

Inspection of Oaklea Montessori St John's

St. Johns Church Community Centre, St. Johns Close, COLCHESTER CO4 0HP

Inspection date: 7 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children part from their parents and carers with ease. They build secure bonds with the caring staff, who welcome them warmly with smiles and cuddles. This helps children to feel safe and secure and promotes their emotional well-being. Children take part in activities such as making play dough. They explore the changes that take place when they mix water with the flour, and play cooperatively. Children talk confidently to visitors about what they are making. They answer questions, sharing their thoughts and ideas.

Children respond positively to each other, encouraging their friends to join in their play. They walk along milk crates, and squeal with delight as they jump off them. Staff treat children with respect and praise them regularly for their efforts. This helps to build children's self-esteem.

Children behave well. Staff encourage them to use good manners by teaching them to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Children listen to staff and follow instructions well, for example when helping to tidy up and getting the table ready for snack time. They are gaining independence from a very young age. For example, children hang their coats and bags up when arriving and use a knife and fork when eating.

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

- The manager leads the nursery with a strong sense of direction and dedication. She is passionate about providing the highest quality care and learning for the children, continually improving the provision. The manager values the staff as the most important asset of the nursery.
- Staff have high expectations for all children. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with other staff to ensure they provide an inclusive provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children develop good hygiene skills. They know that they must wash their hands before eating. Staff support children to make healthy choices. At snack time, they are encouraged to try a variety of fruits. Children pour their own drinks and tidy their plates and cups away when they have finished.
- Staff promote children's language and communication skills well. Children use words such as 'yucky' and 'gloopy' to describe what their play dough feels like. They participate in singing and story time routines, joining in with the 'goodbye' song at home time.
- Staff work effectively to support children who speak English as an additional language. Children show increasing confidence as they say some single words and begin to form simple sentences in English. Staff provide children with opportunities to share aspects of their different traditions and cultural practices from home.

- Children have access to a wide range of resources, which they use to enhance their play. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning and show high levels of curiosity and concentration. For example, children are keen to use binoculars to look for different birds in the sky.
- The curriculum for mathematics is woven throughout all areas of learning. Children gain a good understanding of mathematics and recognition of numerals and counting, such as 'more than' or 'less than'.
- The staff's intent for the curriculum is clear for all children. Overall, staff design a broad curriculum that builds on what children already know. They use children's interests when planning their next steps. However, there are times when staff are not consistent in challenging children to fully extend their learning.
- Staff provide good opportunities to develop children's literacy skills. Children have access to a wide range of books and staff encourage them to select books independently. Children enjoy listening to familiar stories, which staff read with animation and enthusiasm.
- Parents speak highly about the nursery, commenting, 'It is amazing and the children love coming'. They also praise the dedicated manager and staff. Parents of older children feel that their children are well prepared for school through their attendance at the nursery.
- Children develop good physical skills in the well-resourced outdoor area. They practise balancing, jumping and climbing using different equipment. Staff engage children in ball games, throwing and catching to help develop their hand-to-eye coordination.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of all areas of safeguarding, including current legislation and guidance, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Staff confidently describe the signs and symptoms that may indicate possible abuse. They know who to contact and where to obtain further advice to act upon any concerns they may have. The management team uses robust vetting and recruitment systems to help ensure staff are suitable for their roles and responsibilities.

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 challenge and extend children's learning, to help them to achieve as much as they can.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY550414
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10143476
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	44
Name of registered person	Oaklea Montessori Community Interest Company
Registered person unique reference number	RP528964
Telephone number	01255 880135
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Oaklea Montessori St John's registered in 2017 and is situated in Colchester. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including two with early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8am until 5.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It follows the Montessori approach to education.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Diane Middleton

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.
- The manager showed the inspector around the nursery premises. She explained how they organise the environment and learning programmes for children.
- The inspector observed a range of activities and interactions between children and staff to evaluate the quality of the education. This included a joint observation with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery during discussions with the inspector and provided written feedback. Staff and children also shared their views and experiences at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector met with the manager to discuss leadership issues, such as self-evaluation and the recruitment of staff.
- The inspector looked at some of the nursery's documents, including safeguarding policies, staff suitability checks and paediatric 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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