

# LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI



38a Hyde Vale, Greenwich, London SE10 8QH

15<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Dear Parents,

## **Ofsted report 2025**

We are writing to inform you about the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection which took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, just three weeks into the new term in September.

As you will see from the attached report, we have been judged Good. The Inspector recognised many strengths and achievements which are highlighted in the report. The children were remarkable on the day and a credit to the Nursery and to you, their parents. Although there were many strengths identified in the report, one recommendation of which we were advised, impacted on the overall grading as well as each judgement area.

We were advised that the Overall Grade of Good was due to having a recommendation to *“support staff to strengthen their interactions during activities to challenge children’s thinking further to extend their learning.”*

Following the Inspection, we formally raised our concerns with Ofsted through a Review Procedure and the Complaints Process regarding the judgements and evidence used to reach those decisions.

With the overall judgement of Good, the four individual judgement areas were therefore also given a grade of Good. Regrettably, we were not given clear or detailed feedback to explain the grading for the four individual judgement areas, even after raising a formal complaint with Ofsted, with requests to be provided with this evidence.

During an observation of a teacher, the Inspector advised me about an interaction where the teacher did not extend the child’s thinking. However, we strongly feel the full context around this decision was not taken into consideration and that there were missed opportunities for further staff observation.

Bearing in mind that on the Inspection day, many of the children had only been attending for three weeks and were still settling in, at times, the emphasis from staff focused on emotional support. Therefore, we strongly disagree with the Inspector’s view that some interactions did not extend children’s thinking. Parents are assured that a great deal of time, effort and planning are given to making teaching and other interactions with children purposeful which naturally support and extend children’s thinking and confidence. Staff also use open-ended

questions to challenge children's thinking and with our high staff:child ratio there are many opportunities for one-to-one attention and care.

The Inspection occurred just three weeks into the new academic year during a period when many of the youngest children were still settling into routines, forming relationships and adjusting emotionally to a new environment. This settling-in period is a vital and carefully supported stage where independence, confidence and self-regulation develop gradually.

The Inspection took place on what was a typical day at Little Sponges where the Inspector saw Montessori at its best. The children were engaged, confident and demonstrated independence, curiosity and concentration in a calm environment. However, it is our firm belief that overall, the Inspector did not fully appreciate the Montessori method of education.

While we are disappointed with the outcome of this Inspection and firmly believe that we were judged harshly and unfairly, we want to reassure you that our values, practice, commitment to excellence and high-quality Montessori education remain unchanged. We will continue to do everything we can to uphold them by continuing to reflect and improve our practice. The wellbeing, happiness and progress of the children remain at the heart of everything we do.

We would like to thank parents who spoke with the Inspector. She remarked several times about our strong partnership with parents and their positive views of the Nursery. This is an important aspect in the life of Little Sponges which we acknowledge and always appreciate.

We are extremely proud of all the children and staff. As a team we will continue to strive to give every child opportunities to develop at their own pace, to achieve and thrive and, above all, to be happy, feel safe and loved.

Thank you for your continuing support of Little Sponges.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

*NB*

Nicole Bacon  
Head of Little Sponges Montessori

# Inspection of Little Sponges Montessori

38A Hyde Vale, Greenwich, LONDON SE10 8QH

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Inspection date: 23 September 2025

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Staff warmly welcome children on arrival and support them to settle in well. They place a high priority on children's personal, social and emotional well-being and demonstrate a caring and kind nature. Staff support children to learn vocabulary to describe how they are feeling and help them to manage their emotions. Children are encouraged to be independent from the start. They hang up their coats and put their belongings in the designated place. Children make choices when selecting activities and learn to take responsibility for the resources and the environment.

Staff plan a well organised and sequenced curriculum, which builds on children's interests. They provide all children with a wide range of exciting resources, which sparks children's imaginations and curiosity, including those children who may need some additional support. For example, children investigate how magnetic winches on trucks can pick up different items and test out their theories. Staff recap on previous learning, and children talk about the solar system and discuss which planets are closest to earth. Children increase their fine motor skills as they build, draw and use tools.

Staff role model expected behaviour and use praise and encouragement. Children share resources, listen and follow instructions. They behave well.

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

- Leaders gather detailed information from parents when children start at the nursery. This helps them to get to know the children and plan for their learning. Staff follow children's interests and build on their previous experiences. They use observations and assessments to ensure that all children are making good progress across the curriculum areas and are fully prepared for their move to school.
- Staff promote children's communication and language effectively. They engage children in discussions, ask questions and introduce new words. Children enjoy singing and sharing stories, which they retell using props. Staff ensure that children have opportunities to share ideas during circle time and activities. This supports children to become confident communicators.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents speak highly of the nursery and of how much their children enjoy attending. They feel part of their children's learning and receive regular updates on their progress, next steps and ideas to continue learning at home. Parents state their children are flourishing and are making great progress, especially with their language, knowledge of the wider world and independence.
- The staff promote a culture of diversity and inclusion. They use parents' knowledge, resources and activities to increase children's understanding of

disabilities and other cultures. Children celebrate different festivals and learn about their own uniqueness. Staff expose children to different languages to help all children feel valued and broaden their understanding of diversity.

- Overall, staff engage well with children and provide demonstrations as they explore the Montessori equipment. Children show excellent concentration and strive to complete tasks. Staff spark conversations and give children time to respond to questions. However, there are inconsistencies in teaching when challenging children's thinking to ensure that their learning is fully extended.
- Staff teach children about healthy lifestyles and the importance of eating a balanced and nutritious diet. Children also learn about the benefits of drinking water to stay hydrated. Staff promote children's physical play and provide activities to strengthen their balance and coordination. They ensure that children follow good hygiene routines and learn about oral health.
- Staff extend children's understanding of mathematics and build on their level of understanding. Younger children practise building with different-sized bricks, learn the name of shapes and count. Older children compare lengths and heights and show an understanding of time. Staff support most-able children to recognise decimals and place value of tens, hundreds and thousands.
- Leaders follow safer recruitment procedures and support staff's well-being. Staff receive supervision and access training to increase their knowledge and understanding. Leaders are passionate about providing high-quality care and education. They reflect and evaluate their practice and seek views from parents to help identify areas for improvement.

## 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 staff to strengthen their interactions during activities to challenge children's thinking further to extend their learning.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY413470
<b>Local authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	10407694
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	18
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	24
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Bacon, Nicole Ann
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP905611
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 469 9337
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 January 2020

## Information about this early years setting

Little Sponges Montessori registered in 2010 and is located in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The nursery is open each weekday, from 9.30am to midday and from 12.30pm to 3pm, during term-time only. There are four staff members, including the manager. Of whom, one holds qualified teacher status and two hold a level 4 Montessori qualification. The nursery implements the Montessori method of education.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Helen Craig

## Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector carried out a learning walk together to discuss the curriculum and the nursery's intentions for children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation and discussed the impact this had on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents, staff and children and took account of their views.
- The inspector held discussions with the leaders about safeguarding and how they evaluate their practice.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including paediatric first-aid certificate, qualifications, insurance and suitability checks.

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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