

Inspection of Little Learners Montessori Ltd

Inspection dates: 12–14 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Information about this provider

Little Learners Montessori Ltd (LLML) is an employer provider based in Watford. LLML operates four nurseries across North-West London and Watford. It provides the level 3 early years educator standards-based apprenticeship to its employees at the new training centre in Watford. Most apprentices study the level 2 functional skills English and mathematics qualifications. At the time of the visit, 12 apprentices were on programme. There are no apprentices in receipt of high needs funding. The provider has no subcontractors.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices feel well supported by tutors. They believe staff understand their needs and provide effective one-to-one support when needed. Apprentices benefit from a personalised learning plan which considers the pace at which they learn. Most apprentices who struggle with the pace of teaching get additional sessions to help them catch up. This additional support motivates apprentices to want to achieve. Consequently, they work hard and achieve high grades.

Apprentices confidently articulate the new knowledge, skills and behaviours they develop on their apprenticeship. This includes learning about children's development from birth; attachment theory; diversity, equality and inclusion. Apprentices' ability to remember and build upon what they have been taught helps them to plan and lead effective sessions for the children in their settings.

Apprentices feel safe. They say staff are approachable and care about their safety, future career aspirations and personal development needs. Apprentices are confident to report concerns such as bullying or any form of harassment at work should they arise.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have extensively improved the quality of training apprentices receive. They have acted swiftly to design and implement a clear and ambitious eighteen-month training plan that meets the needs of apprentices based on their starting points. As a result, most apprentices are well-supported to complete their apprenticeship programme.

Leaders have high expectations for apprentices to achieve well both personally and academically. Leaders ensure that tutors frequently challenge and support apprentices to develop and reinforce their learning over time. Apprentices who have completed their programme so far have achieved distinctions in their final assessments. These apprentices have also been promoted to room leader and management roles within the organisation.

Governance arrangements are effective. The new board advisor has expert knowledge and experience of the early years sector and apprenticeship training. The board advisor frequently challenges and holds leaders to account. As a result, leaders have an effective quality improvement plan to drive continued improvement.

Tutors are well-qualified and experienced in the early years sector. Tutors use effective teaching strategies to train apprentices. Tutors provide thorough and clear explanations that enable apprentices to understand key concepts. Most apprentices value the training they receive and can seamlessly apply their learning at work. They confidently plan and supervise activities for children based on each child's interest

and needs. Apprentices are better able to observe and respond to changes in the behaviour of the children in their care because of their learning.

Apprentices value their training programme and develop good knowledge and skills. Apprentices have a sound understanding of child development. They have learned about the theories and philosophical approaches associated with how children learn and develop over time. They use this knowledge to plan a wide range of activities to develop the whole child and promote speech, language, and communication from an early age.

Apprentices develop a wide range of appropriate professional behaviours at work to become highly reflective practitioners. They work effectively with their colleagues to share good practice. Apprentices show a high level of compassion and care for the children they look after. Apprentices are extremely effective in applying their knowledge of fundamental British values to their work, for example, by planning activities for their international celebration event. Apprentices carefully ensure that planned activities promote mutual respect and reflect the different faiths and beliefs of the children and their parents. Apprentices develop their confidence and professionalism by using their own initiative to produce reports, holding parent conferences to discuss children's progress, behaviours and concerns.

Leaders have developed an effective strategy to support the English and mathematics skills of apprentices. Apprentices complete their English and mathematics qualifications within the first 8 months of their training plan. Most apprentices pass these qualifications when they first take them. However, leaders do not take swift action to support the few apprentices who struggle to pass their English and mathematics assessments. Consequently, these apprentices are slow to develop the essential English and mathematics skills needed for their role.

Leaders have been slow to take action to identify and put in place specialist support for apprentices who need additional help with their studies. As a result, these apprentices are not getting the right support to quickly progress through their qualifications.

Tutors do not provide effective feedback on the quality of apprentices' written work that helps apprentices know how to improve. Tutors often do not correct errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. As a result, apprentices do not consistently develop their English skills, particularly in writing. This reduces their chances of future employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices complete an extensive range of professional development activities in addition to their apprenticeship such as learning about female genital mutilation and basic first aid. This allows them to effectively look after and safeguard the children in their care.

Apprentices have a sound understanding of health and safety practices at work. They know how to carry out appropriate risk assessments to ensure children are safe. They understand the importance of good food hygiene practices, particularly in the nursery settings they work in.

Most apprentices have a good understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken action to improve apprentice's awareness of local risk by introducing a monthly newsletter. However, most apprentices' understanding of specific local issues related to the 'Prevent' duty is still underdeveloped.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Tutors must ensure that apprentices are trained to write well and develop good English skills. Tutors need to ensure that apprentices produce high-quality written work.
- Leaders need to put in place an effective strategy to support those apprentices who struggle to pass their English and mathematics assessments.
- Leaders must identify swiftly those apprentices who need additional help with their studies. Leaders must ensure that these apprentices benefit from the appropriate help to enable them to make good progress in completing their apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2626878
Address	62-78 Merton Rd Watford WD18 0WY
Contact number	01923 463927
Website	www.thelittlelearners.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Jenna Hamilton-Howard
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	No subcontractors

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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