

# Annabel's Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date**

26/04/2011

**Inspector**

Jo Rowley

**Setting address**

Lemsford Village Hall, Brocket Road, Lemsford, Welwyn  
Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 7TT

**Telephone number**

01707 393027

**Email**

annabelschool@aol.com

**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*.

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## **Description of the setting**

Annabel's Montessori School is privately owned and registered in 1992. It operates from two main rooms within the village hall of Lemsford, Hertfordshire. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding areas and has strong links with the local primary school. The pre-school is accessible to all children and there is a small, fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school opens each weekday during school term time from 9am until 3pm with children attending for various sessions. A maximum of 40 children may attend the pre-school at any one time and there are currently 54 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 2 or above, including two staff with an Early Years Foundation Degree. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage is organised to ensure that all areas of learning are covered. Staff ensure that children have access to a good range of resources so that they enjoy their time and receive experiences that promote their progress. Staff use effective safeguarding procedures and ensure that they have an accurate knowledge of each child's individual needs to ensure that every child is included. Partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies and settings are established, and these relationships help to promote continuity of care and learning for children and families attending. Self-evaluation procedures are in place and result in a provision that seeks to make continued improvement and therefore is able to promote outcomes for children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- improve the ways in which observations are used to identify the next steps in a child's learning
- practise regular evacuation drills and record details in a fire log book of any problems encountered and how they were resolved.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Safeguarding procedures are effective to ensure that children are well protected. Designated staff update their advanced safeguarding training regularly, while most other staff have completed basic training in order to fully protect children. All staff take responsibility to ensure that only vetted persons have access to children. The manager adheres to an effective recruitment and vetting procedure to ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so and that they hold the required clearances. For example, induction and probationary periods are provided for new staff and this continues with regular staff meetings and one-to-one appraisals. Self-evaluation processes are in place to ensure that all staff have opportunities to share their ideas of the setting's strengths and areas of improvement through, for example, regular team meetings. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to ensure that hazards are minimised within the setting and further risk assessments are carried out before outings take place, further protecting children's safety.

Staff are well deployed within the pre-school and the environment is conducive to learning, with resources being used well to achieve the planned goals for learning and development. For example, children are able to select from resources which are stored at their height with word and picture descriptions of the resource displayed, in line with the Montessori ethos, while also promoting inclusion. Partnerships with parents are good as effective methods of communication, such as offering regular coffee mornings, promote these relationships. Parents are regularly welcomed in to the setting, for example, whether it is for a discussion about a child's learning journey or so that the parent can be part of the child's learning as a helper. The setting has also organised some 'dads mornings' to encourage more dads to come into the pre-school to see what their children are enjoying. This proved a big success and one that is repeated more often now.

The pre-school places the promotion of equality of opportunity and children's personal, social and emotional development at the centre of its work and consistently promotes diversity and social awareness. Staff are aware of children's individual learning styles and this ensures that each child is able to achieve. Staff speaking different languages has enabled children from different backgrounds to settle quicker because staff are able to speak to them in their first language, helping them to feel more confident in their new surroundings. Staff have developed relationships with other settings that children are, or will be, attending. For example, they promote relationships with teachers at the local school by inviting them to come along and meet the children who will be moving up to school.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Most staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and where this links into the Montessori ethos, and the Montessori learning environment is set out to meet all

the needs of the children attending. Learning journeys and observations are in place for all children and the planning is organised to incorporate the six areas of learning. However, although observations demonstrate what children are doing and how this links into the six areas of learning, their next steps are not consistently identified in order to promote children's individual learning needs. Children show an avid interest in books and reading as, for example, they sit with a member of staff and listen to a story or independently access books and look at these with their friends. Children demonstrate great perseverance and concentration as they work on a one-to-one basis with staff, practicing their sounds, words and numbers throughout the session.

Children are keen to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they take part in regular nature workshops where they participate in activities, such as, making bird feeders, using wood for creating things or learning about the creatures around us. Children independently explore technology using resources, such as binoculars and magnifying glasses, as well as having opportunities to develop their skills for the future. For example, as they use Montessori practical life activities, they learn about exploration and caring for their environment. All children's physical development is promoted as they have regular access to a small outside area. Groups of children are also taken to the park area which is a short distance from the setting, enabling their physical development to be further promoted.

Children have opportunities to be creative as they explore different materials and textures during art and craft activities. An example of this is as children are currently preparing for the forthcoming Royal Wedding. Staff talk to children about the celebrations that are taking place and they discuss the Prince and Princess in an age-appropriate manner as children create their own flags which will be used in the celebrations. Staff are able to encourage children to join in with activities while offering them sensitive support where needed. This promotes children's confidence as they are eager to explore and are active in their own learning. All activities offer appropriate challenges and ensure that all children feel included.

All children enjoy music and singing and are encouraged to join in with their friends as they sing along to different rhymes and songs. They also enjoy action rhymes and demonstrate enjoyment as they do the actions while singing along with staff, who show genuine enjoyment for their work. Children have some ownership of their health and hygiene within daily routines. For example, they discuss hand washing frequently and know that they do this to remove the germs, and children are reminded of the importance of either using tissues or covering their mouths to prevent the spread of germs when they cough. They have access to fresh drinking water at all times and bring their own water bottle from home each day. Children learn about healthy eating as they eat fresh fruit during snack time and are encouraged to help prepare snack by cutting the fruit as they talk to staff about what they are eating, which is also helping with their developing vocabulary.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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