

# Acorn Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	107974
<b>Inspection date</b>	19/10/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Keriann Belcher
<b>Setting address</b>	Gerrards Cross Youth Centre, East Common, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 7AD
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<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Acorn Montessori School opened in 1994, it is a privately owned provision. It operates from the Gerrards Cross Youth Centre, a single storey building. The school have sole use of a large room, a small room, office, kitchen, toilet facilities and an enclosed outside play area. They also have timetabled access to a large hall. It serves the local community and surrounding areas.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the school at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions run from 09.15 until 15.15. Morning, afternoon and all day sessions are on offer to parents. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register

There are currently 52 children on roll from two to five years of these 33 funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with English as a second language and has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are currently nine part time/full time staff that work directly with the children and the Principal who is supernumerary. The group has a Montessori ethos and six staff members hold the Montessori Diploma qualification, one member of staff holds a certificate in Education, one staff holds NVQ level 3 in Childcare and Education and one staff is a student on Montessori teacher training practise.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting provides a happy welcoming environment where all children are well cared for and valued as individuals. Staff are keen to continuously improve the service for children and their families. The setting reflects upon their practice, although parent's views are not sought as part of the process. The setting supports all children to make good progress in their learning and development. Staff are successful in promoting children's enthusiasm for learning. However, access to information technology is not freely accessible.

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

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

- enable children to freely access the computer and a variety of programmable resources in order for them to develop the skills they will need in the future to operate information and communication technology.

- improve the system of self evaluation in order to include the views of the parents

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

Staff have a sound understanding of the safeguarding procedures and are aware of the possible signs and symptoms that may be displayed if a child is being harmed. The setting's policies and procedures undergo regular review to ensure they reflect current legislation. Risk assessments are in place to cover all areas of the setting and any outings. In addition, daily checklists and on going visual checks throughout the day ensure equipment and resources are safe for children to use. Staff work well together and regularly have staff meetings and access on-going training.

The setting is committed to continuous improvement and has implemented the recommendations made at the previous inspection to benefit the children in their welfare and education. The setting has begun to complete a self-evaluation process in order to provide the best outcomes for children; however it does not include parent/carers opinions as part of the process. Overall parents/carers are very happy with the service provision as it is reflected in the many "thank -you letters" given to the nursery and comments received on the day of inspection. The setting works effectively in partnership with parents and is proactive in identifying any additional help required for the children. Staff are proactive and seek support from other professional agencies to ensure children's needs are met. Children's continuity of their care and education is very well promoted, as the setting works effectively with local schools to enable a smooth transition from the pre-school to school life.

Equality and diversity issues are strongly promoted. For example, the setting promotes inclusive practice so that the learning, development and welfare needs of all children are met. Children's awareness of different lifestyles is raised through celebrating special events, such as Diwali, Christmas and the good range of resources that positively promote children's awareness of diversity and equality. In addition, the nursery has a good range of toys and resources available to the children that provide suitable challenges in all areas of development and learning which are generally easily accessible set up within the rooms. Older children have the opportunity to access the use of a computer at a structured weekly session however, younger children have more limited experiences of accessing simple technology or the computer.

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

Children benefit from the management and staff's good knowledge and understanding of combining the Montessori teaching methods the Early Years Foundation Stage. Observations are carried out on the children as they play and

are assessed to clearly identify the next learning priority for the child. Children's individual learning journeys are devised from tracking the children's progress and inform the next stage of children's development.

A strong emphasis is placed on children developing their independence and social skill such as hanging up their own coats, turn taking with equipment and tidying away toys. Consequently, even the very young children are confident, well behaved and settled in the setting.

Staff have a clear understanding of individual children's needs and consequently this enables them to make good progress in their early development through a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities. Children are encouraged to explore and investigate the world around them as they delight in digging in the earth and excitedly run to show staff that they had found a "snake". Through the use of staff's skilled questioning, which involves mathematical concepts and relating to the child's past experiences, the child learnt she found a worm. Children have many opportunities to learn simple techniques for subtraction and addition as they sing songs that involve these concepts or use Montessori beads or cubes.

Children demonstrate high levels of concentration and confidence as they sit sensibly together at circle time listening to stories, joining in the discussion and contributing ideas about the weather or topic of the day, such as Diwali. They have great fun as they dance enthusiastically to Indian music as part of the celebration of Diwali, dressed in traditional costume, gaining control of their whole bodies in response to the rhythm of the music.

Younger children are provided with a range of activities to develop their manipulative skills such as play dough which they poke, squeeze and pinch the material. Older children are beginning to form recognisable letters as they have the opportunity label their own work and write in their "news book".

The organisation of the session and environment enables children to benefit from and enjoy plenty of play in the open air on a daily basis. The children access both physical and quieter activities such as climbing on apparatus or sit and look at books.

Healthy eating is promoted by the group. Bread sticks, or an assortment of fresh fruit/vegetables are offered at snack time. Water and milk are offered to drink. In addition children can independently access fresh drinking water available at other times to ensure they remain well hydrated. Children are learning to prevent the risk of cross infection as they are shown how to blow their own nose, dispose of the tissues hygienically and to wash their hands. Staff are aware of safety within the setting; for example, they continually supervise children's play and ensure the correct ratio of staff to children is maintained when they move around the setting. In addition children's safety is further protected as visitors to the group are recorded.

## 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

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

<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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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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