

Inspection of Acorn Montessori School

Gerrards Cross Youth Centre, East Common, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire SL9 7AD

Inspection date: 8 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are highly confident, independent and motivated learners. The curriculum expertly aims to ensure children have a wide range of exciting opportunities that skilfully prepare them for their next stages in learning. The setting follows a Montessori approach to education and children are thriving in all aspects of their learning.

Children thoroughly enjoy their day at nursery. They form exceptional relationships with the staff who look after them and the other children. Throughout the nursery, there is an extremely relaxed, homely and calm atmosphere. Children's behaviour is exemplary.

All children make outstanding progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Children have high levels of curiosity as they explore the exciting range of resources and activities provided, inside and outdoors. For example, children search for 'worms' made from wool hidden in the nursery garden. They have a wonderful time collecting them and rising to the challenge to find 10 each. Children are extremely helpful to their friends, for example, when a younger child cannot find any 'worms' an older child gives him some of his.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Partnership working with parents is fabulous. Staff share daily information with parents through discussions, conversations and by sharing extremely explicit learning journeys. Parents express their utmost satisfaction with the nursery. They describe how settled and happy their children are. Parents say the staff are 'fantastic' and go 'above and beyond'. One parent expressed the view of many by telling the inspector, 'The staff are brilliant. I would not change a thing.'
- Partnerships with local schools, other professionals and early years settings are all excellent and contribute to the outstanding provision and the exemplary support for children's learning.
- Excellent systems are in place to meet the needs of all children. Staff keep very good track of children's progress through highly effective observations and assessments which clearly show children's individual abilities and areas for development. Staff obtain resources aimed at supporting children's individual learning needs. They successfully plan activities for one-to-one or small-group sessions with their key children so that children's priorities for learning are targeted highly effectively.
- Children demonstrate extremely high levels of engagement and concentration. For example, they sit for long periods as they all take turns in an experiment with magnets, predicting the number of metal bars it will take before the tower

falls down. Children are challenged further to see if they can take it down as well as build up. They are extremely patient and kind to each other.

- Children are eager to play together and demonstrate high levels of confidence in social situations. 'Acts of kindness', such as helping friends secure art aprons, are highly celebrated, where children are rewarded by taking home the nursery soft toy.
- Staff provide children with rich experiences and skills that will help them to succeed later on in life. The nursery provides an abundance of extra activities for children to help support their understanding of diversity and what makes them unique. For example, all children have the opportunity to participate in French, dance and music sessions.
- Self-evaluation is highly reflective. The continuous drive for excellence is evident in the staff's attitudes and commitment to providing the highest level of teaching. As well as all of the aspects of the nursery environment, there is an abundance of additional resources to help promote children's practical development of phonics, letters, counting and early science.
- Children are exceptionally well prepared for school when the time comes. They learn to independently put on their coats and change from shoes to wellingtons for outdoor play.
- The deployment of staff is highly effective. Children are always supervised and staff maintain a safe and secure environment, protecting children from harm. Robust risk assessments ensure children's safety is maintained at all times.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have an excellent understanding of child protection issues. They are extremely familiar with the procedure to take prompt and efficient action should they have any concerns about children's welfare. Staff are confident with the whistle-blowing policy and procedures for reporting allegations. They supervise children vigilantly and ensure a safe environment is maintained for the children. Staff have a very good understanding of the signs that may indicate a child may be at risk of harm, including from radical and extreme views.

Setting details

Unique reference number	107974
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10108393
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	56
Name of registered person	Dowman, Juliet Maria
Registered person unique reference number	RP908760
Telephone number	01753 885 448
Date of previous inspection	2 June 2015

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Montessori School registered in 1994. It operates from the Gerrards Cross Youth Centre, in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire. The nursery opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions run from 9.15am until 3.15pm Monday to Friday. There are currently nine staff who work directly with the children and the principal, who is supernumerary. Staff follow the Montessori ethos. Seven staff hold early years qualifications at level 4 and two hold qualified teacher status at level 6. The provider is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Chris Lamey

Inspection activities

- A learning walk was conducted across all areas of the nursery, to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff, children and parents at suitable times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery principal and manager. She looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- Several parents spoke to the inspector during the inspection and their views were taken into account.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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