

Burnham Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY337023
Inspection date	03/11/2010
Inspector	Aileen Finan
Setting address	Dropmore Pairsh Hall, Littleworth Road,, Burnham, Buckinghamshire, SL1 8PF
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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

Burnham Montessori School registered in 2006 with new owners. There has been a Montessori School on this site since 1991. It operates from one large room within Dropmore Parish Hall in Burnham near Slough, Berkshire. The hall also has a kitchen, cloakroom and toilet facilities. The School is open each weekday during school term time from 8.45am until 3.00pm. The early bird session runs from 8.45am to 9.00am, with the main morning session from 9.00am until 12 noon. There is a lunch session from 12 noon to 12:45pm and the final afternoon session from 12:45pm until 3.45pm. Children may attend for the whole day. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is registered to provide care for 24 children from aged to 2 to under 8. Of these 24 children may be in the early years age group. There are currently 32 children on roll within the early years age group. The setting employs six staff. Of these four hold appropriate early years qualifications. The school follows the Montessori philosophy. The School supports children with special educational needs and children who use English as an additional language.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The Montessori School is welcoming to both children and parents. Children are safe and secure, and therefore are happy and settled which enables them to enjoy their learning. There are strong links with parents/carers. The School has met all of the recommendations set at the last inspection and have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. They have highlighted future areas of development to secure their ongoing improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend learning and development opportunities to enhance children's understanding of diversity of life and family groups
- extend and enhance the opportunities for home and school learning as well as in order to more clearly identify children's next steps.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the setting are strong. Policies in place are effective and acted upon well. These policies are shared with parents. Staff who look after children are appropriately qualified and trained. They carry out their individual responsibilities effectively. Arrangements to safeguard children are

robust. Staff understand their responsibilities to protect children appropriately, through effective procedures to identify any child at risk and to liaise with the appropriate agencies. Risk assessments in place minimise the hazards and dangers to children. Therefore, steps are taken to ensure all aspects of the environment are safe for children both indoors and out. Risk assessments are conducted for weekly walks and any visits children take part in. Children's personal records are maintained thoroughly. Accidents, medication and any incidents are recorded appropriately. Recruitment processes include taking and following up references and all staff complete an induction.

Staff are focused on helping children make good progress in their learning and development. They are enthusiastic and have warm bonds with the children, which in turn allows children to feel welcome, happy and settled. Staff are committed to their roles and share a vision to enhance the provision's improvement. All staff, parents and children contribute to the provision's self evaluation processes. Staff are deployed well. All qualified staff share Key Person responsibilities and contribute to planning and assessment for children. Space within the building and outdoors is utilised effectively and to its best capacity. Plans for the future include extending the outdoors, to improve the space assigned for children's gardening and the growing of fruit and vegetables. Staff actively promote equality and diversity and have a good knowledge of children's individual needs and backgrounds. Procedures are in place to identify any specific learning needs and to share information with parents and colleagues. Support is also in place for children attending for whom English is an additional language. Partnerships with parents/carers and other agencies are strong. Communication is in place with feeder schools, the local authority and other professionals who support children in the early years. Parents are positive about the setting. Parents are kept informed about their child's successes, learning and development.

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

Children are settled and secure at the Montessori School. They play in small groups with traditional toys as well as Montessori resources. Staff support children's individual needs well. Free-flow play takes place every session. Children can access the indoors and outdoors as they please and are supervised well. The outdoor area is small but space is utilised well. Children enjoy painting on plastic coated boards, sit reading books with the staff, play musical instruments, build a boat out of blocks and gather leaves together as they fall from the trees. Children squeal with delight as they chase each other around, throwing leaves on one another to depict different seasons; rain and snow in their pretend play. All six areas of learning are covered in all sessions during the day. Children access their resources easily. A mix of more structured, adult led activities complements free play learning activities. Some children play in the home corner, whilst others use Montessori maths and literacy aids. Other children paint or complete puzzles or enjoy art and craft. Each week children enjoy a nature walk where they look for tracks in the ground, look at birds through binoculars and feed the ducks.

Staff consider children's learning and development thoroughly. As a result, children make good progress. Children's starting points are understood and planning reflects the needs of the children as individuals, taking into account activities they enjoy and current interests. Children are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities and are encouraged to challenge their own thinking and to develop new skills through their play. The "red band" teacher encourages children's independence, confidence and self esteem. The "red band" teacher changes daily, so children get to know all the staff as well as their key person. They know to go to this teacher if they need assistance with anything during the day. Regular assessments are made on children. These are transferred to children's development books that are shared with parents. The observations and assessments are linked to the six areas of learning and evidenced in children's development books with statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Identifying children's next steps to enhance their development was completed on an informal basis up until recently, and did not clearly reflect children's progress. However, a new system is being trialled currently, to ensure that a key "next step" is made for each child, on each area of learning, every half term. Partnerships with parents are good and parents are invited to events which enhance their understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Whilst parents are very positive about the school, they comment that they would like even more involvement to extend their children's learning. The School has identified this within their self evaluation. Staff positively promote this and strive to enhance these opportunities.

Children learn about their own safety through, for example, taking part in regular fire drills Staff explain to children, as they play, why something may not be safe. Children discuss fireworks and bonfire night, and keeping themselves safe, whilst enjoying these occasions. These explanations allow children to understand at their own level. Children independently take part in snack time. They pour their drinks and take their snack when they choose. Children confidently put on coats by themselves when going out to play. They tidy up with the staff and are happy to take on the responsibility of taking paint pots inside, gathering lunchboxes and putting chairs under desks. This good practice enables children to enhance their personal, social and emotional skills. Children learn about their various cultures. For example Divali and the "Festival of Light". They take part in paintings using a range of materials such as rice, lentils and beans within their picture, and listen to a story about the festival. Staff play with children using resources which help children to understand similarities and differences. For example, staff play a card game involving family groups. Staff explain to children how different cultures wear different clothes, for example an Indian woman in a Sari and they discuss the clothing of an Eskimo man. However, learning opportunities are missed as the activity is not extended to discuss the diversity of family groups within society. Children are well behaved throughout the day. They show respect for themselves, their friends, the staff who care for them and their environment. Children lead healthy lifestyles as they have many opportunities to play outdoors, and activities are introduced such as soft play, movement to music or songs to enable children to be active. Children are developing skills for the future. They are making good progress with communication and literacy and are curious in their learning. This is supported through resources within Information and Communication Technology,

i.e. using the laptop, digital cameras and a box of "what does it do?" resources.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

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

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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