

# Inspection of Grantham Farm Montessori School

Inhurst Lane, Baughurst, Tadley, Hampshire RG26 5JS

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Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b> |
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| The quality of education | <b>Good</b> |
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| Behaviour and attitudes | <b>Good</b> |
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| Personal development | <b>Good</b> |
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|---------------------------|-------------|
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b> |
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| Early years provision | <b>Good</b> |
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| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |
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| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | <b>Yes</b> |
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Everyone is welcome and feels included here. Each day, pupils arrive at school keen and enthusiastic. They cannot wait to involve themselves in the wide range of enticing activities that will spark their imagination. Even the youngest two-year-olds in the school's 'Children's House' settle in quickly. Pupils are happy and safe. One parent echoed the thoughts of many by saying: 'This is a wonderful school. There couldn't be a more nurturing environment for children to begin their educational journey in.'

Staff value and care about pupils. They ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), flourish. Pupils are extremely polite and treat others with genuine respect and consideration. Unkindness is never tolerated. Staff deal with any minor upsets swiftly.

Leaders and staff expect the very best of pupils and encourage them to aim high. Pupils love to play and learn in the vibrant classrooms and the extensive garden. They thoroughly enjoy working collaboratively, in pairs or small groups, with their younger and older peers alike. Pupils learn to be curious. They listen carefully to each other and share their ideas clearly and confidently. Pupils truly develop their resilience and independence throughout their time here.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to experience success. They have created a curriculum that ignites pupils' sense of 'awe and wonder' of the world around them. Leaders make sure that the needs of the small number of pupils with SEND are identified carefully. Staff make sure that these pupils get the right support to help them learn well.

Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum prepares pupils for future learning. They have identified the essential knowledge that pupils should learn, starting from early years. Across most subjects, including mathematics and phonics, the curriculum sets out precisely the small steps of knowledge that pupils need to acquire. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not as clearly defined.

Staff are well trained. Consequently, the school's Montessori philosophy is firmly embedded across the provision. Staff create an interesting and stimulating environment which places no limits on what pupils can learn or discover. They encourage and support pupils to develop their ideas independently. Staff make sure that pupils choose activities which help them to build on what they know and remember well. Staff are skilled at knowing when to intervene to address any misconceptions that may arise. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders' focus on developing children's communication and language is impressive. Staff emphasise and model language effectively. This helps pupils to practise and

expand their vocabulary. Staff use songs, rhymes and stories to inspire younger pupils. For instance, two-year-olds delight in listening to stories on their own or as part of a group.

Reading is a top priority. Staff have a strong understanding of the school's phonics approach. As soon as pupils are ready to explore phonics, staff skilfully introduce them to the letters and sounds that they make. Reading books and other resources are well matched to pupils' reading knowledge. Consequently, pupils learn to read fluently and with comprehension.

Pupils are responsible learners. They try hard and persevere in the face of challenges. Pupils relish being able to follow their own interests and work in a way that suits them. They use resources independently and take risks safely. For instance, they learn to use cutlery safely while cutting the carrots they have grown in the vegetable plot.

Pupils' broader development is top class. They develop a good understanding of the cultural diversity around them by learning about different faiths and religions. The proprietor has ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Pupils also learn about the importance of looking after their local environment. For instance, they take part in litter picks in the surrounding community and learn about the importance of recycling and composting.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. All who completed the staff survey are proud to work at the school. They appreciate and praise leaders' efforts to make sure that workloads are manageable.

The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, knows and fulfils their responsibility to meet the independent school standards effectively and that all statutory duties are met. Leaders know well what needs to improve further in the quality of education. However, at times, their actions to check, review and improve some of the aspects of the provision are not precise enough. Leaders are addressing this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils' well-being, welfare and safety are given the highest priority. Appropriate checks are carried out on all adults who work at the school. Staff build strong relationships with parents. They know pupils and their families very well. This helps staff to spot when a pupil is upset about any aspect of their lives. Staff act quickly if any concerns emerge. Leaders follow up on any issues swiftly and sensitively.

Learning to stay safe is an important part of the school's curriculum. For instance, pupils learn to manage risk particularly well, including keeping safe when online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not precisely defined. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects. Leaders need to continue to develop the curriculum further so that it enables pupils to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of all subjects.
- Leaders' actions to review and improve some of the aspects of the provision are not precise enough. This means that some of their actions to improve the provision are not as well-honed as they could be. Leaders need to develop a more rigorous system of improvement planning.

## **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

|  |  |
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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 133964   |
| <b>DfE registration number</b>             | 850/6079   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Hampshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10232307   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Other independent school   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Independent school   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 2 to 7   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 39   |
| <b>Number of part-time pupils</b>          | 29   |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                          | Emma Wetherley   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Emma Wetherley   |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>            | Up to £6,830   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01189815821  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.montessorigranthamfarm.co.uk">www.montessorigranthamfarm.co.uk</a>   |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:emma@montessorigranthamfarm.co.uk">emma@montessorigranthamfarm.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 1 to 3 May 2018  |

## Information about this school

- Grantham Farm Montessori School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from two to seven years. It follows the ethos and teaching methods of Maria Montessori. Most staff, including the headteacher, were at the school at the time of the previous standard inspection in May 2018.
- Pupils are split into two groups. The Children's House caters for children aged two to four and Grantham Farm is for children aged four to seven. Parents of children in The Children's House can opt for part-time arrangements. Once children move to Grantham Farm, they attend on a full-time basis.
- The headteacher is the sole proprietor.
- The school does not use 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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in 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 the school 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 teaching and support staff.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a known adult.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website, toured the school premises, examined policies and associated documentation and spoke to staff to consider if the school meets the independent school standards.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors scrutinised records, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff, health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment. They also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.

- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the additional free-text responses. An inspector talked with some parents on the second day of the inspection.
- The inspection team gathered the views of staff during meetings with them and through their responses to Ofsted's survey.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included a formal meeting with a group of older pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Louise Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Felix Rayner

Ofsted Inspector

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