

Inspection of Unique Child Montessori Nursery

Stockwell Methodist Church, 44-55 Jeffrey's Road, Stockwell, London SW4 6QX

Inspection date:

27 June 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Staff provide a safe environment and are kind and attentive to children's needs. This nurtures children's sense of security and helps them to build strong bonds with staff. They show that they enjoy their time at the nursery and confidently make choices about their play. Staff offer activities that spark children's curiosity and interest in learning. For example, they provide adaptable materials, such as dough, which promote children's sensory exploration and imaginary play. However, the quality of education is variable. Although there is a broad curriculum and staff want children to do well, they do not always plan effectively for their next steps in learning. At times, teaching lacks a clear focus and staff do not extend children's learning as they play. This affects children's overall progress, including for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Managers and staff have high expectations for children. They are committed to supporting children with SEND and spend additional funding thoughtfully, providing equipment to enhance children's learning. Staff support children to become independent and to manage their own personal needs, such as feeding themselves and using the toilet. These experiences foster children's self-esteem and prepare them for starting school. However, staff do not consistently promote children's positive behaviour effectively. While they remind children about 'golden rules', such as using 'kind hands', they do not help them to manage their strong emotions. Therefore, at times, children demonstrate repeated unwanted behaviour.

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

- Managers describe an ambitious curriculum and staff have a general understanding of what they want children to learn. However, some staff are not clear about how to plan for what children need to learn next. For example, they provide craft activities that involve cutting out complex shapes, which children find far too difficult. Therefore, staff complete the task while children sit and watch. This does not ensure that children consistently build on what they know and can do.
- Managers are enthusiastic and committed. However, their current workloads are burdensome at times, and this affects their oversight and leadership of the nursery. Therefore, while managers describe plans to help raise the quality of the provision, they do not support staff effectively through these changes. This does not ensure that improvements are securely embedded.
- Staff have access to regular mandatory training, to ensure that they know how to keep children safe and well. However, they do not receive effective supervision sessions and coaching, to help them develop their teaching skills. As a result, some staff do not know how to support and extend children's learning, especially for children with SEND or those that need extra help.

- Staff promote children's communication and language development well. Stories, rhymes and songs are a part of the daily routine for children, introducing them to a range of new words. Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, become confident communicators.
- The curriculum has a focus on developing children's understanding of the world. Children learn about animals, such as frogs and grasshoppers, by observing live creatures and looking at factual books. This helps to ignite children's interest and respect for nature.
- Staff aim to foster children's independence through everyday routines and responsibilities, such as by serving their own food and drinks at mealtimes. However, in the toddler and pre-school rooms, these routines are not always well organised. For example, at times, staff are too busy with domestic tasks to help children make the most of these learning opportunities.
- Overall, children behave well. When conflicts occur, staff are quick to intervene and support children to share and take turns. They offer gentle reminders about the rules in place. However, staff do not support children to understand the impact of their actions and why certain behaviours are not acceptable. Therefore, children do not learn to regulate their feelings and behaviour independently.
- There are effective partnerships with parents and carers. Managers and staff do their best to include parents in children's learning. For example, they provide a lending library, to encourage parents to read with their children at home.

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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
support staff to plan and implement an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum, to help all children to make the best possible progress	04/08/2025
improve senior staffing arrangements to provide an effective management structure and ensure that managers are secure in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities	04/08/2025

focus staff supervision sessions more precisely, to ensure a consistently good level of teaching across the nursery, including for children with SEND.	04/08/2025
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- help staff in the toddler and pre-school rooms to review and improve the arrangements around mealtimes, to ensure that all children benefit fully from the learning opportunities available
- ensure staff use consistent approaches when supporting children's behaviour, to help children to recognise the impact on others and begin to manage their emotions.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2721031
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10409232
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	91
Number of children on roll	69
Name of registered person	Unique Child Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP528208
Telephone number	02076272277
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Unique Child Montessori Nursery registered in 2023. The nursery is in the Stockwell area of the London Borough of Lambeth. It operates Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, throughout the year. The provider employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 staff hold childcare qualifications, ranging from level 2 to level 6. The nursery offers government funded childcare for children aged from nine months to four years. Staff use aspects of the Montessori Method in their teaching.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Crawford

Inspection activities

- The deputy manager showed the inspector around the childcare premises, and explained the curriculum and how the provision is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of the education and considered the impact on children's learning. This included a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- Managers had discussions with the inspector on matters, such as staff supervision sessions and training. They ensured that relevant documents were available for the inspector to view.
- Parents, staff and children shared their views and experiences with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.

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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