

Lincolnshire Montessori

Top House Farm, Grimsby Road, Market Rasen, LN7 6RJ

Inspection dates

20–22 May 2014

Overall effectiveness

Good

2

Achievement of pupils

Good

2

Quality of teaching

Good

2

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

2

Leadership and management

Good

2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Achievement is good. Pupils in the school and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Often they demonstrate rapid learning in English and mathematics from their starting points.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. All staff are skilled Montessori practitioners. They are effective in supporting the development of pupils' skills so they can learn and find things out for themselves through Montessori methods.
- Pupils feel safe in school and the school's procedures ensure they are safe. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are very well prepared for their learning in the school. By the time pupils leave school, they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leadership and management are good. The proprietors ensure that all aspects of the school, including teaching and pupils' achievements, continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding.
- The school's systems for checking how well pupils learn and progress from when they enter the school are not sufficiently robust.
- The regulations are met and the pupils are safe but an issue of health and safety needed to be addressed by the proprietors during the inspection.
- The school does not always provide parents with sufficient regular information about their children's academic progress.

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

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine lessons and parts of lessons, and spent almost four hours in classrooms. They looked at the work in pupils’ books and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Discussions with pupils occurred during lessons and break times.
- The inspectors met with the proprietors, one of whom is the headteacher, teachers and administrators.
- Meetings were held with eleven parents. The inspectors took note of 48 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, (Parent View). They also took account of an email that was received from a person who wrote in the first instance to the Department for Education; a small number of others wrote to the inspection team via the inspection service provider.
- Inspectors looked at teachers’ planning and their records. They scrutinised policies and other documents related to the school’s work.

Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jo Sharpe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lincolnshire Montessori school admits pupils aged three to 11 years. The school follows the philosophy of Maria Montessori, the founder of the Montessori movement. It is co-located with a separately registered Montessori nursery.
- Pupils can join at any age between three and 11. Many continue from the separately registered nursery and Early Years Foundation Stage into the school at the age of four. The school does not classify pupils by year groups.
- The school is registered to admit up to 80 pupils and currently 80 boys and girls attend, with around half in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many of the pre school-age children attend part-time. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school aims to enable pupils to learn key life skills, independence, self-confidence, a sense of challenge and how to achieve. It stresses the importance of teamwork.
- A very few pupils are recognised as disabled or having special educational needs but currently no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school does not employ teaching assistants.
- The school was established in 2000 and was last inspected by Ofsted in 2008. Since then the school has relocated to a new site approximately 11 miles from the original school and now occupies part of a large house with a purpose built school and nursery.
- The school gained the 'Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board School' accreditation in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils have every opportunity to gain the most from their learning and demonstrate this by:
 - improving the overall quality of teaching to outstanding
 - further developing the school's systems so that pupils' learning and progress can be better tracked and checked over the entire period of their time in school.
- Ensure that parents have more regular information about their children's academic progress by further developing ways of communicating with them.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- The starting points of pupils in the school and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage vary considerably. Nevertheless, through the Montessori methods, teachers quickly gauge the abilities of pupils and begin supporting them in their very individual learning journeys.
- All year groups achieve well. This applies to the different groups of pupils including boys, girls, disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, those for whom there is additional support, and the most and least able.
- Pupils often learn quickly and efficiently. The tasks are set for them by the teachers and then closely monitored. However, in accordance with the Montessori philosophy, pupils have control over the routes they take in their learning. Pupils and younger children can spend as long as they wish, within reason, on making sure that they fully understand elements of learning before moving on to the next step.
- The skilled Montessori teaching is much appreciated by most parents. Some told inspectors that it is because of the quality of staff and their ability to get so much from their children that they pay to send them here. The Montessori courses of study have few limits and ensure that all children, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are fully included in learning with none left out or discriminated against. This is because the Montessori resources enable pupils to work on practical activities at their own speed and as independently as they wish. The Montessori resources encourage pupils to become confident and acquire good basic skills in literacy and numeracy; rapid learning in English and mathematics is often demonstrated.
- Most pupils read confidently and well. Pupils of all ages and abilities read materials that will assist them in their learning. For example, a nine year old pupil read to an inspector the classification groups of animals such as 'echinoderms'. In another room a five year old pupil confidently read the recipe card for the making of bread that included words such as 'yeast' and 'dough'.
- The resources are always available to the pupils to go back to refresh their understanding and reinforce their learning. The most able pupils gain great independence because of this and reach their potential. They mainly work at standards well in excess of national expectations for their ages. Some parents reported the great value to their children of this independent approach.
- Almost all of the learning observed by inspectors was at least good with much outstanding. The school's records and inspection evidence indicate that the attainment of the great majority of pupils is at least in line with and often above national expectations for their age.
- Inspection evidence indicates that achievement is good. However, except in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school's records are not sufficiently clear to show that pupils make more than expected rates of progress over longer periods of time.
- Some parents reported that when their children, who had previously attended this school, moved on to secondary schools their attainments upon entry there were at least in line with those of most other pupils. They stated that their children benefitted in secondary schools from the self confidence instilled in them by the Montessori school.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Inspection evidence indicates that, over the passage of time, teaching is good overall. Good teaching is the key to the good achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in the school. The Montessori practical learning resources are managed extremely well so that each individual can work at their own pace; the very small classes make this possible. Each small class group is taught effectively by two Montessori trained teachers.
- Learning materials and practical resources are always used skilfully to ensure that pupils'

learning is good. Courses of work are planned thoroughly by staff to ensure that all of the required areas of learning are taught.

- Activities are designed and based on the belief that the child's natural, self-initiated impulse is to become absorbed in a rich environment and to learn from it. Consequently, there is a great deal of attention given to the study of the natural world.
- Staff make good use of the garden and paddock. Pupils often learn out of doors including in a nearby area known as 'the forest school' owned by the proprietors. Inspectors watched one class studying the theme of 'migrations'. Here, eight and nine year old pupils talked confidently with an inspector about how they had enjoyed the independent research undertaken concerning the ancient journeys of Homo Sapiens and Homo Erectus. Their progress in learning here was extremely good.
- The small numbers in each class enable teachers to pay great attention to how each pupil is progressing. They quickly notice if any pupils require additional help to better understand what they are learning. This was observed when a pupil showed difficulty in understanding decimal calculations. Extra support was quickly provided to take the pupil back through the practical activity until the meanings became clear.
- In another class a pupil had been advised by staff to revisit calculations on 'squared numbers'. The pupil worked successfully on constructing number squares and was challenged by a teacher to relate the square to the 11-times table, which the pupil did.
- Teaching motivates individuals so that their self-esteem and self-confidence remain high. Teachers know their pupils very well but do not yet have records to show that pupils make more than expected progress over longer periods because new systems have not yet been fully installed. The proprietors have made a start to improving the school's records and systems so that pupils' learning and progress can be better tracked and checked over the entire period of their time in school.
- Pupils are guided and supported very well by all the adults. A number of parents reported that the atmosphere of the school is like a family because it is so nurturing for their children. This high quality of care for the pupils was frequently observed by the inspectors.
- The proprietors acknowledge that teaching is not yet consistently outstanding. Effective action is being taken to spread outstanding teaching practice across the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- The behaviour and safety of pupils overall is good and in classes and around the school the behaviour of pupils is often of a very high standard. Their attitudes to learning in class and outside are superb, and they are rarely distracted from their studies.
- The Montessori system encourages individuals to put away the practical class materials after they have worked with them, so they are ready for the next person to use. This concern for others runs through all aspects of school life.
- Pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage show very high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For many, these aspects of growing up are far in excess of those which might be expected for their ages. Parents recognise this and report that it is the great strength of the school.
- In most classrooms there is hardly any talking, except when pupils and children are working together or with staff. They are not repressed in any way by the adults but simply have a keen desire to get on with their learning.
- Pupils are extremely polite to visitors. They are very welcoming. Parents report they very much value the developments their children make in knowing how to behave, and how to use behaviour productively to get good outcomes from others.
- School records indicate there is very rarely any negative behaviour in the school. This is confirmed by the great majority of parents.
- Pupils themselves report that bullying and harassment are unknown. They say they feel safe at school. The great majority of parents report their children are safe. A small minority

reported through the Parent View questionnaire that their children are not safe. This view was not borne out by the findings of the inspection. Furthermore, this was not the view of the nine parents interviewed.

- Pupils explore issues of bullying, tolerance and harmony with others through their learning. Trips and visits away from the school bring them into contact with people from different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs.
- An issue of health and safety was brought to the attention of the inspection team. It was quickly dealt with during the inspection by the senior leadership team. The inspectors did not consider that pupils and children were unsafe. Consequently, no regulations were failed but the overall judgement for behaviour and safety is therefore good rather than outstanding.
- Throughout their time in Early Years Foundation Stage and in school, pupils and children develop exceptionally and are prepared very well for moving on to the next stages including secondary schools.

Leadership and management

Good

- The leadership and management by the proprietors are good. They have ensured that the school is well equipped and resourced to enable Montessori education to be employed successfully and for good teaching, high-quality behaviour and positive attitudes to flourish. The proprietors, in turn, have benefitted from the challenge provided through the recent Montessori accreditation because they have been required to show clearly how the Montessori methods benefit pupils and children in their learning and personal development.
- Through their governance the proprietors consistently challenge staff to provide the best for all. There are no middle managers but the school's leaders support teachers in managing classrooms and other learning areas by ensuring that the Montessori resources are always available to them. However, they have not yet fully implemented new systems designed to show clearly how pupils make progress over their time in school.
- The proprietors have ensured that all of the independent school regulations are met. All staff have undertaken the required training in safeguarding. The two designated persons have completed the training in accordance with, and beyond, the advice of the local authority. All requirements for safeguarding are met. Sufficient staff have completed first aid and fire safety training.
- Since the last inspection the proprietors have successfully relocated the school. The premises and accommodation are fully compliant with the regulations. The inside and outside areas are spacious and attractive. The headteacher (one of the proprietors) encourages classes to make full use of the inside and outside areas to extend pupils' learning.
- Through the regular review of teachers' work and by having clear expectations of them, the headteacher ensures that staff are fully competent in the Montessori methods and as a result, their rates of pay are reviewed annually. All are 'Montessori qualified' and the appraisal system encourages them to refresh their training regularly.
- A few parents stated that they would welcome better information from the school about their children's academic progress and the inspectors agree with this view. Most parents, however, report that the school fully meets their needs. Those who spoke to an inspector stressed the value for money it provides. A typical comment was 'It is wonderful to see my children with happy, smiling faces when they arrive at school in the morning and when they leave in the evening!'

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate
<p>Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the <i>Non-association independent school inspection handbook</i> which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.</p>	

School details

Unique reference number	134713
Inspection number	443478
DfE registration number	925/6003

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.

Type of school	Montessori Primary School
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Number of part time pupils	40
Proprietors	Sylvia Archer and Theresa Ellerby
Headteacher	Theresa Ellerby
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,788
Telephone number	01472 859589
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	theresa@lincolnshiremontessori.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

