



ISI

Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Meadowbrook Montessori School

January 2022

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School's Details

School	Meadowbrook Montessori School			
DfE number	867/6006			
Address	Meadowbrook Montessori School Malt Hill Warfield Berkshire RG42 6JQ			
Telephone number	01344 890869			
Email address	admin@meadowbrook.uk			
Headteacher	Ms Sarah Warner			
Proprietor	Mr Steven Byron			
Age range	4 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	34			
	Lower Primary	13	Upper Primary	21
Inspection dates	25 to 28 January 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Meadowbrook Montessori School is an independent co-educational school situated in Warfield. It was founded in 1990. The proprietor of the school is a limited liability company and is the sole owner. Since the previous inspection, the school has seen a change of head, who has held the post since September 2020. The pre-primary school has closed, and Reception age group pupils now join Key Stage One in lower primary on one site.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school was closed.
- 1.3 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.5 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.6 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.7 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.8 The school aspires to create responsible, respectful and resourceful children who have developed strong perceptions of self, capability, belonging and significance. It endeavours to stimulate children's spiritual and moral growth, deeply rooted in mutual respect, kindness and understanding. The school seeks to empower children with skills that will last a lifetime by helping them strive to be their best, to actively engage with their education, and to celebrate and value their differences and strengths.

About the pupils

- 1.9 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and nationalities, mostly from families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. Assessment data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly average. The school has identified 13 pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), nine of whom receive additional support. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school modifies the curriculum for those pupils it identifies as the most able in the school's population.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment indicates that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, except those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 Arrangements are not always made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance. Specifically, the proprietor does not maintain an appropriate oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 2.10 The fire risk assessment is not kept up to date and so not regularly reviewed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–11 and 13–16, the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding] and 12 [fire safety] are not met.**

Action point 1

The proprietor must maintain an appropriate oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.7].

Action point 2

The school must comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by ensuring that there is an up to date and regularly reviewed fire risk assessment [paragraph 12; EYFS 3.56].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.20 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.**

Action point 3

The proprietor must ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils display good knowledge and understanding across all areas of their learning.
- Pupils are articulate verbal communicators, especially when expressing their opinions.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are enthusiastic participants in lessons, but do not always take initiative and work independently when responding to tasks.
- Pupils have good study skills but do not always apply them across a wide range of subjects.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils have excellent self-understanding and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Pupils actively demonstrate excellent understanding of right and wrong and readily accept responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others.
- Pupils have outstanding social skills and enjoy working together as a whole school team.
- Pupils make outstanding contributions to their own community through child-initiated activities and suggestions.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- To ensure pupils become increasingly independent and can demonstrate initiative in taking more ownership in their response to tasks.
- To ensure pupils develop their abilities to analyse, hypothesise and synthesise information, and are able to apply these skills across a wide range of subjects.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5 Pupils have good knowledge and understanding across the different areas of learning. The oldest pupils demonstrate good science knowledge in all the expected areas. They can accurately identify the parts of a flower using correct scientific language; they can identify and compare life cycles of different animals. There are some examples of pupils working above age expectations in science. For example, older pupils can accurately draw and label the structure of a cell and they can interpret information from line graphs. Younger pupils demonstrated good technological knowledge when

building bridges to support the weight of a toy car. Older pupils sew accurately to make Christmas decorations and demonstrate effective cooking skills. They can make carefully constructed sea scape dioramas, demonstrating effective awareness of how to create a sense of space, movement and scale. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of human and social studies. For example, pupils can identify key settlements on a map of England and show good understanding of life in ancient Egypt. Older pupils demonstrate excellent geographical skills when drawing field sketches of the brook near the school grounds and can accurately label the sketches with appropriate geographical terms for river features. Observations of pupils' work showed subject specific geographical and historical skills for younger pupils are less well developed because of more limited opportunities to apply these skills in practice. Pupils have good physical skills; for example, younger pupils showed good control when dribbling a hockey ball. Pupils display good creative skills, as seen in pencil line drawings that show understanding of techniques to incorporate depth and represent perspective. They understand the techniques used by artists such as Seurat, successfully reproducing their own work in his style. Older pupils have good musicality, with most playing the Ukulele with fast chord changes to a high degree of accuracy.

- 3.6 All groups of pupils demonstrate good communication skills. They are excellent verbal communicators, using sophisticated vocabulary when passionately and articulately expressing their opinions and values. They speak and read with accuracy and interest and listen attentively in lessons to their teachers and their peers. Children in EYFS have appropriate phonic knowledge for their age and ability, because of the effective use of Montessori equipment to support building words from initial sounds. Pupils have good comprehension skills interpreting information effectively from a range of texts including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. They use age-appropriate inference skills to accurately interpret language chosen by an author to describe the character in the story. Pupils can understand and accurately explain techniques used by authors to emphasise the importance of information. Older pupils can accurately interpret poems, such as *The Giantess* by Carol Ann Duffy, to effectively explain why and how the author has used metaphors. They can explain authors' intent, in the way a poem is structured, at age-appropriate levels. By the time they leave school, pupils have a good understanding of the appropriate writing techniques for a variety of genres and apply them successfully in their own writing. Older pupils can accurately interpret information and re-present it in newspaper articles, correctly using time adverbials and effective rhetorical questions. By the time they leave the school, most pupils have well-developed cursive handwriting because of the emphasis placed on developing this key skill. All pupils have good understanding of basic Spanish words, with older children demonstrating developing skills in spoken Spanish and understanding simple phrases when they are spoken to in Spanish. This is supported through the specialist teaching of modern foreign languages.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages and abilities have good numerical understanding. Older pupils can apply their skills when measuring distance and carrying out scientific investigations on shadow formation. Younger pupils are less able to apply their skills out of context of mathematics lessons as there were fewer opportunities for them to do so. EYFS children have an understanding of number suitable to their age and ability, with some showing stronger understanding and ability, confidently counting in tens. This is because of the appropriate Montessori resources which are effectively used to help children explore abstract concepts in concrete ways. Older pupils confidently manipulate numbers in tens of thousands. They accurately use formal methods of computation to multiply two and three-digit numbers. Pupils can apply this knowledge to problem-solving at the level expected for their age; for example, to solving problems related to area. Less able mathematicians are well supported to achieve at age expected levels because of supportive marking comments, which also give clear advice for improvement. All pupils develop good mathematical knowledge and skills because they are enabled to work at different levels of challenge.
- 3.8 Pupils display some secure information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They can select, use and combine a variety of software, including internet services, on a range of digital devices. Pupils use computers and tablets competently and enthusiastically to research sources of pictorial or written information, to support their learning in a variety of subjects. Younger pupils were able to use

computers to help them locate settlements on a map of England. Pupils have good word processing knowledge and skills, they use these effectively to type their own stories, poems and research notes. Pupils of all ages have an appropriate understanding of algorithms and their role in computer programming. Younger pupils can give clear instructions to help program movable devices. Pupils have less well-developed knowledge and understanding in the use of ICT beyond a tool for writing and research due to the limited use of ICT for learning beyond these skills.

- 3.9 Pupils' study skills are good overall. Almost all the parents responding to the questionnaire said that the school equips children with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils are able to draw on a range of written sources from books or ICT, that are presented to them, to analyse information when researching for topic work. They can hypothesise when making science predictions for investigations. They use information from investigations to synthesise data such as when investigating the relationship between light sources and objects in creating shadows. The most able pupils showed good reasoning skills when explaining why the Romans selected certain sites for their settlements. However, pupils' study skills are limited by the lack of opportunity to apply these skills independently in a wide range of subjects.
- 3.10 By the time pupils leave the school, all have made good progress in line with their starting points. This was confirmed by observations of pupils' work in books and in lessons. It was also confirmed by analysis of the school's own assessment data. Pupils with SEND make progress in line with their peers, and, in some cases, rapid progress. This is because of the effective individual support that they receive. Leaders and staff support pupils' progress through the use of information from assessment data to provide support and challenge where needed.
- 3.11 Pupils' achievements outside the formal curriculum are limited by the small size of the school, and the recent pandemic. Since the previous inspection the school has successfully competed in a local geography competition. Some individual pupils achieve success in areas such as tennis, horse riding and athletics. Pupils are proud of the achievements of others and the school actively promotes and celebrates external successes. Most pupils achieve places at local selective independent senior schools.
- 3.12 Pupils are active participants in lessons showing particularly high engagement verbally, offering opinions and ideas. The school successfully achieves its aim to help children to actively engage with their education. Pupils are excellent collaborators when given the opportunity; for example, working with huge enjoyment to correctly label a life size 'body' with Spanish words or when working to solve problems in mathematics. They respond positively and with some degree of independence to the tasks they are given and are suitably productive in the quantity of their responses. Pupils show less initiative in presenting written responses to tasks with individual flair or imagination. This is because there are limited opportunities given for independent responses and self-initiated learning.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim to 'create children who have developed strong perceptions of self, capability, belonging and significance'. Pupils of all ages and abilities have excellent levels of self-understanding. They demonstrate high levels of self-reliance and an 'I can do it for myself' approach, particularly in their interpersonal relationships and when acting for the benefit of the community. Almost all the parents who responded to the questionnaire said they felt the school helped their children to be confident. Younger pupils self-confidently ask to continue work from the previous day which interested them. Older pupils explained how they have the self-confidence to know when to attempt tasks for themselves or when to ask for help. More able pupils confidently volunteer alternative persuasive language, to answers modelled for them when writing newspaper articles. In this way the school reflects an underpinning Montessori concept of 'freedom within structure'. Pupils of all ages reflect on what they do well and know what steps they can take to improve

learning. They know that the targets set for them are for their improvement and spontaneously set themselves targets when they hear others being praised for their achievements. Pupils show excellent levels of resilience and perseverance when challenged intellectually or on the sports field because of their high levels of self-confidence. This is because of the caring and solid relationships they have built with the adults in the school.

- 3.15 Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They always show respect to others and have an outstanding personal moral code. It is clear from interviews during the inspection and a review of the small number of entries in the behaviour log, that pupils desire to put right any wrong. Pupils take strong responsibility for their behaviour and discuss the consequences of their actions very well. They are also prepared to challenge any mistakes in behaviour. Older pupils described how they stepped in to challenge younger pupils playing a bit too enthusiastically with sticks. Other suggestions include taking responsibility for turning off taps or to tuck in stools. This is because of leaders' approach to instilling positive discipline. Parents commented in response to the questionnaire, 'Behaviour is beautifully modelled, children are shown how to be thoughtful and kind'.
- 3.16 Pupils have excellent social skills, working and playing entirely kindly with each other, in mixed age and gender groups. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helped their children develop strong teamwork and social skills. Almost all the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt the school helped them to support others. These views are supported by inspection evidence. The younger pupils listened attentively to one another's ideas when collecting suggestions to support group understanding of the structure of fairy tales. Older pupils focused attentively, to collaborate as a class ensemble, when playing the ukulele and chime bars. Older pupils naturally look out for their younger friends and understand and support those with needs. This high level of social awareness is underpinned by leaders' and staff's promotion of the school motto, 'We promise to share, we promise to care, altogether as a team'.
- 3.17 Pupils make excellent contributions to their own and the wider community. Older pupils show excellent leadership qualities and promote the school ethos of one team through their actions. All the older pupils have roles of responsibility, such as stationery or library monitors. Pupils volunteer to be the chair or secretary in community meetings. Many of the contributions pupils make are initiated by the pupils themselves. For example, a recycling project has been started and the school environment enhanced by the addition of a camera bird box. Pupils recognised a need to support others less fortunate than themselves. They suggested raising money through a bake sale to provide food for charities supporting communities in other countries. Older pupils have completed a litter pick in the local park. They also recycle unused coloured paper to make their own paper for further use. Pupils contribute at harvest to local food banks and have raised money for local, national and international charities.
- 3.18 Older pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. They explained why it is important to follow rules to keep physically safe. Almost all the parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt the school encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils can describe ways of keeping themselves safe when working or communicating when online. They have outstanding age-appropriate understanding and knowledge of many things to consider to ensure respect for personal boundaries and appropriate interpersonal behaviour. Pupils understand the importance that such considerations will have in their senior schools. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe from bullying and how to act if they come across it. This is because of the well-planned, and very effectively delivered, relationships education programme. Younger children respond positively to suggestions about personal care and hygiene. They can make comments showing an understanding of healthy and unhealthy snacks in that some contain too much sugar. Older pupils are very aware of the importance of strong mental health and will ask independently to take a 'brain break' or to go to get water.
- 3.19 Pupils have excellent understanding of the importance of making choices which will enable them to make progress in their learning. Children in the EYFS confidently choose from a range of activities,

provided specifically to engage learning based on the pupils' known interests. Older pupils clearly explain that they understand the importance of practising skills such as, touch typing or piano playing. They know these are important as life skills or in helping achieve goals such as scholarships for future schools. Pupils also demonstrate excellent understanding in making choices to expand their friendship groups, even though they say that sometimes making friends is hard. They know this will help them develop respect and tolerance for others. These high-level skills are supported by the intimacy of the school environment, leaders' promotion of the ethos that all must be included, and the extremely strong emphasis in the school culture on British values and respect for all.

- 3.20 Pupils have a deep appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Lower Primary pupils showed much excitement upon discovering that water had turned to ice in their mud experiment. They delighted in being able to pick up and break the ice, naturally investigating its properties. Pupils excitedly described the fun they had exploring the school environment and showed clear understanding of how fortunate they were to have access to such open spaces to learn. They enthusiastically shared their wonder in being able to share their space with the wide variety of wildlife that inhabits the school grounds. During community meeting the whole school enthusiastically engage in posing philosophical 'big questions' in response to a child-initiated questions. Pupils demonstrate strong curiosity in relation to their own or the faith of others, asking questions about the relationship between God and the world. Some pupils have the philosophical skills to debate the nature of faith. This is facilitated by opportunities that the pupils have to discuss and challenge ideas and articulate their own ideas. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire pupils were keen to explain that they felt a strength of the school was that they 'had a voice'. This successfully reflects the school aims.
- 3.21 Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and appreciation of their own and others' cultures, through child-initiated activities such as planning an international day, to promote the heritage of their family's country of origin. Pupils talk to other pupils about their faiths and traditions, such as inviting the whole school to celebrate thanksgiving or to hear about life in Eastern Europe. Pupils have a strong understanding of and respect for those of different faiths to their own. These are supported by their learning about many world religions. Pupils' positive attitudes towards diversity are strengthened through the school's strong focus on the British values of respect and tolerance in personal, social and health education and assemblies. It is clear from watching the pupils at both work and play that they are inclusive, mixing readily with pupils of nationalities, backgrounds and beliefs different to their own.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended community meeting. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Vivien Sergeant	Reporting inspector
Ms Diane Durrant	Compliance team inspector (Former head)
Mr Ralph Dalton	Team inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)