

Inspection of Sarah's Montessori Day Nursery

3 Imperial Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 8NE

Inspection date: 11 August 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy their time at this bright and spacious nursery. Staff welcome children warmly as they arrive for a day of fun-filled learning. Children separate with ease from their parents and settle in quickly to the well-organised learning experiences on offer. The Montessori inspired curriculum supports children to develop skills and knowledge across the seven areas of learning. In particular, teaching promotes confidence, resilience and independence.

Behaviour is supported well by staff who understand the importance of the language of feelings. They slowly introduce children to a range of emotions. This helps children to recognise and manage how they feel and also the feelings of others. Clear rules and expectations are consistently applied by staff. When children struggle to remember the rules, staff present clear real-life images of children demonstrating the positive behaviours.

Routines are calm and unhurried. This enables children to move between activities without unnecessary disruption. Children are supported to continue with play before sleep time if they are not ready to sleep. This develops their emotional well-being and ability to manage their own needs. Staff discuss how children may be feeling, such as having 'heavy eyes' and needing to yawn. Children quickly learn to recognise the signs that they need a sleep.

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

- Through a Montessori-based curriculum, children develop fine and gross motor skills. They learn early literacy and numeracy concepts and problem-solving abilities. Practical life skills, such as pouring and scooping, are designed to foster independence, resilience and respect for the environment.
- Staff use observations and discussions with parents to identify children's starting points, interests and next steps. Planning is flexible and child-led. Teaching includes the use of themes and topics sparked by children's curiosity. For example, children learn about cameras. Staff skilfully link this to self-portraits that encourage children to explore what makes them unique.
- Children across the setting are highly engaged in their learning. Outside, children listen intently to a story, counting the spider's legs and discussing features of a worm. Adults extend language, introducing vocabulary such as 'worried' and linking this to previous teaching about emotions.
- Routines, such as handwashing before lunch, are calm and unhurried, allowing children to develop independence at their own pace. Children make choices about food and drink, discussing preferences with adults. Children are developing strong self-help skills. They pour drinks from glass jugs, serve food and help wipe up water spills. Babies practise washing their hands and faces,

with staff encouraging independence and praising their efforts.

- Physical development is promoted through indoor and outdoor exploration. Children push trolleys and climb steps with developing skill. There is clear progression in learning materials and experiences that promote fine motor skills from chunky mark-making tools to pencils.
- Young children who attend engage in musical exploration, shaking instruments and joining in with favourite action songs. Staff support early communication by modelling language and naming objects. Children show interest in books, handling them carefully and turning pages with developing fine motor skills.
- Children explore their environment with curiosity. They engage in activities that offer real-life examples about temperature. For example, staff provide ice in children's play to connect new vocabulary to real-life sensations. Young children enjoy sensory play as they fill containers with damp sand. Staff role model new language, encouraging children to 'pat' the sand down as they demonstrate how to make sandcastles.
- There is a key-person system in place that supports secure attachments. Children seek comfort when upset. Staff respond warmly and sensitively. Cover staff know children well and provide good continuity during staff absences such as holidays. However, the 'buddy' key-person system is inconsistent. Not all staff are clear about the 'buddy' system, meaning the level of care and education can be inconsistent.
- Parents report staff are patient and offer a flexible service. They comment on how staff are responsive to children's emotional needs, particularly during changes and initial settling-in periods. Sensitive approaches, such as allowing extended sessions, have led to children becoming happy, confident and secure in their new environments.
- Leaders show a positive approach to staff well-being and professional development, with open-door policies and mental health support. There is collaboration with local authorities to provide additional support for staff when promoting children's development and well-being.

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:

- support all staff to understand their roles and responsibilities in the setting's key-person system to ensure consistent and high-quality care and education for all children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2782186
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10406443
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	75
Number of children on roll	83
Name of registered person	Jelly Beans Montessori Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531791
Telephone number	07948404217
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Sarah's Montessori Nursery registered in 2024. The setting employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery is open from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. The nursery provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Clare Ford

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector for a learning walk and discussed their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and interactions both inside and outdoors.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation in the baby room.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation to demonstrate safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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