

# The Norwich Montessori School

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY366985

**Inspection date**

15/11/2011

**Inspector**

Janette Smith

**Setting address**

Montessori School, Old Watton Road, Colney, NORWICH,  
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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**

The Norwich Montessori School opened in 1995 and re-opened in 2007 following a change of ownership. It is registered on the Early Years Register. It operates from the parish rooms in the village of Colney, on the outskirts of Norwich, Norfolk. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor area. The school serves a wide catchment area. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The school is registered to care for 26 children in the early years age range. There are currently 26 children on roll. The school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Sessions are held each weekday during school term times from 9am to 12noon and until 1pm for those children staying for lunch. The school is privately owned and employs six members of staff to work with the children. Most staff are well qualified with either an Early Years National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 4, a Montessori foundation stage diploma level 4 or an Arts in Early Years Foundation degree. The remainder of the staff are working towards NVQ at Level 2 or the Montessori foundation stage diploma level 4. The setting receives support from the local authority. The setting follows the Montessori method of teaching.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals supported by dedicated, caring staff who know the children well. Learning and development is closely monitored, with effective planning targeting next steps in children's learning. The environment is welcoming and very well organised although access to the outside area is limited. Staff are committed to creating an inclusive environment and some resources are available to promote racial and cultural diversity. Partnerships with parents and partners are good. The setting has a good capacity for continuous improvement because self-evaluation is effective in building on the strengths of the provision and in identifying and addressing weakness.

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

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

- include signs, symbols, photographs or objects in the environment which relate to the diverse lives of families who use the setting
- extend the time available for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments to further enhance opportunities for outdoor learning.

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

An effective safeguarding policy ensures that children are kept safe in the setting. All staff understand their responsibility towards the well-being of the children in their care and all staff have attended safeguarding training. Criminal Records Bureau checks have been carried out on all adults to ensure that they are suitable to work with the children. The building is kept secure and all visitors are required to sign in the visitor's book. Thorough risk assessments are carried out daily in order to minimise any potential hazards to children whilst on the premises. Robust risk assessments are also in place for frequent outings.

Most of the staff are well qualified and have a good understanding of the Montessori ethos and pedagogy and how this links with the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are committed to developing their skills by attending early years courses and this impacts favorably on children's outcomes. For instance, recent training means that children can benefit from visits to a forest school where they develop many skills across all six areas of learning.

Staff make good use of a number of evaluative procedures including the local authority quality assurance scheme. They have identified key actions for the future and aim to provide safe free flow access to the outside area where they recognise that some children learn best. Parents are welcome to contribute their ideas and suggestions in order to develop the provision for children. The supervisor has her own vision for the future of the setting but above all strives to provide quality provision in order for children to attain highly in all aspects of their learning. Recommendations from a previous inspection have been implemented. The school's complaints procedures are shared with new parents and cupboards in the kitchen area are locked to safeguard children.

Parents speak highly of the care and nurture that their children receive. They are kept well informed of children's progress via the home/school book and are able to contribute to children's records of achievement. Parents are given good information about the setting including information about the Montessori approach to learning. Partnerships with other providers are also good meaning that children's well-being and development are supported well.

Systems are in place to ensure that staff know how to meet the specific requirements of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff work with families to ensure that children with English as an additional language are well supported, by celebrating festivals such as Eid and Chinese New Year and using some words in the children's own language. However, there are few signs, symbols, photos and objects relating to the diverse range of cultures to fully support children's sense of belonging.

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

Montessori practice ensures that children are given very clear instructions on how to keep themselves safe as they learn to use the wide range of tools and equipment. They learn to keep the environment safe and tidy for others as they replace their activities on the shelves when they have finished using them. A sign encourages children to wash their hands before snack and other 'initial introductory skills' are taught such as how to blow your nose, encouraging children to adopt good hygiene practices. Policies are in place to prevent the spread of infection and parents are given information about infectious diseases. A good variety of healthy snacks means that children make healthy choices about what they eat and drink. They develop their independence as they wash and dry their own plates and cups.

Children make good progress across the six areas of learning supported by committed and caring staff. Focused planning includes a good range of adult-led and child-initiated activities some of which are unique to Montessori practice. For instance, children choose a mat on which they place a tray with different sized padlocks and keys. They match the keys to the correct padlocks displaying high dispositions for learning as they concentrate and develop their skills of investigation. Detailed observations are recorded in individual children's records of achievement and are used to plan children's next steps in learning. Children construct with a purpose in mind as they design and build a dinosaur house. They learn that information can be retrieved from books as staff share dinosaur stories with them. Children begin to form recognisable letters as they use trays of coloured pencils and paper to write a story. They give meanings to their marks, sounding out some letter sounds, demonstrating good progress in their literacy skills. Children have opportunities to develop their creativity as they paint and make collage pictures. Many of the exciting activities used in the setting promote children's mathematical skills very well. For instance, children learn about shape and size as they fit lids onto boxes and stack them in the right order. Outside, children transport soil from one area to another using wheelbarrows. They display good personal and social skills as they problem solve and negotiate the best way of getting the raised bed full to the top. Children enjoy developing their physical skills as they move freely in the outdoor area. They jump on the trampoline and strengthen their muscles as they climb on the climbing frame. However, insufficient time is available for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments to further enhance opportunities for outdoor learning.

Children are very independent and behave very well in the setting. They co-operate well with other children and share resources. Staff are good role models and encourage the children to be polite and respect each other. Children are developing their technological skills as they use the electronic toy camera to record activities. They learn about the wider world and develop their skills for the future as they visit Norwich Cathedral and raise money for charity by taking part in a sponsored 'Toddle'. They learn about other cultures by celebrating festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

## 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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