

Inspection of Storybook Montessori

Memorial House, High Street, Ascot SL5 7JH

Inspection date: 12 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Confident children enter the nursery and part from their parents with ease. They are greeted by smiling staff who chat calmly with them and ask them how they are. Children know the routine well. They place their belongings on their pegs and quickly settle into their chosen activities. For instance, babies explore the space around them as they learn to crawl, accessing items that stimulate their curiosity. Children show great interest in the woodwork area and are keen to have a go. They show good perseverance skills as they hammer nails into a piece of wood. Children in the pre-school room are well prepared for the transition to school. For example, they use sandpaper letters to help them form their letters correctly.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills. They regularly play outdoors and enjoy climbing, running and jumping. Children concentrate well as they lift small planks of wood and rest these across tyres. They then walk carefully across them, holding their arms out wide to help them balance.

Children behave well. Clear expectations and an ethos of caring for one another help to encourage positive behaviour. Staff are positive role models and explain expectations, such as using good manners, sharing and taking turns. Tasks, such as setting the table for mealtimes, are given to 'special helpers'. This aids children's self-esteem as they have a feeling of responsibility and importance.

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

- Staff provide a curriculum that combines the Montessori ethos as well as children's interests, to promote a wide variety of engaging learning activities. Overall, staff are clear in their learning intentions. For example, children excitedly learn about different countries and continents as they explore a map of the world. However, at times, what is being taught is too difficult for some children and they find it hard to listen and attend. This does not meet the learning needs of all children.
- Staff morale is high. Leaders give staff well-being a high priority. They ensure that staff's workload is manageable. Staff are supported through coaching, supervisions and access to training, so that they are able to improve their practice. However, these processes are not robust enough to identify and improve upon specific weaknesses in teaching. This results in some inconsistencies in practice across the nursery.
- Partnerships with parents are very good. Staff work closely with parents to get to know their children and to share information about their children's day at nursery. Parents say that they are extremely happy with the care that their children receive. They know what their children are learning from daily contact with staff and from an online app.

- Children celebrate different faiths and cultures in the nursery. For example, staff wear traditional outfits when teaching about Eid. Children enjoy tasting traditional foods and finding out about the similarities and differences between themselves and others.
- Children have good opportunities to learn about their community and the world around them. For instance, staff take them on buses and trains to local places to build on the experiences that children have already had. Older children enjoy forest-school sessions, where they explore the natural environment and learn new skills. This helps them to learn about the natural world.
- The nursery chef provides children with freshly cooked, homemade meals. Mealtimes are social occasions, and children's independence is supported well by staff. For example, children pour their own water and scrape their plates when they have finished their lunch.
- The management team makes timely referrals to external professionals to ensure that children receive the support they need. Staff provide targeted interventions to help close gaps in children's communication skills. For instance, children play 'what's in the box'. Staff encourage children to name simple words and learn the matching Makaton sign.
- Staff encourage children's communication and language skills well. They help children to learn new words to build their vocabulary. For instance, as children mix ingredients to make cookies, staff introduce words such as 'vanilla essence' and 'sticky'.
- Staff value children's views and accommodate their ideas when making improvements to the setting. For example, the 'children's committee' gives them the opportunity to choose activities and resources. This helps to ensure that they are well motivated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff complete safeguarding training frequently to ensure that their knowledge is current. All staff are confident and have a good understanding of how to safeguard children. They know how to follow safeguarding procedures should they have concerns about a child in their care. This includes whistle-blowing against any inappropriate actions or behaviour of a colleague. Daily checks and risk assessments are carried out to identify and remove any hazards, to help to ensure that the environment is safe for children to play in. There are robust recruitment procedures in place to ensure that all staff are suitable.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- focus the intent of activities more closely on what children need to learn next

- develop further the supervision sessions for staff to better support them in raising their practice to a higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY484779
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10288921
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	90
Number of children on roll	113
Name of registered person	Storybook Montessori Ascot Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP534243
Telephone number	01 344 798 600
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2017

Information about this early years setting

Storybook Montessori registered in June 2015. It is open all year round, Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. The nursery follows the Montessori approach. The provider employs 26 members of staff, 13 of whom hold appropriate qualifications at level 2 and above. The setting offers funded places for children aged three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Sarah Richards

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed their curriculum and what it is that they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- Parents provided the inspector with verbal feedback.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.

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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