

Marlow Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Marlow Montessori School is a privately owned setting that opened in 1993 and registered with the current owner in 1999. It operates from Bovington Green Village Hall on the outskirts of Marlow and serves children from Marlow and the surrounding area. The setting uses a large hall, kitchen and toilets. Children have access to a secure garden area. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children from two years to under eight years may attend at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 44 children on roll in the early years age range. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. The setting opens during school term times, on weekdays from 9.15am until 3.45pm, apart from Friday afternoon. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting provides support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are five staff working directly with the children, four of whom hold relevant qualifications in early years and one is undertaking training. The setting promotes a Montessori approach to education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are flourishing in a caring and stimulating environment. They are making rapid gains in all areas of their learning and development. Staff are committed to providing very high standards and they are continually striving to develop their skills and bring about improvements based on rigorous self-evaluation. The favourable ratio of staff to children means that each child receives plenty of individual support and attention. This helps to make them all feel valued and recognises their unique interests and needs. The staff build successful partnerships with parents and other professionals. Parents speak enthusiastically of the excellent quality of care on offer.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- extending the range of equipment to enable children to use technology in their play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff carry out a comprehensive range of risk assessments to ensure children play in a safe and secure environment. They act speedily to address any hazards they identify and there are good channels of communication with the hall caretaker.

Staff record children's attendance and they carefully monitor entrance points as families arrive or leave the building. Staff who take a lead role in health and safety seek out extra training to improve their understanding. There is also a proactive attitude to staff training with regard to safeguarding children. Staff are quite clear about their role and procedures to follow to protect children. Robust and thorough steps are in place for the recruitment of new adults and this is followed by a sensibly, structured induction process. All members of staff are clear about their job roles and they organise the day to run seamlessly. The team contribute to an outstanding self-evaluation process that operates at several levels, from weekly meetings to completion of quality assurance schemes. Staff are well-qualified and earnest in their attitude to provide high standards. One aspect, already identified in their self-evaluation, is to extend the range of practical activities for children to use technology as they play.

There are excellent levels of organisation with regard to documentation and daily procedures to enable the staff to operate a safe and efficient setting. Staff create a stimulating and colourful environment for the children and there is an extensive selection of high quality resources to support learning through play. Staff work proactively to improve aspects of the setting, for example through the addition of a ramp to ease access to the building. They have an extremely good understanding of how to make all children feel included by focusing their planning on the needs of each child. Staff build outstanding partnerships with parents and they are resourceful in finding ways to involve parents in children's learning. There are delightful displays of family activities over the Easter holidays and many photographs of parents spending time in the setting with the children. A parent representative feeds comments back to staff on a regular basis and information is used to bring in new ideas such as a diary to record messages between home and school. Another innovative idea enables staff to capture the opinions of the children with a children's council and staff are acting on their suggestions for additional resources in the garden. Staff work closely with other professionals when children require extra support and they prepare children very well for transitions to school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are able to make rapid progress with their learning and development. They show high levels of concentration and persistence at activities that catch their interest. Staff are adept at knowing when to offer assistance and they frequently praise the children for their efforts. An established key person system is in operation with thorough monitoring of every child's progress. Staff prepare individual targets for their key children and sharing of the information with others means the team are all well informed to support children's next steps in learning. Parents also appreciate the regular feedback on their child's progress from the staff. Children learn a great deal from the stimulating resources about the world around them and there are regular visitors from the local community, such as fire fighters. Through the year the children celebrate a colourful range of festivals to help them develop respect for others and staff particularly encourage parents to share their skills and family experiences.

Children take part in many delightful activities that promote healthy lifestyles. They are developing excellent levels of independence as they visit the snack station when they are hungry or thirsty. They are confident at choosing from a healthy range of foods and they wash their china crockery carefully before going off to play. Children behave extremely well in the calm and supportive atmosphere created by staff, who are excellent role models. Children enjoy playing cooperatively with their friends, helping each other to role up mats or by fetching resources. They have an extensive range of tempting activities from which to choose, covering each of the six areas of learning. Children are progressing well in developing skills for future life, particularly in literacy and mathematics. They enjoy shared stories with staff from a colourful and wide ranging book selection and they confidently recognise their own names. Children play in a print-rich environment with very good labelling of resources and notices to help children learn the meaning of print. They frequently use materials to express their own ideas either through drawing, early writing or when exploring materials like paint.

Children show a great deal of interest in the natural world. They are able to view caterpillars as they develop and the outdoor area presents a small but effectively designed space to encourage planting, physical activity and imaginative play. Staff offer alternate active play indoors to further encourage active play through yoga, dance and drama. Children take an active role in keeping their environment safe for others. They confidently use a dust pan and brush to keep areas clean and fetch sponges by themselves to mop up spills to prevent friends falling over. They are developing a keen sense of fairness, taking turns during a matching pairs game or using a sand timer to ensure equal access to the popular computer. Laminated pictures and words relating to routines help children extremely well to feel secure in the predictable surroundings. When new activities, such as the arrival of the drama teacher occur, staff are quick to offer comfort to those who need reassurance. The tinkling sound of a large rain stick operated by the children warns them of approaching changes and staff are happy to let children finish their activity especially when a child announces 'I need one more minute'.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met