

# Inspection of Little Cakes Montessori School

Chorleywood House Estate, Rickmansworth Road, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire WD3 5SL

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Inspection date: 31 January 2020

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b> |
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| The quality of education | <b>Good</b> |
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|-------------------------|-------------|
| Behaviour and attitudes | <b>Good</b> |
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| Personal development | <b>Good</b> |
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|---------------------------|-------------|
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b> |
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| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |
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## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children benefit from the calm, nurturing and well-organised environment. They can choose freely from the wide range of Montessori resources. The sessions are well structured, with a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Staff observe the children and get to know them very well. This helps them to support all children effectively in their learning.

Babies and children show that they feel safe and secure. Staff are very good role models and children behave very well. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement, and display high levels of self-esteem. Staff have very high expectations of all children. They encourage children to be kind, cooperative and have respect for others. Older children help younger children. For example, they are happy to show them how to complete tasks. Children quickly develop their independence and self-care skills. They are given time to do things for themselves.

The wonderful outdoor spaces surrounding the school provide a wealth of opportunities for physical activity and exploration of the natural world. Each day, children are free to play, explore and learn outdoors. They learn how to stay safe while they explore the woods. Children love collecting sticks to make a den. These outdoor experiences contribute greatly to their health and well-being.

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

- The manager is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She supports her staff effectively through regular supervision and observations of their practice. This helps to strengthen their teaching skills and identify training needs. Staff are valued and respected, and their hard work is recognised with a monthly 'special teacher award'.
- Parents are very complimentary about the school. They say that their children are keen to attend, and that staff are friendly and approachable. Families are encouraged to be actively involved. They help with school events, such as sports days and graduation ceremonies. Parents are given ideas to support their children at home. For example, they are given a folder with suggestions of how they can help their children to prepare for school.
- Practical activities enable children to handle tools safely and with increasing control. They use pegs and tweezers to help develop their small muscles needed for writing. Children enjoy polishing mirrors, using spoons and using small jugs to pour water. After messy activities, they confidently use brushes to sweep the floor.
- Staff support children's understanding of the world in many ways. Children look at maps and talk about where fruit comes from. They learn about their own community and people who help them. For example, they enjoy visits from fire

and police officers, an optician, dentist and doctor.

- Children have many opportunities to experience real-life situations, such as using china dishes at mealtimes. They know that they need to handle these carefully. They learn to use a wide range of tools and equipment, such as woodwork tools. They keep the environment safe as they replace their materials on the shelves, and roll up their mats when they have finished using them.
- Children are developing a wide range of skills, which help to prepare them for their future learning and school. They make very good progress in their communication and language development. Children form letters and learn to link sounds to letters. They demonstrate their very good understanding of mathematics as they use a range of equipment, such as counters.
- The provider demonstrates a clear drive for further developing the school. She seeks the views of parents, children and outside professionals, such as the local authority. This helps her to continually reflect on what is going well and identify areas to develop further. For example, she has recently introduced a 'modification chart'. It records the changes made to improve the quality of care and learning offered to the children.
- Staff have a sound knowledge of how young children learn. They plan a range of stimulating activities throughout the day. However, some large-group activities are not organised in the best way to fully engage or motivate younger children in their learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a very good knowledge about their responsibility to safeguard children. They have a clear understanding of the current procedures to follow should they have any concerns about children's welfare. Effective recruitment processes are carried out to help ensure staff are suitable to work with children. High staff ratios and good deployment help to ensure children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff supervise children closely when they are using small items that could be a choking hazard. The premises are well maintained, and good attention is given to children's safety and security.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

**To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:**

- review and improve the organisation of group times to engage and motivate younger children more fully to enhance their learning.

## Setting details

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|--|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                   | EY421321  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                           | Hertfordshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                         | 10063626  |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                         | Childcare on non-domestic premises  |
| <b>Registers</b>                                 | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| <b>Day care type</b>                             | Full day care   |
| <b>Age range of children</b>                     | 0 to 4  |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                    | 25  |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                | 36  |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                 | Little Cakes Montessori Limited   |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b> | RP908387  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                          | 01923 526597  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>               | 28 September 2015   |

## Information about this early years setting

Little Cakes Montessori School registered in 2011. The school has 10 members of childcare staff, including the owner/manager. Eight staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The manager holds an International Diploma in Montessori at level 5. The school opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The school promotes the Montessori philosophy.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Jacqui Oliver

## Inspection activities

- The inspector and the manager completed a learning walk in all areas of the school to gain an understanding of how the provision and the curriculum are organised.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection, and took account of their views.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at a sample of the school's documentation, including staff's qualifications, safeguarding policies and procedures and suitability checks of staff working in the school.

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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