

Clarendon Montessori School

Meadowbank, Alexandra Road, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire, WD4 8EP



Inspection date

3 November 2015

Previous inspection date

31 October 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Staff build positive relationships with children. They provide lots of reassurance, smiles and praise. Staff sit alongside the children as they carry out activities. This helps children to form secure emotional attachments and promotes their sense of security and belonging.
- Staff help children to make healthy choices and provide nutritious snacks for them. Children are involved in the preparation of snack time. For example, they concentrate hard to cut fruit and pour their own drinks. This helps to promote children's independent skills. They have the opportunity to enjoy fresh air and exercise every day.
- Parents are complimentary about the staff and the service that they provide. They are invited to discuss their children's progress and development and attend fun activities, such as sports days. They are given good information about the school, including information about the Montessori approach to learning.
- There are well-established, good relationships with local schools. Staff invite teachers into the setting and share information about children's learning and development. This helps to prepare children well for their move on to school.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Information collected on entry to the setting does not always take account of what new children can already do to help to promptly establish accurate starting points.
- Staff do not always give younger children sufficient opportunities to express their feelings and to extend their own thoughts and ideas during their play.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- focus more precisely on the initial information gathered from new parents to further support accurate and prompt assessments of children's starting points
- review the planning of the learning experiences so that younger children have more opportunities to express their feelings and to extend their own thoughts and ideas.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and staff interactions indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with a senior member of staff. She also held a meeting with the manager.
- The inspector checked documentation, including children's records, a sample of policies, and staff training and suitability records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through discussions on the day.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have completed training and know how to protect children from potential risks and harm. Secure recruitment procedures are followed and new staff complete a thorough induction process. This helps them to gain relevant knowledge of the policies and procedures. The manager checks staff practice and supervisions are used effectively to identify strengths and to discuss staff development. She provides regular training for staff to enable them to enhance their knowledge and skills. In particular, they often review how the Montessori resources can be effectively used. Staff are keen to extend their knowledge further about effective behaviour strategies and suitable training is being investigated.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Children are making good progress. They have many opportunities to freely choose from the wide range of Montessori resources. Mathematical concepts are introduced, such as names of different shapes, including cylinders and hexagons. Staff teach children to develop early writing skills. They work together to draw pictures and older children are taught how to hold pencils correctly. However, at times teaching is too adult-directed and activities are not sufficiently adapted to extend younger children's learning. For example, during writing activities children are provided with pre-printed images for them to decorate. This lessens their opportunities to be creative and fully represent their own feelings and ideas. Children concentrate well during story sessions. They are helped to recall events, such as 'World book day' and discuss popular fictional characters. This supports children's language development. Staff frequently observe children's development and identify the next steps in their learning. However, information about what children already know and can do is not consistently used to extend children's learning and support early planning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children play well together, they learn about the needs of others while sharing their toys. Older children are considerate to their younger friends. This builds on their social skills. Staff have high expectations for good behaviour and good manners are encouraged. Children help to tidy up and know where to place resources. They learn to be independent and follow good hygiene routines. Children enjoy playing outdoors. They confidently ride bikes and scooters and they are aware of other children playing nearby. This helps to develop their physical skills and to raise their awareness of keeping themselves and others safe.

Outcomes for children are good

Children, including those for whom the school receives additional funding, make good progress from their starting points. Children are encouraged to write a variety of words and take home books to support their early reading skills. They develop the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning, including, where appropriate, for starting school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	129338
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	854193
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	49
Name of provider	Alison Redmond
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2011
Telephone number	01923 268746

Clarendon Montessori School was registered in 1997. The school employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The manager holds a Montessori teaching qualification. The school opens from Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3pm. The school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The school follows the Montessori approach to teaching.

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