

Braywood Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Carol Willett

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Type of setting	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*.

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Description of the setting

Braywood Montessori School is privately owned and opened in 1998. It operates from Braywood Memorial Hall, Fifield with easy access to Maidenhead and Windsor. Children play in the large hall with toilet and kitchen facilities adjacent. Children have access to an enclosed grassed area and the car parking area for outside play.

The setting opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.00am until 12.30pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 9.00am until 3.15pm Tuesday and Thursday. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children bring a packed lunch if they stay all day.

The nursery school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for 20 children in the early years age group. There are currently 28 children from two to five years on roll. Children aged three and four years are in receipt of free early education funding. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

A total of four staff members work with the children. Of these, three are fully trained Montessori teachers and one is a very experienced childcarer. The owner and deputy have higher level qualifications, the owner has a Level 5 management qualification and deputy is working towards a degree in early childhood studies. The group promotes the Montessori method of teaching. They are members of the Preschool Learning Alliance and receive support from the local authority early years team

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Overall, children make very good progress in their learning as they play, explore and experiment in a safe, stimulating inclusive play environment. The strong well-motivated staff team work very closely and the organisation of the environment and resources is generally effective. Staff establish good supportive partnerships with parents which ensure they have a good knowledge of children's care and learning needs. Some progress has been made from previous recommendations. The self-evaluation process is in the early stages and has enabled them to acknowledge their strengths and identify some areas for improvement. The capacity for continuous improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the use of the outdoor area in order to plan activities that offer physical challenges for all children and provide opportunities for children to travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment
- review and develop snack times to enhance opportunities for children's independence in making healthy choices about the food they eat; enable children to eat sufficient to satisfy their appetites
- develop further the systems for evaluating the setting against robust criteria in the Early Years Foundation Stage; include children and parents in the process.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The owner and staff form a strong cohesive team who work together effectively to ensure that children are happy and safe. All required procedures, policies and documentation are in place and used effectively by staff to meet the needs of all children. The owner and deputy have clearly defined roles and responsibilities with regard to welfare and safety. Safeguarding and complaints policies are clearly understood by staff and shared with parents so all are aware of what to do should they have any concerns. Annual risk assessments are completed and staff undertake thorough daily checking procedures which effectively promote children's safety. Good levels of adult supervision ensure children's safety at all times. Children develop a good understanding of safety as they discuss safe play as they go outside and practise regular fire drills.

Staff share the vision of a well-planned inclusive play environment using the Montessori curriculum and high quality resources which offers children challenging, stimulating experiences, alongside opportunities to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions. Staff evaluate their practice, self-appraise and discuss ideas at regular team meetings. The formal self-evaluation process is in its early stages and staff have identified some areas for improvement. These include further development of partnerships with parents through appointed feedback meetings and the sharing of the nursery school's reading books at home. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been partly addressed though snack time and the use of the outdoor play are ongoing areas for further development. Staff respond positively to inspection processes and use local authority advisory support effectively to improve the provision and outcomes for children. For example, they have provided dressing up clothes and large soft blocks play. Informal appraisal systems identify training needs and staff are highly committed to update their training and improve their skills. For example, one member of staff has just completed a Montessori teaching diploma and another is working toward a degree in Childhood Studies. First aid and safeguarding training are updated and as a result, staff members are equipped with up-to-date knowledge to support all children.

The children play and learn with the support of well-deployed and caring staff. Staff very effectively promote children's independence, free movement and use of stimulating high quality resources indoors. The outdoor area is used less effectively

for planned purposeful play and resources do not always sufficiently challenge children. Staff promote equality and diversity and ensure they have a good knowledge of each child's background and needs. Partnership with parents and carers are good and parents are very positive about children's care and learning and happiness and how effective settling procedures are for new children. Parents and carers receive individual daily feedback and share relevant information to ensure children's individual needs are met. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting prior to children starting and receive updates through the notice board, emails and newsletters. The staff are aware of the need to share information when children attend other settings though none currently do.

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

Children make very good progress overall in their learning and they are confident, articulate, happy, successful learners. Staff plan the program and organise the room to ensure children make good progress across all areas of learning. Parents are impressed with their children's knowledge as children recount to them why poppies are worn on special days. Children make outstanding progress in numeracy and literacy through using the range of Montessori resources. Older children choose picture cards of three letter items such as jug and cat and find appropriate letter shapes to make up the words. Children enjoy books and spend time in the attractive book corner reading alone or sharing books with friends. Children also access a vast array of interesting factual books throughout the room. Children thoroughly enjoy group story times. They learn some sign language as they sing and sign a song about little ducks. Children use a wide range of mark making equipment which encourages their creative development. Planned activities include celebrations of different cultural festivals. Children have access to a range of toys that promote positive images of diversity. They examine globes of the world and discuss the different continents which develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children competently use the computer. Though children make good progress in their overall physical development the program for children's larger muscle development is not so effectively promoted as staff do not maximise the use of the outdoor play space to extend children's physical capabilities.

Children are supported by well qualified staff who complete regular observations, and make plans for children's progress. Staff successfully map the requirements of the early learning goals to children's progress through the Montessori curriculum. Children's interests are used well to encourage their learning. For example, children who like to make models can use a wide variety of recycled materials and then paint them. Staff create effective links between home as they share children's interests and conversations, for instance about magic tricks with parents to see if they can share these in the nursery school.

Children show they feel extremely safe in the setting. They are active and inquisitive and develop high levels of independence, freely choosing resources to initiate their own learning. They select resources and mats when needed and

encourage and remind other children if they do not follow the rules. Children understand that there are boundaries that help keep them safe and they know how to use tools and equipment safely. Children work well together for extended periods. For example, they use white boards and felt pens to mix colours sharing resources well and initiating lots of discussions about magic. They enjoy the challenge of seeing who can complete jigsaws and number block cubes fastest. Children learn about healthy eating and get their own snacks of fruit in a cafe style system. Snack time does not fully encourage children skills and ability to choose as one slice of apple and a piece of banana are put on plates. Children pour their own drinks of milk or water. Children behave extremely well. They enjoy their time in the nursery school; they achieve positive outcomes, become increasingly independent and enjoy their work and play. They are well mannered towards each other and courteous to visitors.

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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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