

Littlewick Green Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Hayley Marshall

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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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

Littlewick Green Montessori School has been registered for many years and is a privately run nursery school. The current owner took over in 1999. The nursery school is situated in a Victorian village school in Littlewick Green, near Maidenhead in Berkshire. There is an enclosed outside play area for children to use. The nursery school serves the local community and those who live further afield.

The nursery school is registered on the Early Years Register and both partnerships of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 50 children aged between one and five years may attend at any one time. The nursery school opens five days a week for 48 weeks of the year from 8am to 6pm. The nursery school also provide out of school provision from 3pm until 6pm for children aged from five years to eight years. Children attend from schools in the local area.

There are currently 50 children on roll. Children aged two, three and four years are funded for free early education. The nursery school supports a number of children with special educational needs/or disabilities, and those who learn English as an additional language.

There are 10 staff who work directly with children. The manager holds a level 4 qualification and both the owner and manager hold a Montessori International Diploma. Five staff have a relevant level 3 qualification and four staff are qualified to level 2. The nursery school follows the Montessori approach.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and secure at the nursery school because they share warm relationships with staff. Staff plan activities to support children's development; however, these are not always developmentally appropriate for younger children. Some resources are not readily accessible for all children. Children make steady progress, but staff do not always identify their individual starting points or fully support all children's next steps in learning. Partnerships with parents are good and parents feel included in their children's care and learning. Most recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed and systems for self-evaluation are in place, demonstrating the nursery school has a fair capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure staff effectively support and plan activities to make sure they are

- developmentally appropriate for the younger children
- analyse observations to help to plan 'what next' for individuals and groups of children
- develop children's records of learning and development to always include children's individual starting points
- ensure the positive images provided to challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences are readily accessible.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All documentation and required checks are in place to help to make sure that staff who work with children are suitable to do so. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and follow guidelines to keep children safe. Systems are in place to make sure that the building is secure, such as a key coded entry on the front door. Parents sign their children in and out of the nursery school and staff are vigilant in checking these records. Staff conduct appropriate risk assessments to maintain an environment that is safe for children.

A relatively new manager has ambition to move the nursery school forward. Recent changes to the outside area and introducing free flow, child-directed play has been successful in providing children with greater choice in their learning. There are suitable plans in place to bring about further changes for children. However, not all recommendations raised at the previous inspection have been suitably addressed. This is because younger children still play with resources that are not developmentally appropriate for them. They take pencils and pen lids from tables, put them into their mouths, and climb on furniture at the same time. Although self-evaluation has been effective in bringing positive change to some areas of the nursery school, it is inconsistent overall.

Children have a range of resources and activities to support their learning. They excitedly collect eggs from the nursery school chickens for their tea. The outdoor area has activities and equipment suitable to further children's physical development. Older children have the opportunity to choose what they wish to play with and staff plan activities to follow their individual interests. They make dens and engage in group games and activities. Staff support these activities and underpin their learning through counting and singing. Planning of activities is less well developed for younger children. Although staff observe younger children, they do not use these to plan experiences that will support young children's individual next steps in learning.

Children gain a basic awareness of the diverse world in which they live because they celebrate differing festivals and celebrations. The nursery school has many positive images on display to help children to learn about different cultures, ages and ethnicity. However, these are not readily accessible for younger children and images are too high up on the walls for them to see. Older children at the nursery school make good progress in their learning and development. This is because staff identify what their individual needs are and plan to meet those needs. Accurate tracking helps to monitor older children's progress. Development records

and observations record younger children's progress. However, these records do not identify all children's starting points and tracking is inconsistent. As a result, monitoring of these children's achievements is less effective and progress less clear. The staff identify when children need further help and take appropriate steps to access the further support they need.

Partnerships with other professionals help to support children's well-being. The nursery school has been proactive in forging links with disability specialists, doctors and professionals to ensure children have the support they require. When children experience times of transition, such as starting formal school, the nursery school works with most local teachers. This generally helps to prepare children for the change. The nursery school communicate with others who provide care for children. They record activities in a diary, helping children to experience continuity in their care.

Interactive relationships with parents mean that they feel included in their children's care. Questionnaires and weekly newsletters help to build good links with parents. The nursery values parents' ideas and includes these when possible. As a result, parents are very happy with the care that their children receive at the nursery school. Parents feel that the nursery school is a 'really positive environment where their children learn new things'.

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

Children use special equipment to increase their independence, such as zips, fastenings and buttons. They sort items into groups to develop counting and mathematical skills. Mostly, children choose what and where they want to play. Older children tell staff when they want to play outside and return inside when they wish. Staff help younger children to keep safe while playing outside, as they have an enclosed area where they can play if they wish, away from the older children. All areas of the required curriculum are supported, both indoors and outside. As a result, children are mainly developing well in all areas.

Opportunities are available for children to practise their early writing skills. Outside children use large chalks; inside they attempt to write their name on their artwork. Labelling of familiar objects in the nursery school helps to promote children's early reading skills. Older children have free access to a computer where they can play games and use the keyboard. Children wait for their turn and share resources, such as dressing up clothes. Group games help older children to work together and negotiate plans.

During times when children in different age groups mix, they show appropriate awareness and care for each other. All children behave well, as staff remind them of expectations. When it is time for snack or lunch, staff encourage children to help tidy up so they gain an awareness of responsibility.

Older children manage their own hygiene well. They have a good understanding of

why hand washing is important and explain that chickens could have germs, so we need to wash hands after touching them. The nursery cook makes healthy and balanced meals, meeting children's individual dietary needs. At snack time, children peel their own fruit and choose what they would like to eat. Staff regularly check to see if children need their nappy changing and maintain hygienic practices in care routines. The older children use the toilet and wash their hands independently. Children sleep in individual beds and on mats. Staff wash bed linen daily to prevent the spread of infection. Older children demonstrate an excitement for sport and organise themselves into races and kick balls to each other. Younger children climb steps of slides and crawl on and over garden toys, developing their large muscles. Consequently, all children have a good understanding of the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Children play and learn in a calm environment, helping them to feel safe. Staff are affectionate and warm with all children and as a result, they feel secure at the nursery school. If children do become upset, staff respond to them quickly to offer reassurance. Staff remind children about how to stay safe and are alert to young children's safety. Therefore, children are starting to understand how to manage safety for themselves.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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