

Inspection of The Itchen Valley Montessori

Itchen Abbas Village Hall, Main Road, Itchen Abbas, Winchester, Hampshire SO21
1BQ

Inspection date: 8 December 2021

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and settled at the nursery. Staff are kind and welcoming to children and treat them with care and respect. Children quickly form secure attachments with staff. This helps them to feel safe and confident to explore their surroundings and enjoy their learning.

Children's behaviour is very good. They listen and respond to adults positively throughout the day. Children demonstrate good manners and know about the rules and boundaries of the nursery. Children receive an abundance of encouragement and praise for their achievements, such as when they independently wash their hands and find their photo at the start of the day. This helps to boost their growing self-esteem. Children play happily together and develop good friendships with their peers.

Children like being healthy and active. They enjoy spending time outdoors, which supports their health and well-being. Children enjoy nutritious food at snack times, and talk to staff about their favourite fruits and vegetables.

Children develop creativity and imagination. For example, they pour oats, rice and lentils into bowls, stirring, scooping and transferring the mixture in the outside kitchen area. They recall events and use their memory skills as they tell staff about the recipes they need to bake cakes for the birds in the garden.

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

- The well qualified staff use their knowledge and understanding of Montessori teaching and the early years foundation stage to help them implement a fun but challenging curriculum. Children are well prepared for the next stages of their learning. However, staff do not always identify when some quieter and less confident children need more support to help them to fully engage in the activities on offer.
- Children's early literacy skills are well supported throughout the nursery. Children listen intently as staff read familiar stories. They make marks and begin to write their names in Christmas cards. Younger children have opportunities to scoop sand and explore rolling, pushing and poking play dough, which helps strengthen the muscles in their fingers and hands. These skills help children with later learning, such as reading and writing.
- The manager carries out staff observations and meets with staff regularly to help improve their practice. Staff have the opportunity to attend training online. The manager is aspirational for her staff and the setting. She and the provider regularly reflect on improvements they can make to enhance the opportunities available to staff and children.

- Children, including those in receipt of additional funding, develop well in all areas of learning. They enjoy a range of experiences that supports their physical skills. They ride bicycles, climb and jump from obstacles, such as cable reels, and make marks outside on large blackboards with chalk.
- Staff provide children with a variety of activities which they are eager to join in with. Overall, staff deliver good interactions with children, who make steady progress from their starting points. However, during some learning experiences staff do not recognise when to adapt activities or their teaching to extend children's learning even further.
- Children are curious learners. They use technology to record themselves singing their favourite nursery rhymes and laugh when they play the recordings back to each other. Children spend time shining torches up at the ceiling, moving the light to create patterns. This helps to create a sense of awe and wonder and develop children's growing awareness of cause and effect.
- Parents are eager to share their compliments and positive experiences about the setting. They value and praise the high standards set by the staff. Parents say that even though they have been unable to enter the premises, due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, their children cannot wait to enter the setting each day.
- Children enjoy playing in a safe and secure environment. Staff check the premises daily to ensure resources and equipment are safe for children to use. Staff support children effectively to understand risk. For instance, children know that when riding scooters they must stop safely without crashing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are knowledgeable about child protection matters and understand how to keep children safe. They receive up to date training and can accurately identify the possible signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child, including for wider safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Staff work well with statutory agencies to ensure children's welfare is promoted and they are kept safe. Safeguarding matters are discussed during supervision and staff meetings. The manager follows effective recruitment and supervision procedures to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide further support to quieter and less confident children to enable them to fully engage in their learning
- adapt and extend teaching and activities to consistently consider the abilities of

all children and ensure they are offered sufficient challenge.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY347979
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10108644
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	37
Name of registered person	Butler Butcher Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP909260
Telephone number	01730 829377
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2015

Information about this early years setting

The Itchen Valley Montessori registered in 2007. It operates from the village hall in Itchen Abbas, near Winchester. The nursery is open each weekday during school term times. Sessions vary throughout the week, between 8am to 3pm each day. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three, and four. Five staff work with the children, four of whom hold relevant qualifications between level 3 and level 6. The manager holds a relevant degree and Montessori training. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy of teaching.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nina Lambkin

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- A learning walk was completed with the manager to discuss the curriculum intent and how the provision is organised.
- The manager and inspector completed a joint evaluation of an activity together.
- A meeting was held between the manager and the inspector. The inspector reviewed a variety of documents, including qualifications, first-aid certificates and policies.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children during activities and assessed the impact of teaching on children's learning.

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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