

# Brighton and Hove Montessori School

Independent school inspection report

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Unique Reference Number (URN)	133348
URN for registered childcare	EY345611
Inspection number	348769
Inspection dates	29 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy 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<sup>1</sup>, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of registered provision<sup>3</sup> was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.<sup>4</sup>

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

## Information about the school

Brighton and Hove Montessori School is an independent, non-selective, day school for boys and girls aged between two and 11 years. Opened in 1985, it is located in two buildings; a community hall and several rooms in a house. An after-school club caters for children from the school and for some local children, aged three to 11 years.

The aims of the school are 'to create and continually develop a learning community where respect for oneself, respect for others and respect for the environment is a reality'; for the individual child, the school aims to 'develop a sound academic base and learning skills for life'. On the last inspection, it met all but one of the independent school regulations. Since then it has faced a number of challenges, both administrative and financial. At the time of the inspection, there were 60 children between the ages of two and seven years attending full- or part-time, with the very large majority of these being in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Forty-four children are funded under the Nursery funding scheme.

The school was last inspected in October 2007 and the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery provision was inspected in April 2007.

## Evaluation of the school

Brighton and Hove Montessori School provides a satisfactory quality of education both in the school and the Nursery. Curricular provision and teaching are satisfactory, although teaching is not consistently well informed by assessment. Children make satisfactory progress overall and their spiritual, moral, social and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga\\_20060021\\_en\\_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49)

cultural development is satisfactory. The educational aims of the school are appropriately met. However, the school has not adequately addressed all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, and arrangements for safeguarding, particularly with regard to arrangements for staff training on child protection, are inadequate. As a result, provision for welfare, health and safety is inadequate and the overall effectiveness, including the leadership and management, of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. The school does not fully comply with requirements with regard to the checking of all staff on appointment and there is one unmet regulation with regard to fire safety. Overall, the school does not meet a number of regulatory requirements relating to independent schools and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Quality of education

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. For school-age pupils, the curriculum combines key elements of the National Curriculum with the Montessori curriculum to create a satisfactory breadth of provision. It includes appropriate opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology independently and for them to develop their physical skills, both areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. Self-directed learning is at the heart of the school's approach, but careful daily mapping of chosen and directed activities ensures that no aspect of the curriculum is neglected and boys and girls benefit from a range of different experiences. They learn about the world and its history through individually planned tasks. However, the school recognises that links with other schools, areas and countries are relatively underdeveloped and has plans to address this in the next academic year.

The school provides children with many different experiences, including going to the neighbouring park on a frequent basis, which they evidently enjoy. Curricular opportunities for school-age pupils and older children from the Nursery have included a trip to the seashore to look at rock pools as part of research into pre-historic life. This research has resulted in a 'newly discovered' dinosaur called a Montessosorus!

Teaching is satisfactory and supports children's progress, which is satisfactory overall. They make good progress in areas which particularly interest them. For example, a phonics session (linking letters and sounds) was welcomed with glee by two children for whom finding and matching sounds was clearly a very enjoyable activity. Strengths exist in the relationships between staff and children and in the development of skills such as independent self-help and cooperation. However, the necessary monitoring and planning to ensure that these choices actively extend learning are not always evident.

The use of assessment is an area of relative weakness. Target setting and tracking of progress were areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and the school acknowledges that it has yet to address them fully. Teachers and support staff know boys and girls very well and good use is made of this to encourage their learning. Sensitive acknowledgement of the individual requirements of children with special educational needs ensures that they are fully involved and make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. However, too much reliance is placed upon teachers'

knowledge of children, rather than a more formal ongoing evaluation, to measure objectively how well they are doing. Baseline assessments of the children on entry to the school are not used consistently and long-term targets are not used well to monitor and track progress over time. This means that, in some sessions, activities are not pitched at exactly the right level to ensure individual progress. Teachers' recording and reporting sometimes focuses too much on what children have done, rather what they have learned, so that it is not always clear that an activity is building on prior learning.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. All age groups clearly enjoy school and, from the very early stages, show an increasing willingness to engage with others and to try new things. 'I love this school. It is brilliant,' said one boy. The majority of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, or who spoke to inspectors, said they, too, were happy with the school and their children's enjoyment of it. Children gradually learn the difference between right and wrong and begin to consider the effect their actions may have on other people. They develop a growing awareness of other people's lives and cultures and work well with others from different backgrounds within a harmonious atmosphere. They respond well to the opportunity to try new experiences and join in enthusiastically in music making and singing, where a spiritual element emerges. Children are keen to come to school and although attendance last year was low, this was mainly a result of families spending time abroad.

Children demonstrate good knowledge of local services and public institutions following recent educational visits, such as the one to Brighton's Royal Pavilion. They have enjoyed creating a cupcake bakery and all are developing a keen approach to gardening. Younger ones are avid collectors and re-locators of snails, and outside areas are kept clear by assiduous brushing. In these ways, boys and girls develop both independence and social skills and learn how to contribute to the school community.

Behaviour is generally satisfactory, and often good. Some skilful teaching ensures that all participate equally in group sessions. However, this is not consistent and teachers often respond first to the most verbal or demanding children. This means that others miss opportunities to contribute and the more demanding dominate, and occasionally disrupt, group learning.

## Safeguarding children's welfare, health and safety

The school makes inadequate provision for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the children. Some arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding requirements are met have been neglected. Staff, particularly the headteacher as named child protection officer, have not kept up to date with the required training in child protection. This was an unmet regulation at the last inspection which has not been

adequately addressed. Although, during the course of the inspection, the school clarified with the Home Office a member of staff's right to work in the United Kingdom, this had not been checked before. Arrangements for the evacuation in case of fire are sound and well practised. However, fire records do not show whether identified equipment problems have been addressed and electrical equipment has not all been checked as required. Other arrangements for emergencies are secure, and appropriate procedures have been put in place for first aid, including certificated training of staff. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are safe in and around the different areas of the school and when walking outside, making very good use of the 'rope bus'. Visits to school before starting their education enable children to settle quickly, develop confidence rapidly, and to feel safe and secure and enjoy their first experiences of school.

The well-laid out church hall and classrooms enhance children's feeling of security. In the nursery provision, based in the church hall, the outdoor area is used well in one class but facilities for the second class are limited to its use only for break times. However, the school makes very good use of the nearby park for physical development. Children benefit from sociable lunchtimes, when they enjoy their own lunches and demonstrate a good approach to healthy eating. In conjunction with the parent-teacher association, the school is taking action to improve the outdoor environment further. There is an adequate plan in place showing how the school intends to improve facilities for adults and children with disabilities. It meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Due to the shortcomings in safeguarding arrangements, which it shares with the rest of the school, the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. However, the provision made for children's learning and development is satisfactory with satisfactory outcomes overall. The provision for under-threes meets the requirements of the Early Years Register. The curriculum, for both the under- and over-three-year-olds, provides a good range of activities and experiences which effectively promote their learning. As a result, children enjoy the activities on offer and make satisfactory progress. Children's speaking, listening and reasoning skills are well developed, including among the very young two-year-old group. However, for this group, staff do not give sufficiently clear guidance and, as some children do not know the rules and routines yet, they waste time following the staff. This slows their learning.

Teaching is satisfactory. Staff create a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment in which children enjoy learning. Small numbers in each group help staff to match work to children's needs appropriately. Daily assessments of children's progress are effectively used for weekly and medium-term planning. This is effective in ensuring that children continue to make progress. However, systems to track and set targets for children's long-term progress are not sufficiently robust to ensure that all children make the best possible progress.

The children's personal development is good. They are confident and use their well-developed language skills to explain their work. For example, two boys happily explained that, 'We are making a fish tank. This is going to be a present for our mums, but it is secret.' Children learn to adopt healthy lifestyles; they eat healthy snacks provided in the classrooms and have plenty of exercise. Secure procedures are in place for children's day-to-day care but arrangements for ensuring the longer-term safeguarding of the children have been compromised by the lack of attention to child protection training for staff.

Links with parents and carers are good. Staff involve parents effectively in their children's learning through providing information about the curriculum. Termly meetings with parents and a written report at the end of the year keep parents informed about their children's progress.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. Although the provision runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, there are weaknesses with regard to the fulfilment of statutory duties. This is evident in the lapses in safeguarding arrangements as well as a lack of full adherence to the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum and teaching (standard 1) and must:

- establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and make use of information from such assessment to plan teaching (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- implement its written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (DCSF-04217-2006) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- maintain clear and comprehensive records of checks made in order to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 3(5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- for each member of staff in post on or after 1 May 2007, ensure that a check was made of, and the single central register of staff correctly shows, their right to work in the UK (and the date this check was completed) (paragraphs 4(2)(a), 4C(2) and 4C(3)).

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the school must:

- implement procedures to track and assess children's progress against assessment scales

and in relation to the in-school and after school provision for nought to three-year-olds, and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, the school must:

- implement an effective safeguarding children policy and procedure
- ensure that all members of staff are trained in safeguarding every three years
- ensure that the practitioner designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the setting and liaising with local statutory children's services agencies attends a child protection training course every two years.

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	Brighton and Hove Montessori School		
DCSF number	846/6023		
Unique Reference Number (URN)	133348		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY345611		
Type of school	Montessori Primary and Nursery School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2001		
Age range of pupils	2–7 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 1	Total: 5
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 28	Girls: 32	Total: 60
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 5	Girls: 8	Total: 13
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 6,060		
Annual fees (childcare)	£ 2,985		
Address of school	67 Stanford Avenue Brighton BN1 6FB		
Telephone number	01273 702485		
Fax number	01273 702485		
Email address	brightonmontessori@ntlworld.com		
Headteacher	Daisy Cockburn		
Proprietor	Daisy Cockburn		
Reporting inspector	Anne Duffy HMI		
Dates of inspection	29 June 2010		