

Inspection of Colourbox Montessori School, Newmarket

Exning Road, Newmarket CB8 0EB

Inspection date:

7 August 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are warmly welcomed into this nurturing and highly stimulating environment. They form secure attachments with caring and attentive staff, which helps them to settle quickly and feel safe. From the youngest babies to those preparing for school, children demonstrate high levels of confidence, curiosity and a strong motivation to learn.

The Montessori approach is woven seamlessly throughout the setting. Children make independent choices from thoughtfully prepared learning areas. As younger children show an interest in toy farm animals, they make connections in their play. Staff support and extend their learning by providing other representations of animals in different contexts for children to investigate. Older children become excited as they find slugs in the woodland area. Staff ignite this excitement by offering opportunities to discuss, explore and discover how the slugs look, move and feel. Opportunities such as these support children in gaining a rich knowledge of the natural environment, enhance their language skills and nurture a curiosity that continually moves their learning forward.

Children behave exceptionally well. They treat each other with respect and show care for their environment. When drinks spill, children confidently select and use the appropriate resources to tidy up independently. Staff nurture these skills effectively, encouraging children to take ownership of their actions and fostering a proactive approach to problem-solving. Well-established rules and routines run seamlessly, supporting children's smooth and progressive transitions as they move through the nursery.

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

- The curriculum is carefully designed and consistently implemented throughout the nursery. Highly skilled staff possess an excellent understanding of how children learn. Children flourish as their experiences are thoughtfully developed and tailored to meet their individual needs. Consequently, children develop a love of learning and make the best possible progress.
- Staff get to know children well from the start of their care. They plan diverse experiences that broaden children's understanding of the wider world. Children learn about food from other cultures and visit the local primary school to watch performances. Experiences such as these support children's understanding of modern-day Britain, helping them appreciate different cultures and communities while developing a sense of belonging and respect from an early age.
- Staff consistently provide opportunities for children to develop key life skills that support their ongoing educational journey and personal growth. As children transition between indoor and outdoor play, they put on and remove their own

shoes. Staff provide gentle support, encouraging perseverance by allowing children the opportunity to try first before offering assistance. Staff offer positive reinforcement, fostering a strong sense of self-esteem.

- Children benefit from a wide range of rich experiences during forest-school sessions. Staff skilfully extend children's curiosity by supporting role-play activities that reflect their interests. Children, alongside enthusiastic staff, explore the woodland area through imaginative movement, pretending to be butterflies. They then gather to discuss the butterfly's life cycle, where staff introduce word such as 'chrysalis'.
- Staff create purposeful opportunities for children to develop their understanding of personal safety and assess risks independently. Older children are beginning to recognise how to keep themselves safe. They understand the importance of being with an adult and wearing safety helmets when climbing the climbing wall. Children develop strength and coordination as they pull themselves up and show pride and excitement when they reach the top.
- Staff skilfully support children's communication and language development across all age groups. During mealtimes, they use sign language alongside spoken words to reinforce key vocabulary, such as 'please' and 'thank you'. This helps children to express their needs more effectively. While exploring the beach tray, staff engage children in meaningful discussions about why some shells are smooth. Children develop their thinking and language skills as they hypothesise about why this might be.
- Managers and leaders show relentless drive for excellence. Robust systems monitor and support staff through regular supervisions and training. Leaders foster a culture of ongoing professional development, inspiring staff to deliver high-quality, tailored experiences for children. Staff feel well supported and state that they are encouraged to advance their careers and deepen their knowledge through a range of training opportunities. As a result, children benefit from a confident, skilled team who consistently provide exceptional care and learning experiences.
- Parents are extremely complimentary about the nursery and staff. They highlight the excellent support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including regular communication and tailored interventions that have helped children make notable progress. Communication is collaborative, with daily handovers and regular meetings ensuring parents are well informed. Special events, such as graduation ceremonies and birthday gatherings, further engage families in their children's learning. These strong partnerships contribute to positive outcomes for all children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY471137
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10399037
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	83
Number of children on roll	120
Name of registered person	Colourbox Montessori School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP903381
Telephone number	01638667787
Date of previous inspection	18 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Colourbox Montessori School, Newmarket, registered in 2013. It follows the Montessori approach to education. The setting employs 40 members of childcare staff. Of these, 24 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The setting offers government-funded places for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carly Parkinson

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The inspector and the management team completed a learning walk and discussed the provision and the curriculum.
- 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 inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection and completed a joint observation with the lead manager.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of written testimonials.

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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