

Oxford Montessori School

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Sheila Boyle

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Oxford Montessori Schools' Forest Farm is one of a group of three settings run by a private partnership. The school opened in January 2000 and currently has 74 pupils aged between 2 and 16 years on roll. Forest Farm is registered to provide full day care for children and includes a holiday play scheme and out-of-school provision for up to 70 children at any one time from 8.30am until 3.30pm on weekdays all year round, with the school being open during term times. There are currently six children on roll for the day care facility, all of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding; four are under-threes. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school aims to be a small, family-based community of pupils, parents and teachers committed to an educational environment based on pupils' developmental needs. It follows the Montessori approach in its philosophy and curriculum, seeking to encourage a broad range of independent life skills as well as balancing social and emotional learning with academic work. The school is located in a rural setting outside the village of Elsfield, north east of Oxford. Pupils come from Oxford and the surrounding area and move on to a wide range of schools locally and abroad. The school was first inspected in June 2007.

Context of the inspection

The school was last inspected in March 2010. At that time it failed to meet a number of regulations relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils, the suitability of staff, and the premises and accommodation. An action plan submitted in March 2010 was rejected because it contained insufficient evidence to enable judgements to be made on the progress towards meeting the regulations. A second action plan submitted in August 2010 was judged to be satisfactory. This is the first monitoring visit undertaken to evaluate the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

At the time of the last inspection in March 2010 the school's arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of pupils were found to be inadequate. The inspectors found weaknesses in new facilities for teaching design and technology. The building had a range of electrical equipment that lacked the appropriate safety checks; the

protective clothing was not suitable for all of the pupils using the equipment. To address this issue the proprietors employed a qualified electrician to carry out the compulsory annual PAT test of all its electrical equipment. This was completed in July 2010 and a report was sent to the proprietor which showed that all but two pieces of equipment were safe. These items are no longer in use. A mobile ventilating unit has been purchased for use near the mini-kiln, power drill and lathe. New clothing and goggles of different sizes have been purchased to suite the age range. Good progress has been made on this issue and the regulation is now met.

The inspection of March 2010 judged that the procedures for recruiting new staff and vetting volunteers prior to their appointment were applied with insufficient rigour. As a result, the school's register of checks made on staff was incomplete and there were inconsistencies in the checks made on staff who have lived or worked outside the United Kingdom (UK). To address this issue the school appointed an officer to investigate gaps in the curriculum vitae of serving staff and draw up new recruitment procedures for future appointments, including those who come from outside the UK. The school has now secured Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all its staff and volunteers, including two new staff appointed since the inspection; other relevant information has been obtained for the new staff; and missing information from the curriculum vitae of long-serving staff has been obtained where possible. The correct procedures and checks have been carried out on a new member of staff from overseas. The information obtained from checks on staff is held on a single central register. Satisfactory progress has been made on this issue and the regulations are now met in full.

With regard to the premises and accommodation, the inspection of March 2010 found inadequate lighting, heating and ventilation in the school's design and technology classroom. To address this issue the proprietors have installed florescent lights in the whole of the building. A new central heating system with radiators was being installed and was close to completion at the time of this monitoring visit. A wash area with sinks had been created and plans were in place to fill gaps in walls once the central heating installation is complete. Good progress has been made on this issue and the regulation is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements.

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Montessori		
Date school opened	January 2000		
Age range of pupils	2–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 12	Girls: 10	Total: 22
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 32	Girls: 14	Total: 46
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 3	Girls: 3	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,564		
Address of school	Forest Farm, Elsfield, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 9UW		
Telephone number	01865 358 210		
Email address	oms.schools@btinternet.com		
Headteacher	Ms Judith Walker		
Proprietor	Ms Judith Walker and Mr Daniel Ardizzone		