

# Inspection of The Old School House Montessori Nursery

The Old School House, De Montfort Road, LEWES, East Sussex BN7 1SP

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Inspection date:

7 September 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Requires improvement

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

### The provision is outstanding

Children make exceptional progress at this inspiring nursery. They are highly engaged and have an abundance of confidence. Staff offer each child a warm welcome on arrival and enquire about their well-being. This inclusive practice helps children to feel highly valued and creates an incredibly positive start to their day. The key-person system is strongly embedded, which helps children to feel safe and form superbly close and trusting relationships with staff.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. The highly qualified staff are excellent role models and have high expectations for all children. Children show consideration to their friends and are extremely respectful and kind to each other. For example, one child explained and demonstrated to another the sequencing of traffic lights. The child spoke about how indicators on vehicles show others which way they intend to travel as they played with electronic resources.

Staff plan an extremely well-thought-out environment that allows children to take part in stimulating activities that ignite their curiosity and motivate them to learn. Young children show awe and wonder as they lift logs carefully placed in bark to look for a hungry caterpillar. Older children eagerly discuss if and how a small mouse might eat a large acorn. Children become deeply engrossed in these captivating experiences that develop their imaginations and conversational skills. These activities allow children to develop a positive attitude to their learning and become confident learners.

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

- The provider is inspirational and has a clear and effective vision for the nursery. She has recently introduced further exploration of the nature field beside the nursery. This has enabled all children to discover even more about nature, such as growth and regrowth. Children show fascination as they listen to birds and identify insects such as butterflies and bees.
- The highly qualified staff team has an exceptional knowledge of what children can do and need to learn next. Staff are confident in their own teaching abilities and implement an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. They complete an extensive range of training opportunities to build on their already impressive knowledge. A positive culture of reflective practice enables staff to reflect on what is working well and if any areas need improving to continuously improve practice. Therefore, they have taken highly effective steps to review and improve their practice since the last inspection. Staff share they are extremely happy and feel very well supported in their well-being and professional development.
- Children make exceptional progress with communication, language and literacy.

They are highly focused as they listen attentively to a range of well-planned stories and use an excellent range of resources that support their interests. Staff are particularly skilled in ensuring that all children participate fully. For example, they introduce a theatre and puppets so less-confident children become confident communicators.

- Staff consider what opportunities would best help children to develop their physical skills. For example, young children strengthen their muscles for walking by climbing and exploring apparatus in their base rooms. Older children relish the opportunity to set out their own obstacle course, which challenges their large-muscle skills. They giggle with delight as they try to balance on one leg and jump over low-level bars.
- Children have excellent opportunities to learn about their local community. They walk to the library, visit a local castle when exploring buildings and enjoy extra-curricular activities such as yoga. Children are extremely independent. They self-serve at mealtimes, scrape their plates and pour their own drinks. Staff engage children in conversations about how to promote their health, such as good oral hygiene and physical exercise. Those children requiring a sleep during the day are closely monitored to maintain their safety.
- As children play in the mud kitchen, staff naturally build on their exploration and natural curiosity. When children question the lightness of a petal and heaviness of a stem, staff introduce scales for children to weigh and compare. This provides excellent opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills. Children enjoy arranging flowers and placing them on tables for others to admire. Staff support children in celebrating diversity through food tasting in their pretend café.
- Partnerships with parents are extremely strong. Parents are complimentary about staff and say communication regarding their child's care and development is fantastic. They feel involved in their children's learning and particularly welcome ideas on activities to do at home. This provides excellent continuity of care.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand their responsibility to keep children safe. They can confidently describe the actions they would take should they have any worries about a child's welfare or the conduct or practice of a colleague. Staff clearly understand the procedures to report any concerns and the importance of open communication and reporting any concerns in a timely manner. There are robust recruitment and vetting arrangements in place to help ensure that staff are suitable for their roles. Staff check all areas of the nursery throughout the day to ensure children's safety. Staff are trained in paediatric first aid and are deployed well.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY241373
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10260538
<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>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	48
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	47
<b>Name of registered person</b>	The Old School House Nursery (Lewes) Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP527948
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 480492
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 September 2022

## Information about this early years setting

The Old School House Montessori Nursery registered in 2003. It operates in Lewes, East Sussex. It is open between 8am and 6pm, each weekday, all year round. The setting employs 12 staff, of whom three hold qualified teacher status. One staff member is qualified at level 6, and two hold level 4 qualifications. Four staff hold level 2 and 3 childcare qualifications. The nursery is in receipt of funding for children aged three and four.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Janet Thouless

## Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The provider and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children spoke with the inspector and shared what they like to do when they are at the nursery.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the provider.
- The provider supplied the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.
- The inspector spoke to and read written feedback from parents and took account of their views.

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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