

The Garden Montessori at St Mary's

St Mary's School, Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury SP7 9LP



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| Inspection date | 10 July 2019 |
| Previous inspection date | Not applicable |

| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| | Previous inspection: | Not applicable | |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Outcomes for children | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Children are exceptionally confident and independent. They eagerly approach visitors to find out who they are and to introduce themselves. They skilfully serve themselves, wash up their dishes at snack time and carefully put away resources that they have been playing with.
- Staff know children exceptionally well. They use this information to draw up individual planning for each child to complement the other stimulating activities available. Children make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Children have excellent communication skills. They confidently initiate conversations with children and adults and chat animatedly about a wide range of subjects.
- Staff provide exciting experiences that support children to become active and motivated learners. For example, children are growing sunflowers with seeds harvested from last year's plants, which has helped them learn about life cycles. They are also experimenting with cutting and sticking paper in the style of Matisse.
- Children are exceptionally well behaved. They spontaneously share and take turns and staff empower them to deal with minor issues themselves. They show great concern when another child is hurt or unhappy.
- The close-knit staff work extremely well together as a team and share the nursery's clear ethos of supporting children to become independent learners.
- Staff build highly successful partnerships with parents in order to involve them in their children's learning. They share information with them in a wide variety of ways and give them ideas of how to support their children at home. For example, they give them recipes for healthy meals and there is a borrowing library of books and games to take home.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- seize every opportunity to extend children's learning and enhance their excellent progress even further, with particular regard to those children who learn better outdoors.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the interaction between staff and children.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took account of written parental feedback.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector sampled a selection of records, including children's records of progress.

Inspector

Catherine Sample

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

Safeguarding is effective. Staff have an excellent understanding of their personal responsibility to protect children and the manager ensures that safeguarding is at the forefront of staff meetings. She successfully uses feedback from staff, parents and children to reflect on the quality of the provision. This enables her to focus sharply on areas for development, such as developing a resource pack for new starters to ease the settling-in process. The manager recognises that staff could enhance children's excellent learning opportunities even further in the outdoor area. The manager carefully monitors the quality of teaching in order to identify training needs. Staff have developed their behaviour management techniques following training and this has helped them to empower children to resolve situations themselves. The manager meticulously tracks the progress of individuals and groups of children to identify any gaps in learning and takes prompt action to close them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Staff use excellent teaching methods to support children's learning. They provide a calm environment which helps children to focus fully on what they are doing. They listen carefully to children and value their ideas, such as deciding how to use crates, planks and tyres to build a structure to climb on. Staff skilfully introduce new vocabulary. They talk to children about pouring water into a 'cylinder' and praise their 'technique' for rolling logs. They grasp opportunities to help children sound out letters as they learn to spell and write. Staff make excellent use of questions, such as 'How do you think we can sort this out?', to empower children to think for themselves. They are always ready to have discussions with the children, who eagerly raise a varied range of subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children are exceptionally proud of their achievements. For example, some eagerly showed off their learning journey books while others confidently decided to add a new work of art to theirs. Children show great concern for those that are feeling sad, and work cooperatively at tasks such as draining the water tray. They develop an in-depth understanding of the wider world as they learn about different continents and what it is like to live there. Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe in the sun. They confidently explained why they needed to wear a sun hat and that sweating helps you to cool down.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

Children are exceptionally well prepared for school. They are eager to explore and relish making choices about their learning. For example, older children confidently chose a spelling activity, sounding out and writing simple words, such as 'rug'. Younger children were engrossed in experimenting with how to fit construction blocks together to get different effects. Children have excellent opportunities to develop their mathematical skills. For example, they worked out the number of planets in the solar system and then added the number of dwarf planets.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY544431 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 10090340 |
| Type of provision | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Registers | Early Years Register |
| Day care type | Sessional day care |
| Age range of children | 2 - 4 |
| Total number of places | 26 |
| Number of children on roll | 23 |
| Name of registered person | Sewell, Virginia Julia Laurence |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP516315 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |
| Telephone number | 07971423299 |

The Garden Montessori at St Mary's was registered in 2017. It is situated in the grounds of an independent school but is privately owned. It is open during term time only from 8.30am to 3pm every weekday except Friday when it closes at 2.30pm. The nursery accepts funding for the provision of free nursery education sessions for children aged two, three and four. There are four members of staff. Of these two have qualifications at level 4, one has a qualification at level 3 and one has a qualification at level 2. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy of teaching.

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