

# The Deenway Montessori School

3–5 Sidmouth Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4QX

<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–6 February 2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- It has much improved since the last inspection. The leadership of teaching is now good, resulting in good teaching, good achievement, and a good curriculum.
- The school has created a culture in which teachers share the best practices. Improved assessment and observation procedures mean that teachers know their pupils well and can guide them very effectively to help them make good progress.
- The good curriculum serves pupils' individual needs well. Personal, social, health and citizenship education makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Through links with the wider community, pupils participate in exciting citizenship projects.
- Pupils learn to take responsibility for their own learning from the Nursery onwards and their behaviour is good.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Systems for checking the effectiveness of teaching, learning and the curriculum do not enable all pupils to achieve outstandingly well in all subject areas.
- Although good day-to-day care is provided, recording of the welfare, health and safety is not always well organised and pupils' education in e-safety is not well developed.
- The headteacher's clear view about ways to further improve the school is not supported by a clearly written management plan to help leaders to measure the effectiveness of actions. There is no external body that can act as a critical friend in reviewing all areas of the school's work.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Observations were made of pupils playing or working independently, in small groups, or being taught in one-to-one sessions. The inspectors observed 11 lessons or sessions, taught by 10 different teachers. Discussions were held with pupils. Meetings were held with the headteacher and teachers. Documentation relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, curriculum planning, teachers' assessments and pupils' work was scrutinised.
- The inspectors also took account of the responses in eight questionnaires completed by staff and 21 parental responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.

## Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Griffiths

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Deenway Montessori School is an independent Islamic day school for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years. The school opened in 2009 and is registered for up to 60 pupils. It is situated in a Grade 2 listed building located in the town of Reading, in Berkshire. The school also uses a local church hall for physical education and local facilities for horse riding. It is owned by The Deenway Company Limited, a not-for-profit social enterprise. The school had its first inspection in March 2011.
- There are currently 75 pupils on roll. None has a statement of special educational needs. There are 28 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom attend 15 hours per week, either in the morning or the afternoon. Pupils have diverse heritages and most have South Asian backgrounds. Some pupils have English as an additional language. There are six pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Not all pupils are Muslim.
- The school teaches the Montessori curriculum. Pupils are taught in four classes: the Nursery (three- to four-year-olds); the Children's House (five- to six-year-olds); the Lower Elementary class (six- to nine-year-olds); and the Upper Elementary class (nine- to eleven-year-olds). Nearly all teachers are Montessori trained, including the headteacher who is trained to teach up to the Upper Elementary class. There are three teachers in most classes and a fourth teacher that moves between classes to teach specific lessons such as Arabic.
- The school aims to 'nurture the mind, body and spirit of each child' and to prepare them to be able to direct their own learning and development throughout their lives.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding and help pupils to make outstanding progress by enabling all teachers to:
  - gain a clearer understanding of what the curricular attainment targets are in the Montessori curriculum
  - develop confidence and skills to teach 'Great Lessons' that always inspire pupils to engage in a broader and deeper study of topics
  - always give pupils a clear understanding of what to do to further improve their work.
- Further improve the curriculum to help pupils achieve at least well in all subject areas by:
  - ensuring that rigorous checks are made on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in all subject areas
  - widening the range of outdoor resources available to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their gross motor skills.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school by:
  - creating subject leaders roles to share the responsibilities for checking the effectiveness of teaching and learning in each area of the curriculum and developing teachers' skills to fulfil these roles
  - using a format to track the progress made by pupils against curricular targets that makes this information instantly available to plan actions to further improve pupils' achievement
  - supporting further improvements with a clearly written management plan that enables the school to measure the effectiveness of its actions
  - implementing plans to set up an advisory board that can act as a critical friend in reviewing all aspects of the school's work.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Pupils' achievement is good owing to good teaching, a good curriculum and a very high adult-to-pupil ratio. From the Nursery onwards, pupils demonstrate that they focus on activities long enough to make good gains in their knowledge, and select resources that help them to consolidate their learning or acquire new knowledge. In the Nursery, most children make good progress towards the expected goals. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills. In the elementary classes, pupils make good progress in their academic learning and in the memorisation of the Qur'an in relation to their varying starting points. Many make excellent progress in reading and writing and some areas of mathematics, namely calculations and shapes, space and measures. Assessments carried out in the last three years indicate that, by the age of 11, most pupils' standards in reading and writing exceeded expectations for their age and standards in mathematics were at least in line with expectations. Most pupils who join the school with levels that are below expectations for their age catch up quickly. Pupils who have English as an additional language make rapid progress in speaking English through their daily interaction with other pupils and with teachers, and from one-to-one sessions, often with teachers who can speak their mother tongue. Consequently, these pupils can overcome their language barrier, access the curriculum, and make good progress over time. Where pupils present learning difficulties, the school takes rapid action to ensure that their needs are identified early by the appropriate authorities. Pupils' achievement is not outstanding because there are pockets of adequate progress, for example in art and science. Achievement in problem solving and data handling has much improved, and is now good as a result of the introduction in September 2012 of a new mathematics course to support pupils in the Upper Elementary class more effectively.

From the Nursery onwards, pupils develop secure reading skills, are encouraged to read a wide range of texts and to develop their comprehension skills. Following a solid foundation in grammar and regular handwriting practice, pupils write at length in geography, history, science, as well as through project work and story writing. By the age of 11, their writing is well developed and complex ideas are expressed in an interesting way. Pupils expand their vocabulary by reading a wide range of texts and using dictionaries and encyclopaedias, which support their writing very effectively. Their literacy and communication skills are extended very well through regular drama. While pupils in elementary classes apply their enquiry skills in various areas of their projects, opportunities to apply these skills in science through practical experiments are insufficiently regular. Pupils in the elementary classes apply their information and communication skills (ICT) when producing presentations through software that fosters their creativity well.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. From the Nursery onwards, pupils show high levels of self-discipline and good capacity for directing their learning and focusing on their work. Their behaviour is rarely less than good. They love their school and appreciate the family atmosphere and the ability to make decisions about their learning. Their attendance is high. They take pride in their project work and in the links they make with the wider community through it. However, they sometimes neglect the presentation of their work, which does not do justice to its quality. Pupils form very positive relationships with others and treat them with respect. Pupils who are not Muslim fit in easily because they are accepted as individuals and welcome to join the 'school family'. Pupils have a good understanding of most forms of bullying and bullying is very rare. However, their awareness of cyber bullying is not well developed. Pupils are polite and respectful.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and enterprise skills are promoted well through the school's emphasis on independent learning and extremely well through drama, whole-class project work and participation in local community projects. Pupils in the elementary classes wrote a play, *Educating a Princess*, which captured the essence of Islamic morals and manners, involved all pupils from the primary department, showcased their good singing and acting, and was performed in front of families. They were in charge of making the sets and positioning the sound system. Pupils have contributed to a local green roof garden project by researching edible plants from all over the world and participating in some planting. Pupils gain a good awareness of public institutions and diversity through educational visits and project work. For example, they have visited a Christian school, led an assembly on prophet Isa (Jesus) in a special school and won the first prize in the Reading 'Go-givers make a difference challenge' 2013 supported by the Citizenship Foundation. Leaders ensure that when controversial and political issues are considered, steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now predominantly good, as a result of standardisation of assessment procedures and continuous professional development. Consequently, pupils make good progress and achieve well over time. Teachers provide a calm, peaceful and well-ordered learning environment in which pupils feel invited to learn and can easily access a wide range of resources. They establish good working relationships that are based on mutual respect and conducive to very effective learning. They engage in peer observation to share the best existing practice and reflect on the most effective ways to ensure that all pupils gain secure knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. In each class, teachers are deployed very effectively to take it in turn to observe pupils, support them and present new knowledge to them. Teachers know their pupils well. They are skilful at 'catching' pupils who have completed an activity and seem undecided about taking up another. They re-engage these pupils promptly and so no time is wasted. When presenting new resources and concepts to pupils, teachers ask questions that systematically build on pupils' understanding and enable them to explore the resources on their own and work at their own pace.

Detailed observations of pupils' learning assess each pupil's proficiency in each area of the curriculum and inform the presentation of future activities. They are used to monitor each pupil's progress across the curriculum. However, not all teachers have a sufficiently clear understanding of what the curricular targets are in the Montessori curriculum and so some lack confidence when guiding pupils' learning, especially when teaching 'Great Lessons'. Also, these continuous assessments are not shared systematically with pupils, and so pupils do not always have a clear picture of how to improve their work. While teachers generally have high expectations of work and behaviour, pupils do not receive consistent messages regarding the presentation of their work and their handwriting in the elementary classes, and so their work looks scruffy at times. The teaching is at its best when it is underpinned by specialist subject knowledge. Pupils also learn most effectively when they are required to teach what they have learnt to their teacher, as is the case with new mathematics course in the Upper Elementary class. High-quality termly reports detail what each child has learnt, what amount of progress has been made and, where relevant, how attainment compares with national norms and what the pupils' learning targets are. Most parents and carers feel well informed of their children's progress.

### Quality of curriculum

**Good**

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to achieve well throughout the school. Its best features are that it is highly personalised to serve individual pupils' needs, and that it makes a strong contribution to their personal development. The provision for reading, writing, drama, mathematics, physical education (PE) in the elementary classes and memorisation of the Qur'an are particularly good. The Early Years Montessori curriculum correlates well with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Children learn through a good balance of activities which they

choose and others that are presented by teachers, as part of the 'three-hour Montessori cycle'. In the elementary classes, the breadth of the curriculum encompasses all the required areas of learning. However, Nursery children do not have regular access to outdoor equipment for climbing or cycling, to develop their gross motor skills.

In the elementary classes, the 'Great Lesson' is integrated with Islamic themes wherever possible. For example, in the autumn term, the 'story of writing' integrated the life of prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and Sumerian civilisation, which enabled pupils to place this prophet in a historical context. Pupils have a wide range of physical activities including gymnastics, team games, kung fu, archery and horse riding. Pupils regularly use computers to learn Arabic, the Qur'an and mathematics, and to post their book reviews online. The curriculum is planned effectively. However, the effectiveness of teaching and learning in each subject area is not monitored with sufficient rigour to enable all pupils to achieve outstandingly well in all subject areas. The subject expertise of staff is not utilised for this purpose, resulting in uneven provision in a few subject areas. Pupils cover a wide range of science topics, including botany which has been extended successfully through a local green roof project. However, practical experiments are not planned sufficiently regularly to extend pupils' enquiry skills. While pupils have opportunities to create two- and three-dimensional work in art, the quality of provision for art is variable in some classes. The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education, based on 'cosmic education', 'practical life skills', 'grace and courtesies', *adab* (Islamic manners) and exciting enrichment activities, makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. However, education in e-safety is less well developed.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Adequate**

The school makes adequate provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety and staff provide good day-to-day care. All the requirements for independent schools and the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Pupils feel safe and they and their parents and carers have full confidence in the school's ability to keep them safe in all circumstances and to promote high standards of behaviour. Pupils are supervised very effectively. They feel free from harassment and bullying is very rare. Pupils receive adequate, rather than good, education in health and safety because their awareness of e-safety is insufficiently well developed. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through the curriculum and a wide range of physical exercises.

All the policies and procedures for child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety and first aid are up to date and implemented consistently. However, minor omissions in some policies were rectified during the inspection and some of the records are not organised very well. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all adults working at the school are properly vetted. All the required checks are recorded in a single central register in the correct manner. All staff are trained in child protection to approved standards and at the required intervals. There is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid with paediatric qualifications. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out on the premises, and on-site and off-site activities. The school can demonstrate it has a suitable level of fire safety. Attendance and punctuality are monitored closely.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Adequate**

While leadership and management are adequate overall, the leadership of teaching has improved since the last inspection, resulting in good teaching, a good curriculum and good achievement. The staff work very closely together to create an ethos that reflects the school's aims, learn from each other and reflect on ways to further improve their skills and the overall provision. The school promotes good behaviour and personal development, and increased links with the wider community greatly enrich pupils' experiences. Self-evaluation is mostly, but not wholly, accurate because it is not underpinned by sufficiently rigorous systems for checking on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in all subject areas, and all aspects of the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. There is a secure system to track pupils' progress across the Montessori curriculum.

However, it does not present the information in a way that makes it instantly available for staff to plan actions to further improve pupils' achievement. The headteacher can demonstrate that the school meets all the standards for independent schools and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. He shows a good understanding of how to further improve the school. He has plans in hands to set up an advisory board that can act as a critical friend in all areas of the school's work. However, further improvements are not currently supported by a clearly written management plan. The premises are maintained well and provide adequate teaching accommodation for safe and effective learning. Parents and carers receive the full range of information to which they are entitled, including the complaints procedure. Most would recommend the school to others.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135995
<b>Inspection number</b>	440226
<b>DfE registration number</b>	870/6016

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Montessori primary day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	75
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	28
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Deenway Company Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Munawar Karim
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Munawar Karim
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 March 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£3,600
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 957 4737
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:connect@deenway.org">connect@deenway.org</a>

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