

# Inspection of Harriet House Montessori School

The Walled Garden, Yattendon Estate, Berkshire RG18 0XX

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Inspection date: 19 October 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children of all ages enjoy their time at the Montessori school. Overall, they benefit from the provider's curriculum, which promotes the Montessori approach alongside the early years foundation stage. Other activities planned for children include music, ballet and forest school. These help to enhance children's developing and current interests. Children enjoy the many open spaces that help them to develop confidence, independence and risk awareness and that enable them to explore freely. The outdoor classrooms provide opportunities for children to play outdoors all year, regardless of weather. Children enjoy time spent in the sensory garden and are learning about planting and growing produce. They spend time there with both parents and staff.

Children demonstrate that they feel happy, safe and secure. Children of all ages have warm bonds with staff, who know them well and encourage their personal and emotional well-being. Some children are showing an emerging confidence to speak in small groups and share what they know and understand. For example, during Harvest festival celebrations, children recall how wheat is harvested and processed for making bread. All children behave incredibly well. They are polite and respectful to their friends and staff. Children understand staff expectations and the routines of the day.

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

- Staff morale is high. Staff state that they feel valued and supported in their roles. For example, they explain they are listened to when requesting further training opportunities. Staff have been proactive in making improvements since their last inspection. This includes the ways they find out about children's development upon entry to the setting.
- Overall, staff implement the provider's curriculum effectively in order to promote children's learning across a broad spectrum and prepare them for their next stages of learning. However, planning of the curriculum is not precise enough. This is most evident during children's freely chosen play. Staff are not always confident about what they want children to learn and how they will build on children's experiences.
- Staff in the baby room engage younger children well during story time. Babies snuggle up to listen to the story and commentary and are keen to look at the illustrations. Older children thoroughly enjoy taking part in a singing activity entitled 'Journey home from grandpa's'. They confidently join in with familiar verses and use props depicting a range of vehicles to identify the different sounds these make. These activities promote children's developing language well and encourage a love of books and rhymes. However, interactions throughout the day are not always fully consistent in helping all children build new

vocabulary. For example, staff do not always model language effectively during play activities.

- Children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning. They sit patiently as activities start and listen intently to instructions. Older children are prepared to participate. They show curiosity about what they are learning. For instance, as older children learn about the story 'Handa's Surprise', they help each other recall the names of the fruits. Children are confident to suggest what might be happening. For example, they predict that the monkey has taken the banana.
- Overall, staff help to ensure that all children meet their potential. This includes children who speak English as an additional language and those children with identified or possible special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know the importance of working alongside other professionals involved in children's learning.
- Staff promote children's confidence and independence to help them develop an awareness of healthy lifestyles. For example, staff help children to be independent in their self-care skills. Children are learning about how to protect the environment. This includes an understanding of recycling and composting.
- Parents are positive about the care their children receive. They state that communication about children's learning is informative and that their children flourish at the setting.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior staff have reflected on their systems and procedures that promote awareness and understanding of safeguarding matters as well as those for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff. They show an understanding of what they need to inform Ofsted about. Staff have a good understanding of all aspects of safeguarding and how to protect children. They regularly update their knowledge through a range of training. For example, staff know the procedure to follow should they identify that a child may be at risk of harm. They know what to do if they have a concern about a staff colleague or senior member of staff.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- review and improve the arrangements to plan for the curriculum across all areas, to build more successfully on what children already know and understand
- develop more consistent practice to model language and promote children's language and communication.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY462971
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228825
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 10
<b>Total number of places</b>	47
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	93
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Harriet House Montessori School Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP532623
<b>Telephone number</b>	07816655979
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Harriet House Montessori School registered in 2013. It operates from log cabins on the Yattendon Estate, near the village of Yattendon, Berkshire. The Montessori school is open each weekday during term times, from 8.30am until 3.30pm. On weekdays, apart from Fridays, there is a breakfast club from 7.50am and after-school provision to 6pm. There are 17 staff working directly with children. Of these, 10 staff hold early years qualifications ranging from level 3, qualified teacher status and Montessori qualified staff. The provider also employs administrators, a cook and a housekeeper.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Aileen Finan

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in the evaluation of the provider.
- The provider and her deputy joined the inspector for a learning walk. Discussions took place about how staff plan their curriculum.
- A joint observation was completed. The provider explained how staff are supported in their roles. The inspector spoke with the provider about specific aims for future improvement in relation to children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to children, parents and staff. She read written feedback from parents.
- Documentation was sampled at the inspection. A meeting took place with the provider and her deputy.

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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