

Henley-in-Arden Montessori Primary School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	937/6106
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135418
URN for registered childcare	EY 200679
Inspection number	386831
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Henley-in-Arden Montessori Primary school is situated in the village of Henley-in-Arden, near to Stratford-upon-Avon. The school has recently grown in size and now incorporates Merrydays Montessori Nursery on the same site. It admits boys and girls from two to 11 years of age. There are currently 73 pupils on roll, 64 of whom are in the Early Years Foundation Stage with 47 in receipt of nursery education funding. The school was originally founded in 1958 and was acquired, in 2000, by the current headteacher, who is also the proprietor. Pupils who attend the school are mostly from White British families and a small number are from White European, Chinese and Indian families. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs. The school aims are in keeping with the Montessori philosophy, 'learning the correct answers will get a child through school, but learning how to learn is a preparation for life.' The school has a registered provision for two to three year olds which was included as part of this inspection. The school was last inspected in 2008 when the childcare provision was also inspected.

Evaluation of the school

Henley-in-Arden Montessori Primary School provides a good quality of education for the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage for children aged from three to five years. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding as is the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel safe in the school's nurturing environment, the provision for their welfare, health and safety is good and safeguarding requirements are fully met. The overall effectiveness of the registered provision for two and three year olds is good. The school meets all of the requirements for registration and has acted well on the recommendations of the last report.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. The school is very successful in meeting its stated aims. Parents and carers typically comment, 'My child has matured greatly and has developed a love of learning.' The good curriculum is based on Montessori principles and takes account of National Curriculum expectations. Schemes of work are detailed and provide clear learning pathways to ensure that pupils experience a broad and balanced range of subjects. Pupils have daily opportunities to learn through practical activities and are encouraged to develop their independence at an early age. The curriculum is enhanced by lessons in French and dance, taught by specialist teachers. Parents and carers report that they are pleased with the range of activities in the curriculum but would appreciate more sporting activities. The inspection team agrees with these views. Since the last inspection, the school has fully developed the Forest School curriculum and pupils benefit from weekly visits to a local wooded area to explore the outdoors. Artwork in Key Stages 1 and 2 is a strength, and pupils enjoy studying modern artists such as Eric Carle and making sculptures using a range of different materials. Pupils identified as having disabilities or with special educational needs are well supported by the curriculum. Staff know their pupils very well and tailor learning experiences to meet their individual needs.

The provision for basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is good and is given a high priority across the school. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve standards that are above expectations for their age, particularly in reading. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well integrated into all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and their personal development is outstanding. Pupils contribute fully to the school community through taking responsibility for collecting resources and tidying away their own activities.

The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good as it is tailored to the needs of young children. There is an effective balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities which covers all the areas of learning in both indoor and outdoor activities. Resources are of good quality and appropriate to the needs and interests of young children. For example, during the inspection, children were observed enjoying dancing with coloured ribbons while joining in with a rainbow song.

The quality of teaching and assessment across the school is good. Teachers have high expectations and a good knowledge of the Montessori curriculum. They initiate learning and guide pupils as they move through their individual work programmes, carefully introducing new skills through modelling. Pupils complete tasks at their own pace and teachers keep a close eye on how well they are progressing through observation and questioning. Relationships in lessons are positive and teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' personal skills such as cooperation, respect and consideration for others. Reading skills such as phonics (the sounds that letters make), grammar and punctuation, and mathematical skills are systematically taught. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing their basic skills. The

Montessori curriculum ensures that pupils are given many opportunities to make links between different subjects and to apply their problem-solving skills.

There are well-structured systems in place for tracking pupils' progress. The school tracks how well individual pupils are progressing against their Montessori learning targets and supplements this information with standardised reading tests and National Curriculum expectations. Although teachers have a good understanding of how well individual pupils are progressing, assessment records do not provide a clear summary of how well pupils have progressed over time. Pupils' work is regularly marked with positive comments. In the best examples, pupils are provided with written guidance to help them improve further.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the high adult ratios and good continuous assessment, enable staff to know children very well and understand their needs. Adults promote speaking and listening effectively by engaging children in play and by asking open-ended questions. Good quality teaching and interesting activities ensure that children make good progress.

Attainment on entry to the nursery class is broadly in line with expectations for this age. Good teaching both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across the school, alongside caring support and guidance contribute to pupils' good progress. Those pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. This is because the very small class sizes enable teachers to get to know their pupils very well and anyone at risk of falling behind is quickly identified and provided with support. In addition, links with outside agencies to support pupils with specific needs are good. Parents and carers comment positively on the progress their children are making, not only in their academic development but also in their confidence, independence and self-esteem.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. From an early age pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy all aspects of school life. Their behaviour is outstanding, as seen in the respect they have for themselves, others and in how they look after their learning resources. Pupils are polite, courteous and get on very well together. Pupils visit the local church and appreciate cultural diversity through learning about different countries around the world. Pupils particularly enjoy joining in different faith and cultural celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. However, the school is aware that pupils would benefit from meeting a wider range of people from different backgrounds to themselves. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on their learning in lessons and further develop their sense of spirituality through an appreciation of nature, art and music in lessons. All the pupils who responded to the questionnaire reported that they enjoy coming to school and as a result attendance is above average. Pupils are developing a strong sense of community responsibility as they undertake jobs such as helping to get ready for lunch, helping younger pupils during snack time or keeping the school resources tidy. The personal, social and health education curriculum ensures that

pupils have a good understanding of being a good citizen and the role of public organisations in England. The good progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, alongside their excellent personal skills, ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of all pupils is good. The school provides a calm and nurturing environment. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety are robust and all the required policies are implemented effectively. Detailed attention is given to health and safety through regular checks on electrical equipment, daily site checks and suitable risk assessments for off-site visits. Staff supervise the pupils vigilantly during lessons and when playing outside. There is a good fire risk policy and fire evacuations are carried out regularly. Good procedures for first aid are in place and all staff are appropriately trained, including those responsible for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The designated person for child protection has undertaken appropriate training and all staff receive regular updates and training. All parents who completed the questionnaire report that the school keeps their child safe. Pupils are very positive about their school and each other. They report that the teachers are easy to talk to and they are confident any concerns they have would be sorted out quickly. The school encourages pupils to stay healthy and nutritious snacks and drinks are provided throughout the day. However, despite the school's best efforts, high fat snacks remain popular lunchbox choices. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and strong personal skills make a positive contribution to their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The school has devised a three-year accessibility plan, which ensures it fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school complies fully with the regulations in respect of the checks made on prospective employees, including Criminal Records Bureau checks on their suitability to work with children. The details of these checks, together with those made on the existing staff and the proprietor, are accurately recorded in the required single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is located in the Memorial Hall, a community venue in the centre of Henley-in-Arden. The accommodation consists of a large hall and stage area, three small classrooms and two outside play areas. The school is the sole user of the Memorial Hall during the school day and equipment is safely stored away at the end of each session. The school's premises are safe and secure, well maintained and the accommodation is suitable for the number and age of the children currently on roll. A small garden area with climbing equipment and a hard-surfaced playground are creatively used by staff to ensure that all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have a safe place to play and learn outside.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided for parents and carers of current pupils, prospective pupils and others. Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress through annual written reports, informal meetings and telephone discussions. A very few parents and carers reported that they would appreciate more information about their child's progress. The annual reports include an appropriate summary of pupils' academic progress and personal development.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clear and fair complaints procedure which meets all of the requirements of the regulations.

Registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

The overall effectiveness of the provision for children aged from birth to three years is good. Outcomes, teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management are all good. Children's personal development and their behaviour is outstanding and they are encouraged to develop their independence. Individual needs are well met because all staff, not only the key person, have a good understanding of their developmental needs and know the children well. Children eat and drink healthily and develop good hygiene routines. They contribute to the running of the nursery by collecting their own activities, tidying up and helping themselves to a healthy snack and drink. Inclusive practices and equal opportunities are well promoted. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed learning simple Makaton (sign language) words and phrases. The learning environment is generous in size and children have plenty of room to move around and access the outdoor areas with relative ease. The curriculum and teaching are good. Montessori-based activities and resources are appropriate for the developmental needs of young children and staff are adept at encouraging children to explore their own ideas. Staff work closely with parents and carers and relationships are positive. Good leadership and management ensure that there is close teamwork between all adults and planning and assessment are thorough. As a result, children make good progress in their learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure that assessment records are clearly summarised to indicate how much progress individual pupils are making over time
- provide more opportunities for pupils to meet other people who come from different backgrounds to themselves.

Inspection judgements

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 registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Montessori Nursery and Primary		
Date school opened	1958		
Age range of pupils	2–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 3	Total: 9
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 18	Girls: 14	Total: 32
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 15	Girls: 17	Total: 32
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,234.46		
Annual fees (childcare)	£25.50 per day		
Address of school	The Memorial Hall Station Road Henley-in-Arden B95 5JP		
Telephone number	01564 792427		
Email address	helen.everley@henleymontessori.co.uk		
Headteacher	Helen Everley		
Proprietor	Helen Everley		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Henley-in-Arden Montessori Primary School Henley-in-Arden, B95 5JP

Thank you for the warm welcome and help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you about your school and visiting your lessons. Thank you to those pupils who completed the questionnaire. You told us that you are very happy at school, that you feel safe and that behaviour is usually very good, except for the occasional bit of silliness. We could see that you all get on really well together, your behaviour is outstanding and you learn how to look after yourselves and care for others from a very young age. This is called your personal development and we think it is outstanding. Well done. Your teachers know you all very well and expect you to work hard. You make good progress in your reading, writing and mathematics. We could see that you know a lot about how to keep healthy and enjoy your Forest School lessons a good deal. We also noticed that sometimes your lunchboxes contained a lot of treats which are not always healthy.

We found that your school is a good school. To make your school even better we have asked your headteacher and staff to make sure that they keep a close eye on how well you are all progressing in your learning over time and provide you with more opportunities to meet other children and people from different backgrounds to yourselves.

You can all help your school by making sure you keep attending every day and by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker
Her Majesty's Inspector