

Englefield Green Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Lynne Elizabeth Lewington

Setting address

Englefield Green Montessori School, Kings Lane, Englefield
Green, EGHAM, Surrey, TW20 0UE

Telephone number

01784 472668

Email

egms@egmos.com

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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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Description of the setting

Englefield Green Montessori School reopened in 2010 after being taken over by a new provider. The school operates from a self-contained building in the grounds of the Bishopsgate Evangelical Church. There is a secure garden for outdoor play.

The school is registered to care for a maximum of 22 children from two to five years at any one time. Currently there are 37 children on roll. The school is open each week day from 09:00am to 3.30pm, term time only. A total of nine staff are employed, some of whom work part-time. There are eight staff who hold childcare and education qualifications including Montessori International Diplomas. The school is registered on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children demonstrate a high level of confidence and independence in this happy, calm but busy setting. Excellent care is taken to promote their individual welfare and education. Extremely positive partnerships with parents and other services all help to ensure that the service meets the needs of the young children very well. Staff are very proactive and have clear plans and ideas for aspects they wish to improve indicating they will continue to maintain and further develop this high quality service for young children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensuring the risk assessment reflects the potential hazards from the outdoor flooring and the steps taken to manage the risk.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded and protected in this setting as the staff have a good awareness of the action to take if they have concern about a child. Parents and staff have access to clear policies for all aspects of the service including safeguarding and complaints, enabling them to understand how the setting works. All the required documentation to meet the requirements of registration are maintained efficiently. An annual risk assessment is undertaken and also daily checks are made before children arrive to ensure hazards are managed appropriately. However, the risk assessment does not identify the risks posed by the worn membrane under the bark in the garden or the measures taken to manage the risk.

Staff have considered the setting's strengths and areas for development. This includes improving the outside area, further developing transition arrangements and the involvement of parents. Parents' opinions are sought and the staff work effectively with many other agencies, such as the local authority, for the benefit of the children.

Excellent use is made of the available space and resources, enabling the children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment as they wish. Indoors the good quality resources are displayed attractively at low level enabling the children to access them independently. Outdoors the children have access to a variety of fun play equipment which promotes their physical development and interests extremely well.

Staff gather comprehensive information from parents enabling them to fully understand each child and their needs. Individuality is respected exceptionally well in this busy environment where children make choices in their activities and their independence is encouraged consistently. Staff are knowledgeable about particular needs. They ensure concerns are approached sensitively and appropriate referrals are made to obtain further advice and assistance. For those children who children speak English as an additional language staff seek key words from parents and ensure all staff have this information. Children also benefit from opportunities to learn about different cultures. For example, a parent shared oriental writing and children learn greetings and songs in languages in addition to English. The children use resources which reflect positive images of our diverse society including disability.

Partnerships with parents develop very well through the friendly welcoming approach of the staff. Organised events help to build positive relationships with parents. For example, a coffee morning provides an opportunity for parents to watch a video of the children's activities in the nursery. Twice yearly meetings are also arranged to discuss children's progress. Newsletters and notice boards help to keep parents informed. Parents speak very positively about the setting and the progress their children make when they attend.

A range of relationships with other services all help to promote this excellent setting. They ensure children learn about the local community through visitors to the setting, such as police officers, firemen and a doctor. Effective working relationships are in place with the local authority early years service and, when required, the speech and language service and other specialist services. The nursery has links with the local schools and teachers visit the setting before the children start school, enabling information to be shared easing the transition to school.

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

Children demonstrate a high level of confidence and independence as they undertake their 'work' in this Montessori setting. For example, children undertake a pouring activity at the table. When completed, without reminders from the staff,

the children return the items to the tray, the tray to the shelves, get a cloth to wipe the table dry and then hang the cloth to dry. This simple activity encourages children's physical development, awareness of quantity, social development as the items are ready for someone else to use, and also a sense of achievement and independence when the activity is completed.

Children show great enthusiasm for the high quality wooden blocks, returning to them frequently. They independently create towers, roads and enclosures. Staff speak very quietly to the children; they listen attentively and provoke the children's thoughts and ideas. Consequently the children demonstrate excellent communication skills as they talk about what they are doing. Children enjoy the story of the lady who swallowed a fly and participate in the story which helps to encourage their understanding. Many recognise their own names and those of other children.

Outdoors children busily paint the fence with water, dig in the bark and water the plants. They climb and swing from the climbing frame and also have opportunities to sit quietly outside if they wish. A comprehensive variety of planned activities provide opportunities for the children to work together. They enthusiastically prepare for 'Kickers' where they play team games and develop their physical skills with footballs. They also have dance lessons providing opportunities to develop their physical skills and control.

Staff monitor the children's progress very effectively through their learning journals, observations and Montessori records which clearly indicate the good progress the children are making. Staff have easy access to information each day regarding aspects of the children's development to observe in order to monitor their progress.

Children behave exceptionally well because they are treated as individuals and staff have consistent expectations of their behaviour. When playing indoors children always pack away their activities, ensuring they are available for someone else to use and remain in good condition. Staff interact with the children warmly but always politely, and the children learn from their example.

The children's sense of security is evident in the high levels of confidence they show in moving around the setting enabling them to make full use of the indoor and outdoor environments. They demonstrate an increasing awareness of how to behave safely and respond well to the adult's gentle reminders. Children independently show a very high awareness of good hygiene routines as they wash their hands when they come in from the garden, before they eat their lunch or after using the toilet. They use tissues and dispose of them appropriately preventing the spread of infection. They help themselves to a healthy snack and a drink when they wish and enjoy their packed lunches as they sit at the table with their playmates.

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	2
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	2
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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