

Inspection of Little Elms Montessori Nursery

Elm Court Community Centre, 363 Mutton Lane, POTTERS BAR, Hertfordshire EN6
3BP

Inspection date: 6 July 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 are highly settled, happy and busy. They thrive in the warm and welcoming environment of the setting. Children have warm relationships with staff, who they seek out to read stories, share ideas and tell them about important things happening in their lives. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement. They are inquisitive and make links to their past learning to help make sense of current experiences. For instance, they explain to the inspector that they water the plants to help them grow, then water all the plants with dry soil. Children know that they also need to drink plenty of water on such a hot day.

Children's behaviour across the setting is superb. They are deeply engaged in their learning and often play together. Children work collaboratively to carry heavy planks or roll tyres as they create their own obstacle course and push their friends on ride-on toys. They are also helpful and kind, spontaneously finding toys to help others join in and asking, 'Do you want a go?' to those waiting for a turn. Children make fantastic progress from their starting points. Staff have a deep knowledge of individuals and have high expectations for all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. For example, additional funding is used to deliver targeted interventions in the 'nurture room' to help bridge any gaps in children's learning rapidly. Children are superbly prepared for the next stage of their learning, such as school.

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

- Managers have a clear vision for continued excellence and place children at the heart of everything they do. They reflect on, and evaluate, their provision incisively, using staff's extensive knowledge of children's learning experiences and progress to identify ways to further improve and ensure each individual child's needs are met to a consistently high level. They gather feedback from parents in a variety of ways to ensure each family has a voice and can influence their plans.
- Staff deliver an ambitious, varied and responsive curriculum, which is sequenced so that new knowledge is built on previous learning. They use their deep knowledge of individual children's experiences and learning to introduce new concepts. For instance, they encourage children to think about shelled creatures they already know, such as snails, when considering what might live in seashells.
- Children are extremely confident and willing to 'have a go'. They demonstrate perseverance as they work to master new skills, such as threading needles or opening packets at mealtimes. Children have a positive attitude to learning. They are eager to join in with group activities, contributing answers to staff questions and listening carefully.

- Children demonstrate how well they know the routines and expectations of the setting. They explain to the inspector what will happen next and the setting's rules for behaviour as well as their favourite activities.
- Parents are unreserved in their praise of staff. They comment on the strong partnerships and high-quality communication between the setting and families. Parents report how much their children enjoy attending and the superb progress they have made. They also note how staff value children's home experiences and regularly welcome parents in to celebrate key festivals and share their culture. Parents feel very involved in their children's learning.
- Managers monitor the quality of staff practice regularly. They identify what is working well and areas where staff can improve further or share ideas. They set high standards for practice and ensure this is carefully supported to promote a positive working environment. This results in consistently high-quality teaching throughout the setting. Staff report feeling valued and well supported.
- Staff create a rich and diverse learning environment where individuality is celebrated. They organise cultural activities and welcome parents to visit and share their family's traditions and practices. Staff value each child's uniqueness and help them to learn about their differences. The calm, inclusive atmosphere of the setting and curriculum successfully help children to develop high self-esteem and respectful attitudes towards others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm and have a very clear understanding of their duty and responsibilities to protect children. They know how to identify and report concerns, including via whistle-blowing. Managers ensure staff keep their knowledge up to date with regular training, including on wider issues such as radicalisation. When appointing new staff, the managers follow thorough recruitment processes to assure themselves that staff are suitable. There are robust induction plans in place for all new staff. Managers also review existing staff's suitability regularly.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY270613
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10234749
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	35
Name of registered person	Little Elms Montessori Nursery Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP521691
Telephone number	07444744850
Date of previous inspection	29 September 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Elms Montessori Nursery registered in 2003. The setting employs 10 members of staff, including the managers. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one member of staff who holds early years professional status. The setting opens Monday to Thursday 8am to 3pm and 8am to 1pm on Friday. It operates during term time and offers a holiday club. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It follows the Montessori ethos.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kate Oakley

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- One of the managers took the inspector on a learning walk across all areas of the premises to explain how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of interactions during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- One of the managers completed a joint observation and evaluation of an activity with the inspector.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection. She also took account of the views of parents through written feedback provided.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of all persons living and working on the premises.

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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