

Little Learners Montessori Ltd

Address: 58-60 Merton Road, Watford, WD18 0WY

Unique reference number (URN): 2626878

Inspection report: 20 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance

Expected standard	● ●
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Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders and staff have created an inclusive culture in which staff know their apprentices' needs and support them to engage effectively in their studies.

At the start of the apprenticeship staff identify promptly apprentices' specific learning needs, including temporary barriers to learning such as medical issues. Coaches discuss suitable adaptations which apprentices might need, for example extended deadlines.

Coaches and apprentices discuss monthly the impact of the support which apprentices receive. Coaches record the support activities undertaken as well as any adjustments they make.

In staff meetings, coaches have suitable opportunities to discuss the quality and impact of apprentices' support plans. This includes reviewing cases where coaches reduce support. Apprentices with specific learning needs achieve their qualifications as well as their peers.

Leaders have provided coaches with useful training on how to help apprentices with barriers to learning. A few staff have received training on teaching apprentices with specific learning difficulties and disabilities such as dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Coaches work closely with employers to make sure they meet apprentices' specific needs in the workplace.

Leaders do not systematically analyse information about the groups of apprentices who have wider barriers to learning in order to identify trends in the progress these apprentices make.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and governors have a clear strategy and vision for developing early years apprenticeships. They meet highly effectively the need to provide a skilled early years workforce in a sector where there are skills shortages.

Leaders and governors have appropriate oversight of their strengths and areas for development. Where there are dips in apprentices' achievement, leaders have carefully analysed the reasons and put in place suitable strategies to resolve the issues. Leaders meet weekly with coaches to check apprentices' progress, identify apprentices at risk and develop action plans for those falling behind.

Leaders have access to management information that is broadly accurate and helps them monitor quality. They share this with governors at termly meetings. Governors provide effective support to leaders and challenge them to make improvements. In a few instances, leaders do not provide timely information to governors. This means that governors do not have an opportunity to scrutinise information early in the year so that they can help to rectify any declines, such as the number of apprentices who leave their programme early. Leaders

do not ensure governors have a consistently detailed understanding of the quality of apprenticeships.

Leaders provide highly relevant professional learning which helps coaches develop significantly their knowledge of the early years curriculum. Coaches study accredited qualifications that prepare them effectively to teach Montessori principles in early years education.

Leaders have developed a culture where staff feel valued. Through regular meetings, leaders make sure that staff’s workload is manageable and their wellbeing is carefully considered.

2. Apprenticeships

Strong standard	
Expected standard	

Strong standard

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have planned a highly ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum for apprentices seeking to develop their careers in the early years sector. Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum to make sure that the topics taught consistently meet apprentices’ and employers’ needs very well. Apprentices have valuable additional opportunities to study the diploma to become a Montessori teacher.

Leaders have developed high quality self-study resources that help apprentices gain significant skills for learning independently.

In learning sessions, coaches expertly connect new topics to apprentices’ existing knowledge. Coaches give apprentices clear instructions on what will be covered at the next session. Apprentices use their time in between sessions to study the next topic. Apprentices rapidly apply new knowledge at work and retain securely the information that coaches teach. For example, apprentices understand the importance of play in developing children’s social behaviour and motor skills.

Teachers skilfully use questioning techniques to check and identify apprentices’ gaps in knowledge. They use their expertise effectively to develop apprentices' fluent use of early years and child development vocabulary.

Coaches give apprentices helpful feedback. This includes suggestions for achieving higher grades, such as adding more detail in their reflections about how to adapt activities to further

build children's learning.

Coaches plan apprentices' on and off-the-job learning highly effectively. They work closely with employers to include content that reflects current workplace practices and theories. Coaches involve employers in apprentice's learning and development, such as by supporting apprentices to gain a deeper understanding of the early years statutory framework.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills from their starting points, which they apply effectively at work. Apprentices learn about the importance of health and safety procedures in a nursery setting, such as legal staffing ratios.

Apprentices produce work at a level required for the apprenticeship standard. Apprentices use effectively examples from their daily experiences in their assignments. They create newsletters which describe how to look after babies with additional needs such as those who wear hearing aids.

In a few cases, coaches do not correct errors with apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammar. Where this happens, apprentices do not improve their written English skills.

Most apprentices who remain on their programme achieve high grades in their final assessment. Apprentices who need to achieve level 2 English and mathematics qualifications largely pass the examination at their first attempt.

Most apprentices are well prepared for their next steps. Many gain promotion at work.

Participation and development

Expected standard 

Apprentices feel safe in their workplace. They work and learn in respectful environments free from bullying and harassment. Coaches ensure that apprentices have an in-depth understanding of how to recognise the signs of radicalisation. They know how to keep themselves and others safe, and how to report concerns.

Leaders set high standards for apprentices' behaviour and attendance. When apprentices miss sessions, coaches arrange meetings to help them to catch up.

Coaches teach apprentices about making healthy eating choices. Apprentices study the significance of nutrition as part of their childcare studies. Apprentices improve their understanding of their own nutritional needs.

Coaches ensure that young apprentices have a good understanding of healthy relationships. They learn about personal boundaries and the meaning of consent. They also understand the importance of taking others' opinions into consideration.

Apprentices have useful opportunities to take part in community activities such as volunteering in their local Girlguiding association.

Apprentices receive useful training in seeking and gaining employment. Apprentices create a professional development plan at the start of their apprenticeship which they review regularly with coaches. In a minority of instances, young apprentices do not know about the wider career pathways available to them in the future.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Apprentices highly appreciate the supportive and caring culture which leaders have created. Apprentices value the guidance they receive from their coaches and their nursery managers. Apprentices make effective progress in their apprenticeship.

Apprentices benefit from access to a wide variety of online resources and materials to support their studies, such as video clips and research articles. This helps them to organise their study time at a time that suits them.

Coaches support effectively apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that they learn and remember what they have been taught. Coaches adapt how they teach topics by breaking down large amounts of text into smaller chunks. Coaches consistently repeat and recap information in one-to-one sessions to reinforce topics which apprentices previously learned.

Coaches arrange learning sessions at a time that suit apprentices with specific medical needs. Apprentices with SEND and other barriers to learning make progress and achieve their qualifications in line with their peers.

Apprentices develop a thorough understanding of promoting equality and diversity among the children they work with. They organise activities in the nursery to celebrate a range of religious festivals and bring in food from different cultures. Apprentices apply effectively their knowledge of British values such as respecting each other. They make sure that all children have a say during circle time.

Apprentices learn significant new skills to meet the needs of children with SEND. For example, they expertly use visual aids to help children who do not speak to communicate.

Most apprentices are ambitious to succeed and progress in their careers. They develop the confidence and resilience to move on to the next step in learning. They take the opportunity to complete additional training such as paediatric first aid and budget management to help them achieve their goal of becoming nursery managers.

Next steps

- Leaders should improve the quality and timeliness of management information they and governors use to help them gain a more detailed insight into their strengths and areas of improvement, including for apprentices who face other barriers to their learning or wellbeing.
 - Leaders should ensure that coaches help apprentices to produce written work of a consistently high standard to enable them to progress to higher levels of learning.
 - Leaders should broaden the opportunities for careers advice and guidance available to young apprentices so that they know about the wider range of career pathways open to them.
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About this inspection

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with apprentices, employers, leaders and managers, teaching staff and governors during the inspection.

Little Learners Montessori Limited (trading as Montessori Apprenticeship Academy) is a national apprenticeship provider based in Watford, Hertfordshire. Since the previous inspection the provider changed their status from employer provider to become an independent learning provider. They now offer apprenticeships across England. Most apprentices live in London and Hertfordshire.

At the time of the inspection there were 138 apprentices studying apprenticeship standards in early years at levels 2, 3 and 5. Of those 121 apprentices were studying the level 3 early years educator standard.

Around a third of apprentices were working towards achieving level 2 mathematics and/or English.

Twenty apprentices were under the age of 19.

Teaching takes place mainly online alongside face-to-face visits in the workplace.

Director: Jenna Hamilton-Heward

Lead inspector:
Sue Hasty, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Penny Fawcus, His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Griffin, Ofsted Inspector
Eileen O'Gara, Ofsted Inspector
Ravinder Jhite, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 20 January 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

138

Apprenticeships

138

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	91	61	Above
2022/23	50	55	Close to average
2021/22	63	53	Close to average

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2023/24	100	98
2022/23	86	97
2021/22	100	98

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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