

Inspection of The Montessori Place

45 Cromwell Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 3ER

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 July 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

This remarkable place provides an inspirational, safe and nurturing environment in which pupils flourish. They are extremely polite and treat others with genuine respect and consideration. Pupils are exceptionally happy and feel a strong sense of belonging here. As they progress through the school, pupils demonstrate their resilience, independence and sense of personal responsibility superbly.

The school sets exceptionally high expectations of learning and behaviour, and pupils consistently rise to meet these. Expert staff know pupils amazingly well. They have a compelling ambition and determination that pupils will benefit from an extensive and rich learning experience, and they do. Pupils attend extremely well and achieve very high academic standards. Consequently, pupils are prepared very effectively for all that the future brings.

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is impressive. From the moment the youngest children join the 'Infant Community', they are fully immersed in all that the school has to offer. A wide array of captivating activities sparks pupils' imagination and natural curiosity about the world around them. They thoroughly enjoy working collaboratively, in pairs or small groups, with younger and older pupils alike. Pupils listen carefully to each other and share their ideas clearly and confidently.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school provides an excellent education for pupils. It ensures that pupils experience a highly ambitious curriculum that ignites pupils' sense of 'awe and wonder' of the world they inhabit. This allows pupils to follow their own interests and talents, while ensuring that the essential knowledge and key skills are taught across a range of subjects. This highly personalised approach for each pupil means that disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit exceptionally well. Staff accurately identify pupils' additional needs and make suitable and highly skilful adaptations. Where needed, the school also works well with families and external agencies to ensure the right support is provided. Consequently, pupils excel in all areas of their learning and achieve very well.

The school's teaching approach is shaped by Maria Montessori's philosophy, with a strong focus on independence and self-initiated learning. As a result, the school has very thoughtfully designed an interesting and stimulating environment which places no limits on what pupils can learn or discover. Right from the start, staff encourage and support children, including the two-year-olds, to develop their ideas with autonomy. As a result, children soon recognise how important their own choices and actions are in shaping their learning journey. They show remarkably high levels of engagement with their learning.

Similarly, pupils in both the 'elementary' and 'young people's' communities achieve highly as they move through the school's unique curriculum. Older pupils study a

wide range of A levels tailored to their individual talents and aspirations.

Staff, known as 'guides', are experts in the school's curriculum. They understand how pupils learn. Staff use their excellent subject knowledge to bring pupils' learning to life skilfully. In all phases, they carefully model learning before expecting pupils to use and apply the concepts taught deliberately. There is a meticulous approach to assessment. There are very well-thought-out systems to check how well pupils are learning. Staff are skilled at knowing when to intervene to address any misconceptions that may arise. As a result of the curriculum being implemented consistently well, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Reading is central to the school's work. Its focus on building children's communication and language is striking. Staff emphasise and continually model appropriate language and vocabulary extremely well. This helps children learn, practise and broaden the language they use. Staff use songs, rhymes and stories to engage and inspire children. Through sound awareness, children learn to value the written word and develop their awareness of the sounds letters make at a 'natural pace'. Reading books and other resources are matched to each pupil's place in the school's bespoke reading curriculum. The individual approach to pupils' learning means that any additional support needed is identified and quickly put in place. Consequently, pupils learn to read fluently and with comprehension.

Pupils' excellent attitudes towards their school and others begin in the early years. Here, children demonstrate high levels of respect and consideration. They learn to share resources, take turns and play amicably alongside their older peers. Further up the school, pupils told inspectors that unkindness is incredibly rare. This is because pupils value and understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own and each other's behaviour and how this contributes to this inclusive community.

The school's work to promote pupils' character is exceptional. Pupils have an excellent understanding of their role and responsibilities as citizens. For instance, older pupils work in the school's kitchen and relish cooking meals for their peers using the herbs and vegetables they grow. Pupils develop a deep appreciation of topics such as conservation as they care for the school's extensive woodland area. They engage in environmental stewardship by caring for the on-site beehives. Pupils harvest and sell the honey produced. Through this hands-on experience, they learn about pollination, sustainability and responsibility. This gives pupils valuable insights into enterprise and community engagement. Older pupils delightfully rehearse for the musical production of 'Mamma Mia'. Pupils told inspectors about how they had designed and built the set, raising funds to support their production, which they were excited to share with their friends and families. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They are taught how to stay safe online and understand what factors contribute to a positive relationship.

Pupils benefit from excellent careers advice and guidance, which helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps, the different career pathways and

future study options available.

There is a tangible sense of teamwork among staff, reflected in the highly supportive atmosphere in the school. Importantly, the proprietor body, which consists of three co-directors, continues to work as an effective group. It has a very clear vision for the school, shared by all staff. Together with its talented staff, the proprietor body ensures that the school meets the independent school standards, including the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 securely.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	136947
DfE registration number	846/6018
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10375000
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	1 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	13
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	The Montessori Place Limited
Chair	Robert Gueterbock
Headteacher	Robert Gueterbock
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,549 to £22,866
Telephone number	01273 773 764
Website	themontessoriplace.org.uk
Email address	info@themontessoriplace.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 July 2022

Information about this school

- This is a Montessori school, led by Montessori principles and practice, following the training and guidance of the Association Montessori Internationale.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in July 2022.
- The school is governed by a board of three directors who are also the directors of the proprietor company. Each director plays a full role in teaching at the school.
- The school operates across two sites:
 - 45 Cromwell Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 3ER.
 - Eason's Green, Framfield, TN22 5RE.
- There are three communities at the site in Hove. The 'Infant Community' caters for children up to the age of three. The provision for two-year-olds was part of this inspection. The provision for under two-year-olds is registered and inspected separately. It was not part of this inspection. The 'Children's House' at Hove caters for children aged three to six and the 'Elementary Community' at Hove is for pupils aged six to 12.
- The school's other site, Eason's Green in Framfield, also has a 'Children's House' and an 'Elementary Community'. In addition, a 'Young People's Community' caters for ages 12 to 19.
- The school's boarding provision currently accommodates up to 53 pupils. The boarding provision was not part of this inspection.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and teaching and support staff. They had a meeting with the chair of the board of directors and two other directors. The lead inspector also held a remote meeting with a representative from East Sussex local authority.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and personal, social and health education. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking to leaders, teachers (known as guides) and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils' knowledge over time. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a known adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website and toured the premises on both sites of the school. They also checked a range of policies and documents regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspection team took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life. They also considered the responses to the confidential pupil survey.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jo Brinkley	His Majesty's Inspector
Lucy English	His Majesty's Inspector

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