

The Denning Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 116750
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Inspector Mandy Gannon

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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

The Denning Montessori Nursery School opened in 1991. It operates from Fawley Village Hall and is located in the village of Fawley, near Henley on Thames in Oxfordshire. The school serves the communities surrounding Fawley. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 18 children may attend the nursery school at any one time. The nursery school is open from 9.10am to 12.10pm Monday to Friday, and to 4.00pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Lunch sessions are available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays finishing at 1.00pm. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting is open term time with the offer of some holiday clubs. There is a fully enclosed outside play area and the setting uses the local rural area operating a forest school.

There are currently 24 children on roll. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs five members of staff, four hold a level 4 qualification in childcare, and one is planning to undertake her level 4 training. In addition, two members of staff are currently working towards the Forest School Leader qualification. Most staff hold Montessori training qualifications. The Nursery school follows the Montessori teaching method.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and play a dynamic role in this exceptional setting, where they are highly valued as individuals. A motivated and enthusiastic staff team work very well together. Staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs of each child. Superb partnerships with parents contribute to the meticulous observations and assessments records, enabling accurate future planning of a wide range of interesting and exciting activities, and promoting the best possible outcome for each child. The capacity to make continuous improvements is excellent, due the high levels of drive, commitment and dedication of the staff, who are constantly evaluating their practice and identifying areas for further improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing further the two-way flow of information with other settings that children attend.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded as staff have an accurate understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, and are confident about the steps they would take if they had concerns. Robust systems are in place with an extensive range of policies and procedures to promote children's welfare. These are regularly reviewed and updated and include 'whistle blowing' and the steps to follow should allegations be made against staff. Children's safety is promoted as meticulous records are maintained of accidents, incidents, existing injuries and the administration of medication.

Children's well-being is enhanced by the exceptional, well organised and conducive learning environment. Children flourish in the enabling environment where they safely, confidently and independently access a wide range of safe and suitable toys and resources suitable for their age and stage of development. Children are welcomed into a safe and secure environment where staff remain vigilant at all times, deploying themselves effectively. Thorough visual checks and detailed written risk assessments minimise potential hazards in a setting, which constantly reviews and evaluates its practice, identifying areas for further improvements. For example, while undertaking evacuations from the premises, the children are asked to hold a 'walking rope'. Previously the children took hold of this rope inside the premises, however on reflection this delayed their exit from the building. They have now changed practice and the children now take hold of the rope once they have left the premises. Staff work exceptionally well together, although recent staff changes mean that some staff have only been at the setting for a short time, although due to the skills and dedication of the leadership and management, this is not visible. Staff and their continual training and development is highly valued in a setting where a commitment to always improve practice is highly visible.

Equality and diversity is at the heart of this setting. Each child is unique and their individual contribution is highly valued in a setting, which is led by the needs of the child. Children's contribution to the setting is sought as they are actively encouraged to share their views, opinions and ideas for further improvements. Successful links and partnerships are formed with external agencies such as health visitors, paediatricians and speech therapists to effectively support all children. Effective support is in place to meet the needs of the child and aid transitions, as staff complete home visits and have resources from local schools to help children settle and feel at ease. The setting continues to encourage links with some other pre-school settings children attend, sharing children's development and progress. Exceptional partnerships with parents and carers are established who when spoken to, could not praise the setting enough, expressing that the staff 'know their child exceptionally well', they are 'very approachable' and 'go out of their way to meet the needs of their child' and 'nothing is too much trouble'.

Parents are an integral part of the setting and are involved in contributing to decision making. Information evenings are held for parents to develop their understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and how it links with the Montessori ethos. Children benefit as parents and staff work exceptionally well

together, parents and carers are well informed about their child's achievements through daily verbal discussions, detailed written reports, parents' evenings, and the sharing and contributing to their learning journals. Staff maintain this accurate record as they encourage regular updates. For example, as following the summer holidays they asked parents and carers to share what the children had been doing, people they had met, places they had visited and achievements they had made.

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

Children make substantial strides in their learning and development in a superb setting, where the needs of children are paramount at all times. Children are interested and involved in an extensive range of exciting toys, resources and activities. They demonstrate exceptional levels of independence as they confidently serve themselves snacks and socially sit with their friends and discuss activities they have been doing at home. Children are confident communicators who are encouraged to share their views and opinions. They are actively listened to and their contribution is highly valued. Children confidently mark-make, identifying shapes, letters, sounds and numbers. They confidently use tools and clear up after activities, as they sweep up sand spilt on the floor using a dustpan and brush, wipe the table and mop the floor.

Children enthusiastically participate in creative activities as they independently make choices and select resources. For example, a child drips and trails glue onto paper and sprinkles on glitter and sand, identifying 'it is like the snail and slug trails we found in the garden when they had eaten the strawberries'. Children are engrossed as a two-year-old patiently builds with cylinders; they identify as they place a smaller cylinder and then add a larger cylinder that they need to be changed round in order to balance. They skilfully hold the cylinder in their other hand and swap them round and proudly announce their achievement, repeating the process with other boxes of cylinders. Children have an exceptional knowledge and understanding of the natural world around them, through planned activities and exploration of the environment. Children's understanding is enhanced by the use of non-fiction books and the skills and questioning of skilled practitioners. Highly effective use is made of data from observational assessments, ensuring the best possible outcomes for each child.

Children flourish in a setting where children have extraordinary self-care skills. Meticulous hygiene practices are promoted and these are followed. Children benefit from frequent access to fresh air and exercise, promoting a healthy lifestyle as they make choices to free-flow between the inside and outside, throughout the year. They have frequent opportunities to participate in forest school, where they extend their learning experiences and take calculated risks, further exploring the outside environment using a wide range of tools and equipment. Healthy eating is promoted in the setting and information and ideas for healthy lunch boxes are shared with parents and carers, as children bring in packed lunches from home. Children demonstrate an active interest in healthy eating as when eating their lunch, they discuss with staff which food has proteins or carbohydrates. A child

explains that they have cinnamon and a discussion takes place to see if they can remember where cinnamon comes from. A child recalls that it comes from the bark of a tree, an understanding they had developed through recent cooking activities, which they regularly participate in.

Children feel safe and secure in this welcoming setting, where they develop a strong sense of belonging. Staff support each child exceptionally well with highly effective key person systems in place, where children first meet the staff in their own home. Children have their own trays and pegs to hang their belongings, accurately labelled with their name and picture. Children are at ease in a setting where they demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-esteem, enthusiastically exploring and accessing toys and resources. Children behave exceptionally well, they are kind and courteous, showing care towards their friends. For example, an older child offers to read a story to a younger child and they sit side by side in the book corner sharing a book. Highly successful positive relationships are formed between children and adults as staff act as calm, consistent role models, skilfully enabling children to understand expected behaviour and resolve differences. It is a superb setting where children are the focus at all times and benefit from a wealth of opportunities.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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	1
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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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