

Inspection of Oaklea Montessori Cic

Magdalen Hall, Wimpole Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 2DE

Inspection date: 11 February 2025

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are warmly welcomed by happy staff that are genuinely pleased to see them. The manager and her team have a good knowledge of the children attending. They have a comprehensive understanding of what the children can do, and understand what they need to achieve next. The staff provide children with a broad range of learning opportunities within the ambitious curriculum. Activities cover all areas of learning and deliver the principles of Montessori teaching while also following the children's interests and seasonal themes. Staff ensure the environment and activities are interesting, and ignite children's curiosity. Children demonstrate they are keen and eager learners and quickly settle at a chosen activity. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.

The management and team recognise that happy children who are interested in their environment, learn well. Therefore, there is a strong emphasis on supporting children's emotional development. Children understand the high expectations of the staff who are calm and reassuring role models. They speak to the children with respect and are gentle and attentive in their approach. They provide children with lots of praise and encouragement and recognise their achievements. Therefore, children's behaviour is very good. Children have formed close and trusting bonds with their key person and the whole team. Children are confident and demonstrate they feel safe and secure. They ask lots of questions, show curiosity and are keen, eager learners.

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

- The quality of teaching is good. A principle of Montessori teaching is to promote independence and self-care. This is a strength of the nursery. Children make choices for themselves. They select activities from the open shelving and know to return them when finished. They persevere as they dress ready for outdoor play. They wipe their nose and dispose of tissues appropriately. They pour drinks with skill and help prepare the tables for lunch. They enjoy a range of healthy snacks and nutritious meals. Stringent procedures in place ensure children's allergies and dietary needs are met.
- Parents speak highly of the 'stimulating and enriching' environment provided. They comment their children happily attend and have 'thrived' at nursery. They feel reassured their children are extremely well cared for, and that the staff are kind, supportive and provide good communication and feedback, regarding their child's day.
- The team of professional staff speak positively about their roles and the support they receive from managers. Staff are positively encouraged in their own professional development. Apprentices feel extremely supported and guided as they complete their qualification.

- Babies individual routines are respected and fully discussed with parents. They demonstrate they are very happy, confident and secure in their homely and cosy environment. They have formed close bonds and enjoy cuddles and reassurance from the staff who know them well.
- There is a strong focus on supporting children's speech and language and emotional development. Staff understand how children develop their conversation skills and provide running commentaries during play and introduce new words to extend children's vocabulary. Effective, communication with parents and the strategies in place support those who are bilingual or who speak English as an additional language. This helps to ensure all children make good progress.
- Older children are kind and caring toward the younger children. They happily demonstrate how things work. For example, they practise their fine motor skills as they use chopsticks to move pom-poms from one pot to another. They demonstrate how best to do this and offer lots of encouragement and clap their friends when they successfully achieve the task.
- Children thoroughly enjoy imaginary play. They show sustained concentration when using the dolls house and they negotiate well together building train tracks. Practical life skills are promoted well through the Montessori curriculum. Continuous provision, such as role play is also very popular too and sparks some interest. Children enjoy using dolls in their play. However, the lack of resources and challenge in this area means they soon become bored and move on to something else, rather than engage and express their imagination and creativity to a higher level.

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:

- consider how to provide children with a broader range of role-play opportunities to enable them to explore and develop their own play and ideas.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY542566
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10368502
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	42
Name of registered person	Oaklea Montessori Community Interest Company
Registered person unique reference number	RP528964
Telephone number	01206 587448
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2019

Information about this early years setting

Oaklea Montessori Cic registered in 2016 and is situated in Colchester, Essex. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with early years professional status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round from 8am until 5.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for children between nine months and four years of age.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum and what it is that the team want the children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- Parents provided the inspector with oral and written feedback at the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- The inspector spoke with the staff team during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of the staff working in the nursery.

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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