

Brighton and Hove Montessori School

67 Stanford Avenue, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 6FB

Inspection dates

21 May 2019

Overall outcome

The school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The proprietor, who is also the headteacher and designated safeguarding lead, is insufficiently familiar with important safeguarding guidance, including 'Keeping children safe in education 2018'.
- Not all of the required checks on the suitability of staff have been carried out and recorded on the single central record.
- Record-keeping of safeguarding concerns is weak. Although there is evidence that staff are alert to concerns and indicators of abuse, processes for recording and responding to these concerns are insecure. There is no reliable system in place for the designated safeguarding lead to build a picture of low-level concerns about pupils that, taken together, might lead to safeguarding action being taken.
- Concerns that staff raise are not always reliably recorded in a timely manner. Sometimes they are recorded, but not on, or subsequently transferred to, the school's forms intended for this purpose. This means that important details are sometimes missed. The incident records that do exist are poorly organised and some are not stored securely. Among files not systematically sorted or stored, historic records were found where it was not clear how, or if, safeguarding concerns had been properly followed up.
- A safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. It meets requirements in terms of the range of areas it covers. However, the published safeguarding policy is not implemented effectively. Nor does it reflect closely the school's current practice, or its own arrangements for safeguarding pupils.
- The proprietor has not considered thoroughly enough how to adapt the safeguarding policy, the core of which is based on a model policy from the local authority, to ensure that it fully reflects this school. For example, there are frequent references throughout the policy to the role that governors will play in safeguarding arrangements. Brighton and Hove Montessori School does not have a governing body. The safeguarding

policy's intended overarching 'disclaimer' that the school does not have governors near the beginning of the policy, and the possible alternatives, do not amount to an adequate explanation of how this should work in practice in each instance where the policy suggests governors should have a role.

- This paragraph is not met currently and, is therefore unlikely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 14 and 16

- No evidence was noted that indicated unmet standards relating to the health and safety, risk-assessment or fire-safety arrangements of the currently operating provision. However, preparations for the proposed expansion are at the earliest stages, and in relation to the above paragraphs, amount predominantly to statements of good intent.
- The proposed accommodation on the floors above the existing school is currently appointed as a residential space. At present, there is no full or formal risk assessment of the implications of the change of use.
- The fire-safety risk assessment has not been extended to account for up to 20 additional pupils, plus staff, being housed on an upper floor. The proprietor has not fully considered the implications of a significant increase in people at the evacuation point. For example, there are no confirmed plans or arrangement for the likelihood that in the event of an emergency, pupils would need to be moved further away from the building.
- As per the current accommodation, the proprietor intends to commission external fire-safety experts to advise on the extended school's fire-safety arrangements and risk assessment. However, this has not yet happened.
- There are paragraphs in this part that are not met with respect to current pupils. There are others where work is not sufficiently advanced to evidence that standards are likely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21

- The single central record does not meet requirements. Those responsible for making the checks on staff and administering, monitoring or overseeing the single central record do not understand the purpose of, or differences between, all of the required checks.
- Not all teaching staff have been subject to a check that they have not been prohibited from teaching.
- References have been obtained for staff that have lived or worked abroad. However, no further checks have been made for any relevant events that occurred outside the United Kingdom, contrary to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Home Office. The proprietor was not familiar with guidance for how to carry out these important safety checks.
- The proprietor did not know about statutory checks on whether any leaders have previously been prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school. She had not used the guidance to consider which staff may require this check,

either now, or following any restructuring of leadership roles due to the expansion. There was no space on the single central record to show whether any of these checks have been carried out.

- The single central record does not show whether barred-list checks have been made on relevant staff. Although upon reviewing files during the inspection, it became apparent that these checks had been made, it was also clear that those responsible for safer recruitment do not understand the different levels of check and who should and should not have the highest level.
- There are paragraphs in this part that are currently unmet and are therefore unlikely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29

- The proprietor's proposal is to extend educational provision to occupy the upper two floors of the existing property. Currently, these floors are furnished for residential purposes. They have not yet been converted or furnished for use as a school.
- When ready, the accommodation will provide three additional rooms for teaching and learning, including one large and two smaller spaces.
- There are separate toilet and washing facilities for staff and pupils. Currently, there is provision for one further toilet for the additional 20 pupils, which is in line with non-statutory guidance. However, the proprietor has plans to adapt the existing bathroom to provide two individual toilets with integral washing facilities.
- There are sufficient supplies of thermostatically controlled hot and cold running water, and mains drinking water, which are labelled in the currently-used spaces.
- The school will continue to make use of existing facilities for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils.
- There is sufficient outdoor space on site to accommodate the youngest children. The proprietor intends to continue existing arrangements for the older pupils to access a nearby park for recreational purposes daily and at least weekly for physical education.
- Although the accommodation currently has sufficient light and acoustic conditions conducive to effective learning, the proprietor has plans to improve both the lighting and the décor of this part of the premises. The proprietor has identified damp which she reports requires treatment before decoration. Fixed shelving that is on the stairway currently presents a hazard on the only escape route and evacuation routes are not signposted. Consequently, the proprietor is not able to demonstrate at this stage that the health and safety of pupils would be assured.
- Not all the paragraphs in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34

- The proprietor has not ensured that the independent school standards are met consistently. Critical standards in relation to the school's current operation, including

those relating to safeguarding, are unmet. Planning for the proposed material change is not sufficiently advanced to demonstrate that all standards relating to the proposal are likely to be met.

- The proprietor is not sufficiently familiar with some of the most important guidance associated with running an independent school. This has led to gaps in vital parts of the school's work, such as safer recruitment. For example, the proprietor has not ensured that staff responsible for carrying out suitability checks know how to make prohibition from teaching checks where relevant, including on staff who do not have a registration number.
- The weaknesses in safeguarding mean that pupils' well-being cannot be assured.
- The paragraph in this part is currently unmet and is therefore unlikely to continue to be met if the requested material change is implemented.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change, as set out in the annex of this report.

School details

Unique reference number	133348
DfE registration number	846/6023
Inspection number	10106892

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	Daisy Cockburn
Headteacher	Daisy Cockburn
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,818
Telephone number	01273 702485
Website	www.brighton-montessori.org.uk
Email address	info@brighton-montessori.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	5–7 June 2018

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	2 to 12	2–12	2–12
Number of pupils on the school roll	45	65	65

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	31	65

Number of part-time pupils	14	14
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	1	2
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	1	2
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	1	0

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	6
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	4

Information about this school

- The school is a Montessori non-selective, mixed day school for pupils aged between two and 12 years of age. The school operates from a large converted Victorian house and gardens.
- The headteacher is also the sole proprietor of the school.
- The school is currently registered for 45 pupils, and at the time of the inspection was full.
- The school was last inspected 5 to 7 June 2018, when the overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education because the proprietor had applied to make changes to the school's registration. The proprietor wished to increase the number of pupils on roll.
- This was the first material change inspection.
- Prior to the visit, the inspector's preparations included familiarising himself with the context and inspection history of the school. He also reviewed the school's website and scrutinised some of the available policies.
- On site, the inspector held discussions with the headteacher, who is also the proprietor. He also met other staff and pupils informally as he toured the premises with the headteacher.
- While touring the site, inside and out, the inspector took account of the current situation of the premises, as well as the plans, intentions and proposed developments.
- The inspector checked policies, records and documentation in relation to the specific independent school standards that were within the scope of this inspection. This included checking the single central record and safeguarding policy. He reviewed safeguarding arrangements and safer recruitment procedures.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—
 - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The school is unlikely to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

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