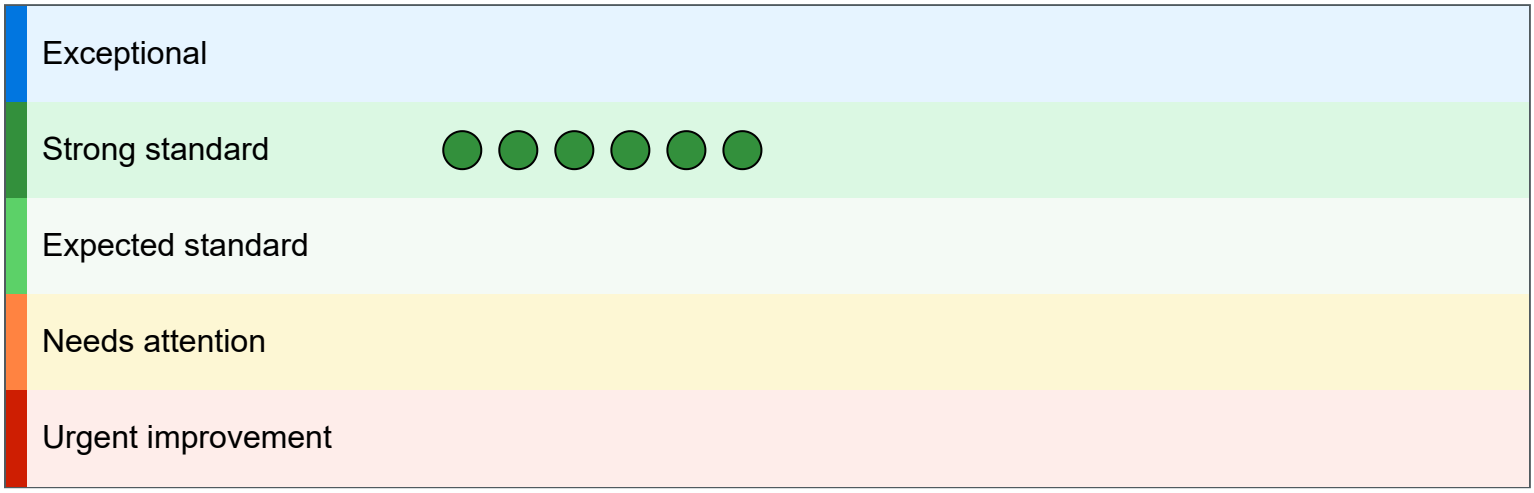
Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 12/01/2011

Registers: EYR, CCR, VCR

Registered person: Little Cakes Montessori Limited

Inspection report: 9 December 2025



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Children develop into confident, independent and respectful learners who are ready for the next step in their educational journey. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other barriers to learning, make rapid progress from their starting points. The well-designed curriculum ensures that children thrive, supported by both the high expectations of the staff and the securely embedded teaching and learning. Transitions are carefully planned, with staff providing the right support at each stage so that children feel prepared and able to succeed in their next steps.

Children show high levels of engagement and are motivated to learn by a variety of exciting learning opportunities. Babies use trains to make marks in paint, strengthening the fine muscles in their hands to move the trains on tracks and through tunnels. Older children carefully peel the shells from boiled eggs. This supports fine muscle development and hand-to-eye coordination.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Strong standard

Children demonstrate a secure understanding of, and follow, the daily practices that are in embedded in the day-to-day routines. They immediately respond to instructions, such as 'tidy up time' and 'circle time'. Babies replace the toys they have been using in the correct place then select their own mat for circle time, positioning them ready to begin. Older children carry their own chairs to and from the circle. Staff have high expectations of children. Where support is needed, staff quickly provide clear instructions, enabling children to complete their task.

There is an established culture of respect and kindness in the setting. Children listen to each other, share ideas and take turns in conversation. They remind each other to have good manners and clearly exhibit the independence skills they are being taught and that are modelled by staff, such as clearing away after lunch. These routines are securely embedded in the daily practice.

Children particularly enjoy being given responsibility. They carefully sweep up, selecting their broom, dustpan and brush, then demonstrate what they need to do. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional development are strengthened and their behaviour

is excellent. They are confident to ask questions, have a good understanding of how to regulate their feelings and are caring and considerate of others. Leaders prioritise the importance of children's attendance, which is carefully monitored.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard

Staff have extensive knowledge of the children and they use their detailed understanding of them to plan what they need to learn next. A flexible settling-in process, tailored to individual children and their families, ensures that warm, caring relationships are built quickly. Staff prioritise the children's emotional learning and support them to understand their feelings and regulate their emotions.

For babies, staff provide consistent, sensitive and responsive care, tuning into children's cues and emotions and responding promptly. Staff co-regulate emotions, model calm behaviour and narrate feelings in the moment, enabling babies to feel understood and develop secure attachments. Older children have a 'learning reflection area' in the room, which provides a safe space for children who need to identify how they feel. The use a variety of different resources, including photographs, support soft toys and objects made by the children themselves, which depict various emotions.

Leaders ensure that robust policies and procedures are embedded to keep children healthy and safe. Mealtimes are a social time, with staff and leaders eating with the children. The setting provides a healthy, balanced menu and staff understand the importance of children's dietary requirements and rigorous supervision at mealtimes. They work in partnership with parents to plan routines for potty training, weaning and safe sleeping.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders use assessment information and ongoing evaluation to make informed decisions about curriculum development. They have designed and refined a clear, well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum that builds precisely on what children already know and can do. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make rapid progress from their starting points and show high levels of engagement.

Staff know and understand exactly what the children need. They focus closely on the prime areas of learning, knowing that these form the foundations for all future development. They adapt activities in the moment and use high-quality interactions to extend every child's learning.

Communication and language learning are embedded in the daily routines. Babies join in with songs and rhymes, while older children take turns to talk and explain to others what they have been doing outside of the setting. This builds children's confidence in communicating with others.

Babies and toddlers develop an awareness of number through songs, rhymes, counting routines and sensory numbers. Older children develop an awareness of estimating whether something is heavier or lighter by using balance scales. This helps children to develop mathematical understanding and use what they know independently.

Leaders are skilled in their knowledge of using the outdoors to enhance children's learning and physical development. Babies regularly go out for walks, while older children spend time on the field or in the forest. This supports children's core muscles and stamina while fostering their curiosity of the world around them. For example, they look at changes in the seasons, growth, animals and the weather.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Staff have high expectations for all children to make rapid progress from their starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with other barriers to learning. Staff quickly identify when children need more support in order to access the curriculum. They rapidly build a picture of the child and what they might need, and plan appropriate support to meet those needs. At the same time, they value the uniqueness of all children. Leaders and staff work alongside parents, taking on support and advice from other professionals and the families themselves. The impact of this is that children with SEND or other barriers to learning are able to access the curriculum effectively alongside their friends.

Leaders recognise the importance of staff spending time in smaller groups with children who need extra support. They ensure that they consistently have a high staff-to-child ratio in order to enable this. As a result, staff provide extra emotional and physical support for the children who need it most.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders inspire the staff team to consistently offer high-quality experiences that support the children to thrive in all areas of learning and development. They understand the strengths of the provision and know what they need to do to maintain consistency.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from leaders and each other and the strong team ethos of the setting. Leaders value and support staff on their career pathway and provide regular opportunities for further training and development. Leaders are 'hands on' and work alongside staff to support their development. As a result, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to learning who need specific support thrive and make rapid progress from their starting point.

Parents speak extremely highly of the setting. They appreciate the settling-in process and the open-door culture of the setting. They speak very highly of the staff and highlight the relationships of the staff with their children. They appreciate the use of the online platform, which regularly updates them. They particularly value the opportunities they are given to speak to leaders and staff at the beginning and end of the day.

Compulsory Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Compulsory Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Compulsory Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

Voluntary Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the voluntary part of Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Voluntary Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children arrive excited and ready to learn. The caring staff greet them warmly, helping them to feel safe and understood. Each child has a peg with a photograph and a space for their bag, encouraging a sense of belonging. They hang up their coats and go into their room. Leaders place a strong focus on attendance.

The curriculum and learning provided are firmly entrenched in the setting's ethos of fostering independent, confident and happy children. It is well sequenced and ambitious, supporting children's growing curiosity. For example, babies explore mirrors and study their reflection. Older children use balance scales to weigh conkers and wonder out loud what will happen if they add an object on to one side. They ask each other 'will it be heavier?'.

All children are regularly offered choices that enable them to take control of their own learning. They take care of their environment and show pride in what they do. The well-established routines ensure that all children are clear on exactly what is expected of them. Babies put away their toys and older children clear away after lunch. They are confident, curious and independent learners who are keen to experience everything on offer. Children choose from the wide variety of learning opportunities that are provided. Staff skilfully adapt to make them accessible to the wide range of ages and stages of development the children are at, and for those children with barriers to learning.

Physical development is a clear priority across the setting. Babies go on regular walks around the grounds, building core strength and stamina. Older children regularly visit the forest area, combining long walks with observing nature.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain their work to ensure continued improvement and high standards. They should focus on creating a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known or previously known to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders, practitioners, special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, designated safeguarding lead and parents.

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.
A quality assurance visit by an additional inspector was carried out at this inspection.

Inspector:
Lorraine Terris

About this setting

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Address:
Chorleywood House Estate
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Chorelywood
Hertfordshire
WD3 5SL

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 12/01/2011

Registered person: Little Cakes Montessori Limited

Register(s): EYR, CCR, VCR

Operating hours: Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 08:00 - 18:00

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 9 December 2025

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

0 to 4

Total number of places

37

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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