

Cookham Montessori School



The Scout Hall, Grange Road, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 9TH

Inspection date 13 February 2015
Previous inspection date 4 November 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Highly skilful teaching helps children to develop the skills for early reading and writing. Older children learn to hear and say letter names and sounds, and they are beginning to read and write words to communicate meaning.
- The manager is highly skilled in monitoring children's progress. She works in close partnership with key persons, parents and other professionals. She oversees the excellent teaching strategies to ensure all children make rapid progress in their development from their starting points, with any gaps in learning closing quickly.
- Highly successful engagement between parents and their child's key person means that they have a comprehensive knowledge of their child's learning and development.
- The dedicated staff excel at providing an environment that nurtures children's independence and self-confidence.
- Children have very strong bonds with their key persons and other staff. The close relationships between the staff and the children help contribute to how extremely safe and secure they feel in the nursery.
- The manager dedicates time to supporting the professional development of staff. She provides individual supervision termly and appraisals. Together, they identify training, which helps improve their already excellent practice and outcomes for children.
- The staff assess the environment meticulously for risks to ensure the learning spaces are safe for children to play.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- maximise the opportunities for children to experience risk and challenge and to enhance their physical skills, such as climbing and balancing in the immediate environment.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and the outside learning environments, and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector checked evidence of the staff's suitability, self-evaluation processes and documents that support the nursery school.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and the planning documentation.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager.
- The inspector took account of parents' views.

Inspector

Ruth George

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is outstanding

Staff make precise assessments of children's development and effectively track their progress. They plan accurately for children's next stages in learning to help them achieve. Staff actively encourage parents to support children's learning at home. Parents express a deep appreciation of how their children are developing skills for their future education. Staff expertly use a range of strategies to help children search for the answers to their questions, for example, by posing another question to extend their thinking. Staff are extremely skilful in helping younger children learn to sort by size and to count reliably. Older children begin to develop more complex skills, such as adding and subtracting, solving problems, and making predictions. Staff are highly effective at helping children to learn about their friends' customs and traditions. They recently shared a Chinese meal in a local restaurant with their friends, staff and parents.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is outstanding

The dedicated staff excel at nurturing children's self-esteem and confidence. They turn to familiar staff for reassurance, confident in the warm and caring responses they receive. The staff are very positive role models and give consistent guidelines to children. Consequently, children learn to manage their emotions and adjust their behaviour around other children. Excellent teaching encourages children to manage things themselves. For example, they carried equipment safely, and mopped and swept up spills. Overall, children have high levels of independence and staff prepare them exceptionally well for their move to school. Staff make excellent use of Forest School activities to enable children to explore and discover nature. This approach helps children to gain an extremely positive attitude to being outside and supports a healthy lifestyle. Children benefit from excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills and experience risk and challenge in the forest, but they cannot always practise these skills daily in the garden.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is outstanding

The manager gathers the views of staff, parents and children to inform self-evaluation. This means that all those involved in the setting contribute to the process to identify strengths and areas to enhance practice further. Since the last inspection, the manager has gained a Forest School Leader qualification. The induction of activities in the forest has seen children who are timid at nursery flourish into leaders. In addition, staff are now extremely knowledgeable and have a very clear understanding of procedures for child protection to keep children safe. The manager has effective safe recruitment procedures, ensuring the suitability of staff working with the children. Staff value the induction process and the ongoing support they receive from their mentor.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY294410
Local authority	Windsor & Maidenhead
Inspection number	826990
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	74
Name of provider	Virginia Margaret Roden
Date of previous inspection	4 November 2009
Telephone number	01628 529414 01494442057

Cookham Montessori School registered in 2004 and is one of three settings. It operates from the Scout Hall in Cookham, near Maidenhead, Berkshire. The nursery follows the Montessori ethos and Forest School takes place every Friday; each child goes to the forest for a half-term block each term. The nursery operates Monday to Friday during term time only from 8.30am to 3.30pm. There is a variety of sessions including breakfast and early bird club, a lunch club and morning and afternoon sessions. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The staff care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are learning English as an additional language. There are 11 staff members; of these, seven staff hold an early years qualification and the manager has Early Years Professional Status.

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