

Inspection of The Deenway Montessori School

3-5 Sidmouth Street, Reading RG1 4QZ

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like Deenway and are very positive about their school. They describe the school community as a family. Pupils are happy and safe. High expectations, consistent routines and clear community values help children to settle in. Staff and pupils develop positive relationships with each other.

British values are deeply embedded in the school. Good values and morals are instilled in children from the moment they start in the early years. Grace and courtesy lessons help them to know what is expected and how to interact with others.

Staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly independent. They tidy up after themselves and do jobs around the school. Tellingly, pupils treat others with courtesy and learn to disagree and give their opinions in a respectful manner. They look after each other and encourage their peers to do well.

Importantly though, leaders have not made the environment as suitable as it should be. They have not carried out some of the checks that are required of them, for example external fire safety checks. The school building needs much refurbishment, and leaders accept this is an immediate priority.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear vision for Deenway and they admirably strive for excellence. Importantly, they recognise the need to be challenged and supported. Despite their best efforts, it has taken some time to establish a school advisory board to carry out this role. The prospect of school closure and the COVID-19 pandemic have both slowed this. As a result, there is a lack of oversight of the school's work, particularly in relation to some of the independent school standards.

While leaders are fully committed, they have not acted quickly enough to ensure that the premises are well maintained. For example, carpets are worn and pose trip hazards in some of the communal spaces. Some areas are untidy with flaky paintwork. During the inspection, fire extinguishers that were in situ had not been checked for many years and what was described in the school's fire safety policy had not been implemented. However, during the inspection, the fire extinguishers were removed and replaced with brand-new ones. Some fire doors did not shut properly but were repaired during the inspection. The alarm system was showing an error as a smoke detector had been removed, and some internal emergency lighting was not working as it should. These issues were not rectified by the end of the inspection.

From the very start of school in the early years, the school's curriculum follows the Montessori approach. Leaders and staff know a lot about this approach and have used their knowledge and understanding to plan what pupils need to learn and when. A logical sequence helps pupils to build their knowledge and skills over time.

This approach continues through lower and upper elementary. The curriculum successfully engineers success for pupils. At the end of upper elementary, pupils embark on a transition year which helps to prepare them for secondary education.

Pupils in the senior school follow a liberal arts curriculum. This has the Montessori approach at its core. Some of the key stage 4 curriculum is delivered by an external online provider. This helps to provide a broader curriculum. While some aspects of the school's own secondary curriculum have been planned well, for example Arabic and English language and literature, other aspects lack precision. This is because staff have not considered the essential knowledge and skills pupils need to learn and when with enough precision across every area of the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy a degree of flexibility in what they learn. They often identify what it is that they need to learn next and communicate this to their teachers. While this has the potential to lead to learning that is jumbled, staff guide pupils' learning to avoid this from happening. This is more successful in the early years and lower and upper elementary. Leaders are currently strengthening some aspects of the secondary curriculum so that pupils' learning is even stronger.

Assessment is used well across most phases. Leaders have worked hard to give staff the tools they need to track and monitor pupils' progress through the curriculum. This is highly consistent in the early years and lower and upper elementary. Staff check pupils' learning through observation and questioning. During a visit to an English literature lesson, the teacher skilfully asked pupils questions to check their understanding of Boey Kim Cheng's poem 'The Planners'. She deepened their understanding of the poem through the questions she asked, encouraging them to critically analyse the poem line by line. However, the use of questioning and assessment more widely is not as developed across all areas of the secondary curriculum.

Leaders have developed a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils are introduced to many interesting stories, nursery rhymes and poems from an early age. As pupils move through the school, there are plentiful opportunities for them to explore a range of texts, including Macbeth and Beowulf. In the Children's House, staff read to pupils regularly. They encourage a love of reading from the start. Classroom books are changed frequently to match the topic children are learning about, for example nature. Pupils follow a structured phonics programme that ensures they know each of the sounds. Books are carefully matched to the sounds pupils are learning. As a result, they read confidently and fluently. Children in the early years proudly showed the lead inspector how well they could read.

The personal development programme is well thought out. Pupils are taught the important topics they need to know about as they move through the school. Sensitive topics are taught with considerable care. Staff ensure that they teach a range of views and thoughts about these different topics. Learning about the Islamic faith is integral to the curriculum. Pupils recite the Qur'an daily and have opportunities to take part in Inshad. British and Islamic values are carefully interwoven. Pupils are taught about protected characteristics and fundamental

British values, for example democracy and the rule of law. Pupils receive careers advice and guidance, and, in recent times, visited a university. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and is suitable. Leaders and staff are trained well in all matters relating to safeguarding. They understand their responsibilities and know what to look for and what to do when they are concerned about a pupil. Staff-pupil relationships are strong and this helps staff to identify subtle changes in pupils' behaviour. This means that they quickly spot anything out of the ordinary. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Staff undergo a series of checks when they first start working at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to address issues relating to fire safety in the school. Additionally, some areas of the premises are in a poor state of repair. For example, carpets are worn and create trip hazards. This means that currently the independent school standards are not all met. Leaders need to urgently ensure that all the checks relating to fire safety are carried out. They also need to check for any hazards and improve some areas of the school so that the environment for pupils and staff improves rapidly.
- Leaders welcome challenge and scrutiny. However, they have been unsuccessful in establishing a school advisory board. This means that leaders do not receive enough challenge and support to help them take forward the necessary actions to further improve aspects of the school's work. Leaders need to urgently establish a school advisory board.
- In the senior school, some of the essential knowledge and skills leaders want pupils to develop have not been identified precisely enough in all areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils have gaps in some of their knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that the essential knowledge and skills they want pupils to develop and when are identified and mapped out across all areas of the curriculum more consistently.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	135995
DfE registration number	870/6016
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10232316
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Deenway Company Limited
Headteacher	Munawar Karim
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,710 to £5,700
Telephone number	01189 574747
Website	www.deenway.org
Email address	enquiries@deenway.org
Date of previous inspection	30 January to 1 February 2018

Information about this school

- For primary-age children, this is a Montessori school, led by Montessori principles and practice, following the training and guidance of the Association Montessori Internationale. From the age of 11, pupils follow a Liberal Arts curriculum.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place from 30 January to 1 February 2018. There have been no monitoring visits since then.
- This is an Islamic school.
- Currently, there are no pupils in the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, staff and pupils about how teaching in these areas of the curriculum builds on pupils' knowledge over time.
- Inspectors also explored other areas of the curriculum through discussions with pupils and a review of their work across the curriculum.
- Inspectors visited the early years during the inspection.
- Inspectors toured the premises.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.

- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included formal meetings with different groups.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Linda Jacobs

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed 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[12].

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.

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

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