

Pocklington Montessori School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	811/6006
Unique reference number	118137
Inspection number	342464
Inspection dates	17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Age group: 0-7

Published: 02 October 2009

Reference no: 342464

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.¹

This was a light touch inspection, which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Pocklington Montessori School, which is in East Riding, caters for children from birth to seven years of age. The school is part of Beaconhouse Educational Services Limited, whose head office is in Kensington, London. The school opened in September 1992, and currently has 139 part-time children on roll, and 40 full-time pupils. There is pre- and post-school care provision run by the school, together with daily sessions for 'Mini Montys', birth to 2½, and a nursery for those between 2½ to four years of age. The care provision was registered with Ofsted in March of this year and has not yet been inspected. Sixty-two children currently receive nursery education funding. The school follows the Montessori principles, in which it 'aims to protect and nurture the rightful development of the children by promoting their education beyond the realm of the classroom to the community in which they live.' The school's educational provision was previously inspected in March 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Pocklington Montessori School provides a good overall quality of education; some aspects of its provision are outstanding. The curriculum is of good quality, and successfully merges the Montessori principles with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching is always good, and is occasionally outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils clearly enjoy attending school, and show high levels of independence and confidence in all that they do. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The school has maintained its overall good quality provision since its previous inspection. The school meets the all the regulations for independent schools, including all aspects of safeguarding the pupils' health, safety and general welfare.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good overall, including the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school very successfully balances the Montessori principles with the areas of learning required in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The curriculum gives a high emphasis on recognising the uniqueness of each child, their independence, freedom of choice, time and space, and targeted adult guidance. This approach to pupil's learning makes a significant contribution to the good overall progress that they make during their time at the school. The balance of curriculum activities works well across all age groups, and helps to support and develop the children's key literacy and numeracy skills, including their speaking and listening. The development of these skills shows itself in the confident and articulate way in which the children engage in group or whole-class discussions in lessons. The curriculum is enhanced by some off-site activities, such as swimming. By the time the children leave the school, they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment is good overall, although the procedures and processes for assessment are satisfactory. Some teaching, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is outstanding. Lessons are characterised by very secure, safe and open relationships between teachers and pupils. This helps create a working atmosphere in lessons where pupils' achievement is valued and celebrated by the staff. Good use is made of the available lesson time, which helps to keep a good pace to pupils' learning. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, and are helped to develop their speaking and listening skills through well targeted whole-class and individual learning activities. The organisation of pupils' learning is also good, with free access to a range of suitable resources, strategically placed around the classroom. All lessons have a clear sense of purpose and direction, although some of the planning places too much emphasis on content and activities, and not enough on the learning outcomes expected from the pupils. This, in turn, means that teachers do not give enough emphasis in their assessments of the pupils' progress to recording what they have learned, as an aid to future planning and targeting of learning activities that aid even faster progress. Although teachers use praise regularly in lessons, other aspects of the pupils' work, especially written feedback in books about the quality of their work, is underdeveloped.

Children's progress is good overall, and outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the start of statutory schooling, the overwhelming majority of children have achieved above or well above the standards expected for their age. Although the pupils continue to make progress in Years 1 and 2, their overall rate of progress slows down so that standards, while still high, are marginally lower than expected, given their starting point at the beginning of Year 1.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The school provides a very secure learning environment, within which the pupils make good overall progress in their learning; this is making a positive contribution to their independence, self-esteem, self-confidence and, in particular, their attitudes to learning. The development of these personal qualities is helping to prepare the pupils well for the future. Attendance and behaviour are outstanding, and exemplifies the very high levels of enjoyment shown by the pupils when in school. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes also show very high levels of enjoyment, and achieve well in all areas of learning. Staff work very well with the pupils, encouraging them to participate and engage in discussions, both in and out of lessons; this is helping the pupils to appreciate their personal successes and also encourages a high level of participation from them in all aspects of life at school. The pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong, and are helped by the very supportive relationships with all adults who work in the school. The school actively encourages the pupils to appreciate their own school community, and that of life outside of school. However, this has yet to include a more comprehensive coverage of different faiths and cultures regionally, nationally and globally.

Safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety

The school's measures to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of its pupils, including child protection, is good. In other aspects of the school's work, including ensuring the suitability of adults to work with the pupils, the school meets all regulations. Staff are very aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, with the level of supervision very effective throughout the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff work very effectively together to plan activities that are safe when the children work individually or in groups. The children are always well cared for and kept safe through the good levels of supervision. There is a range of adequate and relevant school policies relating to the health and safety of the pupils when in school or during off-site visits to local places of interest or sporting facilities. There are very good opportunities within the curriculum for the pupils to participate in regular exercise and eat healthily. The safety checks on fire fighting equipment and fire safety comply fully with the regulations. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has a three- year accessibility plan.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The provision, which combines the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage with Montessori principles of learning, is effective in meeting the individual needs of all the children. The success of this work is down to the efforts of all staff, including senior leaders and managers who help to ensure that all regulations for the Early

Years Foundation Stage are met in full. Overall, therefore, leadership and management are good. Children are well supported and encouraged to develop their independence and self-confidence when working alone or with others. The staff expertly facilitate well organised and well planned lessons, within which the children are able to move and access an outstanding range of learning resources. However, even though there is detailed recording of the children's work and personal achievements, assessment procedures lack the level of detail that pinpoints accurately the learning outcomes achieved by the children, and which can then be used to inform future planning. Despite this, the children achieve outstanding results by the time they reach the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The recently registered provision for the under threes is also well planned, and provides very effective early learning experiences for the children prior to them starting in the Nursery.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005²

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Ensure that it develops assessment procedures across the whole school, including for the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that teachers more accurately record pupils' progress, and then regularly use this information to inform future planning and provision.
- Develop the curricular provision so that all pupils learn to appreciate and understand about different faiths and cultures within the region in which the school is located, and also nationally and globally.

² www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	√			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	√			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	√			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	√			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	√			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?	√			
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?	√			
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?	√			
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?	√			

School details

Name of school	Pocklington Montessori School		
DCSF number	811/6006		
Unique reference number	118137		
Type of school	Montessori		
Status	Independent day school		
Date school opened	September 1992		
Age range of pupils	0 to 7 years of age		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 12	Girls: 28	Total: 40
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 57	Girls: 82	Total: 139
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 44	Girls: 39	Total: 83
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5,683.86		
Session fees (childcare)	£ 14.00 or £19.00		
Address of school	Bielby Lane Pocklington York YO42 1NT		
Telephone number	01759 305436		
Fax number	01759 305436		
Email address	principal@pocklingtonmontessori.com		
Headteacher	Mrs T Slack		
Proprietor	Beaconhouse Educational Services Ltd		
Reporting Inspector	Brian Blake HMI		
Dates of inspection	17 September 2009		