

Inspection of Chiltern Hills Montessori

Downley Memorial Hall, High Street, Downley, HIGH WYCOMBE, Buckinghamshire
HP13 5XJ

Inspection date: 16 April 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are warmly welcomed by staff and chatter happily about their morning. After children have self-registered, they choose from a range of purposeful activities that engage and excite them. Staff deploy themselves effectively to support children at their chosen activities. All children thrive in this welcoming setting and become highly motivated and independent in their learning. They spend their days immersed in their chosen play as well as the exciting activities planned by staff.

Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour and development. Children know and understand the rules of the setting and behave exceptionally well. Through highly-effective communication with parents, and insightful observations, staff develop a thorough understanding of each child's personality and learning needs. Children benefit significantly from activities that are very precisely planned to reflect their individual needs. For example, staff plan small focus groups that very successfully enable children to develop at their own pace. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make excellent progress from their starting points.

Children have wonderful opportunities to develop their physical skills within the nursery, and during regular outings in the local community. For example, in the nursery garden children concentrate intently as they hold their arms out to balance on stepping stones. They persevere until they are successful, receiving genuine praise from staff and from their friends. This very effectively supports children to develop a sense of well-being and security. Children show very mature levels of patience as they wait for their turn to climb the stairs and use the slide. As they ride bikes, they skilfully negotiate the space available to them.

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

- The inspirational leadership team fully understands its responsibilities and acts promptly to address any weaknesses identified. For example, leaders have recently strengthened all risk assessments linked to outings. Leaders strive to improve the experiences and learning for children. The well-developed curriculum sequences children's learning to ensure they become confident and resilient learners. Staff use their thorough knowledge of children to plan new experiences that successfully captivate and inspire children. Leaders and staff create an environment where children concentrate for long periods and work hard to master new skills.
- Leaders have superb oversight of staff practice through ongoing observations and provide regular feedback. In addition, staff are supported through highly effective supervision sessions and staff meetings. They also benefit from regular

training days to constantly develop their teaching. The positive impact of training is evident through the careful planning and skilful interactions with children. Staff intuitively know when to intervene to provide ideas or encouragement to support children's learning and when to step away and allow them to work things out for themselves.

- The promotion of children's communication and language is a particular strength of the nursery. Staff recognise children's different communication needs and expertly use various methods to communicate with them. For example, picture cards and simple signing is used effectively for children with English as an additional language and those with SEND. Staff consistently talk to children about what they are doing and ask questions that inspire children to think and extend their learning. Staff introduce children to new words and teach them the skills to hold back-and-forth conversations. As a result, children become confident communicators.
- Staff have made excellent use of knowledge gained through recent training to expertly weave mathematics into children's learning. They do this through planned activities and spontaneously when children are playing. Staff very successfully inspire children to explore numbers and mathematical ideas, such as quantity, in practical ways. For example, children very confidently and accurately count as they play, and take pride in matching number cards to the number of candles they place on play dough cupcakes.
- Staff have a focus on providing strong support for children's personal, social and emotional development. They encourage children to complete tasks for themselves and manage their self-care routines. For example, during snack time, children confidently set the table and peel their oranges and bananas. When going outside, children expertly change their shoes and put on their own coats. Staff support children to understand and manage their emotions. They are patient and calmly talk to children about behaviour expectations. Children listen well and show they understand.
- Children develop an impressive knowledge of their local community and the wider world, giving real-life context to children's learning. For example, children and their families enjoy the annual Iftar meal, with staff, which takes place after sunset during Ramadan. Staff thoughtfully plan a range of interesting and exciting trips to local parks and woods to explore nature. On a recent outing, children went to local shops to buy ingredients for a cooking activity. Staff plant seeds with the children to support their learning on how fruit and vegetables grow. As a result, children develop a love of nature and an understanding of the natural world.
- Partnership working with parents is excellent. Information is regularly shared to ensure parents have a fully up-to-date understanding of their child's progress. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure children and families get any additional help and support in the quickest time possible. This highly effective two-way communication provides consistency for the children between home and the nursery.

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	116712
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10395558
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	23
Number of children on roll	56
Name of registered person	Roden, Virginia Margaret
Registered person unique reference number	RP514546
Telephone number	01494 524586
Date of previous inspection	29 September 2021

Information about this early years setting

Chiltern Hills Montessori Nursery registered in 1997. It is situated in the Downley Memorial Hall in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. It is open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. A team of 12 staff work with the children. Of these, eight staff hold qualifications between level 2 and 5. The setting accepts funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two and three years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicky Butler

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The deputy manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy doing while with at the nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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