



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Oxford Montessori Schools

March 2022

School's details

School name	Oxford Montessori Schools			
DfE number	931/6119			
Address	Oxford Montessori Schools Forest Farm School Elsfield Oxford Oxfordshire OX3 9UW			
Telephone number	01865 352068			
Email address	admin@oxfordmontessori.co.uk			
Principal	Mrs Katie Townsend			
Proprietors	Mrs Judith Walker Mr Daniel Ardizzoni			
Age Range	2 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	132			
	EYFS	50	Primary	39
	Seniors	43		
Date of visit	11 March 2022			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Oxford Montessori Schools comprise a co-educational school, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting for children aged between two and five years at Forest Farm in the village of Elsfield and a similar EYFS setting at Wolvercote, on the outskirts of Oxford. The school is owned and administered by its two proprietors in a limited partnership. The school has 45 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 20 have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Four pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was an inspection of regulatory compliance and educational quality in January 2020.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework. The visit also checked progress on the actions required by the inspection of January 2020.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (publication of safeguarding policy)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school does not meet the requirements.
- 2.2 The school's policy for safeguarding does not provide suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school because it does not have due regard to statutory guidance. It does not include all the required content as specified in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* (KCSIE), in particular the identification of types and signs of abuse; procedures for responding to reports of child-on-child abuse; and arrangements for the reporting of lower-level concerns about staff and other adults working in the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.4 Suitable arrangements are in place for pupils to share their concerns with staff. These were well understood and valued by the pupils interviewed, who could readily identify trusted adults within the school. They confirmed that when they raise concerns they receive a response. The school keeps appropriate records of safeguarding concerns about pupils. These show that appropriate actions are taken to support them, including when they raise a concern. The records demonstrate appropriate liaison with parents and external agencies and a strong awareness of the individual needs of the significant number of pupils in the school with SEND.
- 2.5 Those with responsibility for the leadership of safeguarding have been trained at an appropriate level. Staff training has taken place, including a range of courses designed to support the specific needs of the pupils in the school. Staff have received clear guidance on how to report their concerns about pupils. They have a secure understanding of the school code of conduct, whistleblowing procedures and the Prevent strategy and are confident to report any concerns about other adults working in the school. Mechanisms exist to deal with serious allegations in liaison with appropriate external agencies. However, the school does not have appropriate measures in place for dealing with concerns about adults in the school which do not meet the harms threshold.
- 2.6 Evidence indicates that the school culture, including the curriculum, guards against all forms of child-on-child abuse or discrimination in school appropriately, including sexual discrimination or racism. However, the school has not established appropriate arrangements for the management of reports of concerns linked to any such areas. Staff have not had the necessary training to enable them to respond to incidents or concerns in these areas in line with statutory requirements.
- 2.7 The proprietors have oversight in most areas, including through ensuring appropriate recruitment checks are carried out and through an annual review of safeguarding. However, the deficiencies in the school's safeguarding arrangements show that this review is not sufficiently effective.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.
- 2.9 Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the safety of the pupils when travelling in the school minibus to and from the school at the beginning and end of the school day. The school has ensured that the driver is suitably qualified and that the vehicle is serviced regularly by a suitably qualified external provider. Additional arrangements were made to promote the safety of the pupils during the recent pandemic.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 The school has ensured that pupils travelling to and from the school in the school minibus are properly supervised at all times by an adult employed by the school. These arrangements include procedures to ensure that all pupils who are expected to travel on the bus are identified as being present and for confirming that all arrive safely at the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

- 2.12 The school meets the standard.
- 2.13 The school has considered the possible risks associated with the transport of pupils to and from the main school site in the school minibus. This includes suitable arrangements for instances including the non-collection of a child from their stop, breakdown of the bus, inclement weather and staff illness.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.14 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 An appropriate procedure for the management of parental complaints is in place. Records indicate that the school has responded to informal and formal complaints within the stated time scales since the previous inspection. Records of formal complaints have been kept as appropriate, including the actions taken and whether the complaint is successful. No complaint has proceeded to a panel hearing since the previous inspection.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.17 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.18 The proprietors have not ensured that school leaders and managers demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the other standards are consistently met. The well-being of the pupils is not actively promoted because the school's arrangements for safeguarding do not pay full regard to statutory guidance in policy or practice.

3. Regulatory action points

3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 7 [safeguarding]

- Ensure the safeguarding policy includes all the required content specified in KCSIE, in particular the identification of types and signs of abuse; procedures for responding to reports of child-on-child abuse; and arrangements for the reporting of lower level concerns about staff and other adults working in the school [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].
- Ensure staff training includes KCSIE Annex B, guidance as to how to manage a report of child-on-child abuse and arrangements for the reporting of lower level concerns about staff and other adults working in the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.6].
- The proprietors must ensure that the annual review of safeguarding is fully effective, in particular with regard to the contents of the safeguarding policy and procedures [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.4 and 3.7].

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34

- Ensure leaders and managers demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively in order to meet the standards consistently and actively promote the well-being of pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the proprietors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.