

# Marlow Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 116753  
**Inspection date** 24 May 2007  
**Inspector** Christine Cutts

**Setting Address** Frieth Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 2JQ

**Telephone number** 01628 477855

**E-mail**

**Registered person** Janice Christina Evans

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Marlow Montessori School is a privately owned group which opened in 1993. It operates from Bovingdon Green Village Hall which is on the outskirts of Marlow, and serves children from Marlow and the surrounding areas. The school uses the large hall, kitchen and toilets and has access to a secure garden area.

The school is open from 09:15 until 15:45 Monday to Friday apart from Friday afternoon, during term times only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The school accommodates 24 children under eight years with 28 funded children. There are 45 children on roll. The school provides for children with English as an additional language and children with a special educational need, although there are none currently attending. Children are normally accepted from the age of two and a half.

Five staff work with the children, four of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications, with four staff holding current first aid certificates. Montessori teaching methods are used incorporating the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage for education.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy an excellent range of equipment to develop their coordination skills as well as a very good range of activities to promote their physical development through games, movement to music and Yoga, contributing to a healthy lifestyle. The children move with confidence and imagination spontaneously hopping or dancing in the room or when playing king of the castle, 'you can't get me' outside on the climbing frame. The Yoga sessions also help children develop bodily awareness as they learn the benefits of physical activity and appropriate exercise.

Children learn through very good experiences the importance of good personal hygiene, staff remind them to blow their noses and children independently access the washing area after messy play or before and after snacks. The low table with bowl and jug of water is inviting for the children, encouraging them to develop good hygiene practices for themselves, as they pour the water, use the soap and empty the bowl after each use, developing their independence skills. Children learn to protect themselves in the sun by wearing hats and sunglasses. Parents are encouraged to apply sun creams before the children attend sessions. The children are protected from infection because the children play in a very clean and well-maintained environment and the staff have information about children's health care matters. A very comprehensive range of documentation is in place and the majority of practitioners hold current first-aid certificates.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy healthy snacks and drinks, fruit and bread sticks from the snack station, which is available for children to come to throughout the session. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about their own needs and to recognise for themselves when they are thirsty or hungry. Regular events such as cooking, lunch times and topics include discussions and opportunities for children to taste and find out about a variety of foods, such as the children making their own Guacamole as part of their South America topic. The staff take account of the wishes of parents and have a clear record of any allergies or medical condition as well as any dietary requirements to ensure all the children have appropriate and suitable meals.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very well cared for in a safe and well-maintained environment. The organisation of age-appropriate toys and equipment means children can move around safely and freely to independently access available resources from tables and shelves at child height.

Children benefit from a very good range of safety measures, for example radiator covers, fire blanket and extinguishers and a fully secure outdoor play area. They develop a good awareness of safety through practising emergency evacuations. Staff deployment is very good and guarantees children are well supervised and safe at all times. Sensitive reminders, such as requests to remember to use equipment appropriately or not running in the hall, are reinforced through praising positive behaviour 'That was a nice walk, well done', this increases children's awareness of everyday safety in the setting. Children have visits from the fire brigade and police and have had topics on road safety to ensure children have very good opportunities to develop their own awareness of protecting themselves in the wider community.

Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff show a sound understanding of the procedure to follow with any concerns. They are fully aware of the types of abuse and signs to look and how to handle any concerns. There is comprehensive information for staff and parents on child protection issues to help staff protect the children in their care.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very confident, settle quickly and select for themselves a favourite activity from the excellent range available. The children explore and investigate in a child led environment where a philosophy of 'it is the children's classroom' prevails. Children are very interested and active in their own learning, spending time concentrating on the resources and activities, such as one child sequencing and naming numbers in units, tens, hundreds and thousands. Another child is concentrating very hard on doing up the buttons on a dressing up coat. They are curious and want to play with the resources, watch the tadpoles, cook or explore many of the excellent resources available to support children's learning.

Children are developing good relationships and get on well with peers and adults. They play imaginary games together, shopping in the role-play corner. The children co-operate, working very well together, they organise their own games, two boys, playing a dominoes game, help each other get equipment out and put it away again. They naturally share and readily take turns, with staff rarely having to help mediate disputes.

Children make connections in their learning as they regularly use a wide range of creative materials, such as paint, dough and collage materials, crayons, chalks and pencils, which encourages them to represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

The staff promote children's development, they join in the children's play, building on the children's own interests and supporting their learning through appropriate questions and challenges.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding; the very committed and enthusiastic staff team, who have a very confident and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, support children's learning through the Montessori teaching method. Planning covers all areas of learning and identifies the early learning goals, as well as individual plans for each child to identify their individual learning needs. The staff have an excellent knowledge of the children's individual needs and keep detailed assessment records to help them support children onto their next steps in their learning.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. They are actively involved in play and activities throughout the sessions. Children show a good understanding of numbers and some can sequence and name numbers into the thousands. Children confidently use mathematical language; they talk about big and small, talk about and name shapes and use directional language 'That one goes under there, next to that one'. They count correctly to ten and show a clear awareness of numbers larger than ten when counting the children at register time. Children also use simple calculation in every day situations, with staff asking questions such as 'are there more girls than boys?'

Children enjoy books and readily select them to read to themselves and others, they take part and listen well at story times. Children have many opportunities to make marks and practise emergent writing, with free drawing, using sand trays and using work sheets on the letter of the week. Children show a good knowledge of letters and make words from letterboxes which some then write into their workbooks. Children attempt to write their own names on their work and use their name cards to help them. Children are very confident communicators and use language effectively to make their feelings, thoughts, wants and needs made known to others.

Children are able to freely explore everyday items and learn through practical play, such as when using the digital camera to record their achievements or using the play till in the role-play area. Children learn about time and are developing a sense of past and present, they know the routine of the nursery and know what to do at tidy up time or when preparing to go out-side for play. The children have excellent opportunities to explore and investigate through a very wide range of equipment and resources both inside and out-side the nursery. They dig out-side in the soil box, use lots of construction toys and play dough, make guacamole and enjoy sand and water play. They also learn about the natural world by observing growth and change through growing herbs in the garden and observing tadpoles grow.

Children have a good sense of perseverance and concentrate when completing activities, and they develop imaginative games when dressing up or shopping in the role-play area and they have excellent opportunities to create using paint, crayons, chalks and collages and movement to music.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in an atmosphere where staff nurture and support children making them feel valued as individuals. The children and the staff show respect, consideration and care for themselves and each other. Staff value children's input, listen to them and respond showing interest and concern. Children's work is displayed and children learn to value themselves and others through planned topics and activities such as the 'children around the world'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are very good systems in place to support children with special educational needs and children for whom English is an additional language, however there are none currently attending. Children's behaviour is very good, they share and take turns and have a developing sense of right and wrong. The children have a good level of independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking responsibility for their personal care.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents speak highly of the group and appreciate the care and attention given to their children. Children benefit from parents' involvement in their learning, the group have a parents' representative who liaises with the staff and arranges social and fund raising events. Parents have a comprehensive range of information on the children's activities through notice boards, newsletters and good daily dialogues. This helps staff and parents work closely together to promote children's progress and ensure consistency of care.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The environment is effectively organised and space is used very well to maximise play opportunities for the children. Excellent and consistently maintained ratios enable the staff to get to know the children very well and spend time talking and playing with them.

Staff vetting, induction training and comprehensive policies and procedures are in place and work well in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare.

Leadership and management is outstanding with the highly motivated and committed staff team working well together. There is a shared commitment to early years, which is supported by management and staff who attend regular training to extend their understanding in early years' education. The staff have a sound knowledge of the National Standards, the Birth to three framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum, as well as having Montessori teaching qualifications. The leadership and management have a clear commitment to improving the quality of care and education for the all the children that attend the setting.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The last education inspection asked the setting to consider introducing ways of displaying the children's work, related posters and pictures on a regular basis to create a stimulating learning environment. Staff have made a great effort to make the premises stimulating and welcoming for the children, with low level units of open shelves so that all the resources are at the children's level and easily accessible. Children's work is displayed at their level either on the moveable boards or on the backs of the low-level units.

There is also lots of supportive labelling of equipment, some sequencing action, such as at the snack table a picture frieze of children washing their hands, selecting their drink and pouring it for themselves, choosing their snack and sitting down chatting to friends, then putting their things away and washing their hands again when they finished, making a stimulating environment for children to play and learn.

The group were also asked to consider providing more opportunities for children to access a variety of resources for construction to promote children's designing and making skills. The group have increased their extensive range of equipment to include more construction toys such as block play, gears, Brio train set and small world play to extend the children's opportunities for design and making skills. These complement the Montessori equipment and free creative materials already available.

At the last care inspection the group were recommended to ensure that all visitors are recorded on the visitor forms and noted on the register. All visitors are challenged, identified, and asked to sign the visitor's book improving the safety for the children. The group were also asked to ensure the register of attendance records attendance times of staff and children. The register of attendance now includes all the records to meet the requirements of registration and enable to group to ensure ratios are well maintain to support the children attending.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)