

# Green Gables Montessori Primary School

4, Wapping Lane, Wapping, London, E1W 2RG

**Inspection dates** 30 April–2 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Pupils' achievement in all year groups is good. Pupils are becoming very competent readers and writers and they are increasingly comfortable with numbers and other aspects of mathematics.
- Most of the time, teachers set work that is suitably challenging and, with teachers' help, pupils are good at selecting activities for themselves. This makes pupils responsible for a good part of their learning.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly confident and understanding of themselves and others. Behaviour is good.
- The Montessori curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils well.
- The proprietor and headteacher have very good knowledge of what works well and what can be improved. They know how well pupils are learning. They challenge and support teachers to constantly improve teaching and pupils' achievement.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Occasionally, the work that is set by teachers does not match the abilities of the pupils.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work in exercise books is not always good.
- The use of phonics to break down words into sounds is not used enough to help some pupils read more competently.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' progress and how well their achievement compares with all pupils nationally are not yet rigorous enough.
- Some of the school's administrative documents need improving.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The school was given one day's notice of inspection. This is the school's first inspection as a primary school.
- A total of 11 class-based lessons and other learning activities was seen and the two teachers were seen teaching. Discussions were held with the pupils, headteacher, other staff and the proprietor.
- School policies and procedures were reviewed, including the procedures to safeguard the pupils. A large sample of pupils' work was examined.
- Seven members of staff answered Ofsted's questionnaire and 10 parents and carers provided opinions on Ofsted's Parent View website. Others wrote to the inspector.

## Inspection team

Paul Armitage, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is located in Wapping in east London. It opened in September 2011. It is the successor school to Green Gables Montessori School for pupils aged three months to eight years which was located at a different address. This is the school's first inspection as a primary school.
- The school accepts pupils aged from three to 11 years but the current age range is from three to 10 years. There are currently 38 pupils in school, 21 of whom are in the Reception class.
- The school shares the same building as Green Gables Pre-School, which was not inspected on this occasion. Together, the school and pre-school are registered for 94 pupils aged from three to 11 years.
- No pupils have a statement of special educational needs and there are no disabled pupils. A very few have English as a second language and a very few have individual education plans which focus on behaviour. These plans have been agreed with the local authority.
- There is a single, very large, open-plan classroom for Key Stages 1 and 2. In Reception, there is also a large classroom. There is a hall used for a range of purposes, including an after-school club, and a small eating area used for a breakfast club.
- The school uses outside provision. It has no playground so uses two local parks. It also uses the local swimming pool.
- The school's aim is 'to offer an inclusive and caring environment that values the uniqueness of your child, nurtures their individual needs and helps them achieve their potential academically through the Montessori method'.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils are always given, or are able to select, work that challenges them and matches their level of ability.
- Provide more help for pupils whose handwriting and presentation of work are not good.
- For pupils who are having some difficulty with reading, provide more help using phonics to increase their level of skill.
- Revise all school policy documents to ensure that they relate fully to the school and improve the quality of risk assessment recording for visits.
- Given the school's expansion plans:
  - develop a means for obtaining an overview of how well the school is doing based on pupils' achievement
  - create a system for comparing pupils' achievement with achievement nationally.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Pupils' achievement is good because teaching is good. Children's level of ability on entry to Reception is very variable, which is a key reason why staff focus carefully on their different needs. In Reception, most children make good progress in literacy and in numeracy and the other areas of learning. They are very familiar with books, developing their reading ability well. A few read very fluently for their age. Likewise, in numeracy, pupils are increasingly comfortable in playing with numbers or identifying shapes and achieve good standards.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' good progress continues to reflect the good pace and content of learning so that by the age of 10, pupils achieve above average standards in both literacy and mathematics. The exercise book of a Year 3 pupil, typical of more able pupils, showed considerable fluency in the use of number, statistics, interpretation of graphs, Venn diagrams, time and shapes. There is equally good achievement in other subjects; for example, one older pupil wrote authoritatively about Stonehenge.

Handwriting and presentation in all subjects are generally good but are not always so. Phonics, which is the breaking down of words into sounds to help with reading, is used in both Reception and with older pupils but it is not used enough with pupils who would benefit from it and so this prevents achievement in reading from being outstanding.

Pupils with individual educational plans to support their learning progress very well. They are controlling their behaviour better, which means that they and school staff are able to focus more on their academic work. The few pupils with English as a second language make similar progress to their fellow pupils. Largely due to the good work of staff, these pupils' standard of English is at least as good as the English of native speakers.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. The most significant feature of their development is their growing confidence as they spend time in the school. From often quite timid beginnings, Reception children quickly become eager participants in all learning activities and are increasingly ready to ask questions and give opinions. This pattern continues for older pupils. A major reason for this success is the school's Montessori approach, which places emphasis on pupils making decisions for themselves.

Behaviour is good – in class, in the breakfast area, in the main corridor, and in the street as pupils walk to local parks for recreation. There are a very few occasions when pupils annoy or interfere with another pupil in some way but teachers deal with this very quickly should it occur by bringing both pupils together to understand what has happened. Older pupils confirm that there is no bullying. There is a good understanding amongst these pupils of what constitutes bullying. Its characteristics are displayed on classroom noticeboards and are discussed in class.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Circle time, when older pupils get together to discuss issues and understand each other better, provides time for reflection. One frequently discussed theme is pupils' happiness and the reasons for sadness. Older pupils have recently studied disability – what it means to be disabled and how the community should help. Socially, pupils have plenty of opportunity to work and play and to understand each other and they are beginning to reach out to the wider world. Reception children have recently been looking at the location of different countries, their distance from London and social aspects. Cultural development is encouraged by frequent visits to places such as the Whitechapel Gallery, the Manet exhibition at the Royal Academy and the Natural History Museum. A visit to the Bank of England is planned.

**Quality of teaching****Good**

The quality of teaching is good and results in good achievement. Teachers provide a good range of activities which are well suited to the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of pupils. Teachers openly lead some activities such as a mathematics lesson on angles but they also prepare a range of activities from which pupils can choose. This is linked to a particularly strong feature in Montessori schools called the 'prepared environment'. In Green Gables, this includes classrooms with many shelves at pupils' height. Each shelf contains simple, clearly presented learning materials from which pupils can select.

The mixed-aged classes are generally managed well by teachers, ably supported by their assistants who are very well deployed. There is a wide range of ability as well as differences in pupils' attitudes to learning, with some pupils being less confident than others. The work undertaken individually by pupils is well targeted. A good example of this was when a younger pupil worked on the floor with plastic circles divided into thirds, fifths, sixths and so on. She slowly but correctly worked out fraction equivalences. However, when pupils work in groups, there are a very few occasions when weaker pupils do not get the support they need and the more able are not challenged enough. For instance, the simple task of older pupils modelling planets in clay did not match their excellent knowledge and understanding of the solar system, meteorites and satellites. This is why teaching is not outstanding.

Both in Reception and for older pupils, the school uses a Montessori form of assessment. It is a record of competences or targets achieved by pupils. The results for each pupil are kept in their individual files and are accurate. These detailed records show whether each pupil is working towards a target or has achieved it. Teachers use this information well to decide what the pupil needs to do next. Older pupils are aware of their targets and can explain how they can improve.

**Quality of curriculum****Good**

The quality of the curriculum is good and effectively supports pupils' good achievement. Morning activities are based on the Montessori curriculum which covers five main themes – 'the education of the senses'; 'exercises in practical life'; 'mathematics'; 'literacy' and 'culture'. Such themes cover the areas of learning required by the independent school regulations; for instance, the cultural element includes science, history and geography. These subjects also appear in other themes; for example, the ability to interpret a graph is part of 'education of the senses'. In Reception, there is good correlation between the Montessori curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Literacy and mathematics are given prominence.

In the afternoons, there is less emphasis on Montessori; pupils do projects on different themes and there is also time for physical activities, French and Spanish.

Before school, there is a breakfast club providing not only food but also an opportunity for pupils to read and do other activities. In the late afternoon, there is an after-school club with a wide range of activities on offer, almost all of which are chosen and undertaken by pupils with minimum teacher intervention. It was good to see a small group of younger pupils in the corner studiously reading books while in the other corner, pupils were engrossed playing with a variety of wooden toys, including a train and railway lines which they had locked together.

**Pupils' welfare, health and safety****Good**

The quality of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good overall and all regulations are met. The school has a relevant range of policies, including those for child protection, behaviour, health and safety and anti-bullying. Some of the policy documents such as those for child protection and anti-bullying have been well written by the staff but others have been acquired from other sources and contain a small amount of material that is not related to Green Gables, for

instance references to the role of governors. Nevertheless, the broad content of these policies is good and the policies are understood by staff.

Recruitment procedures are effective and the results of checks on staff and others are correctly recorded in a single central register. Staff training in child protection is up to date as is staff training in first aid. Admission and attendance registers are completed correctly.

Risk assessment of the building is very thorough, including daily checks by staff, regular checks by commercial companies and a fire safety check by the local fire authority. Risk assessments for visits outside school are robust in the way they are carried out but the form on which the results are recorded and evaluated carries limited information and is only adequate. Pupils are very well supervised at all times, including when they visit two local parks for playtime.

Pupils have a growing awareness of how to stay healthy. This was well illustrated by a group of older pupils who had no difficulty in discussing in class which foods are healthy and why. The breakfast and lunchtime food served by the in-house cook also reflects healthy eating principles. Pupils love playing on the excellent equipment in the parks and respond well to other opportunities for physical activity such as dance.

## Leadership and management

## Good

The quality of leadership and management is good. The proprietor and the headteacher are ambitious and have high expectations for what the school must provide for pupils. The headteacher has a clear view of the quality of the school by her regular presence in the classrooms and observation of teaching and learning. She is closely involved in planning what is taught and in addressing pupils' individual needs when there are issues to address. She works closely with pupils, listening to them read and helping them with other work. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and pupils' achievement is good, especially in literacy and numeracy. The school's ethos, which is well promoted, strongly influences pupils to be positive learners who are becoming increasingly aware of themselves and others.

Because it is a small school, the headteacher and other staff have a good understanding of an individual pupil's progress throughout the year, using a variety of means, including the pupils' record files. However, they do not yet have an overview of the pattern of pupils' achievement as a whole or of defined groups within it. This is important in view of the school's planned expansion and the need to monitor the progress of an increased number of pupils. In addition, except in Reception, managers cannot compare individual pupils' achievements with all pupils nationally. This also is important, especially for pupils who may transfer later into the state system.

The accommodation is outstanding in quality. The large rooms, the way they are set out and the quality of the furniture, fittings and learning resources are impressive. All the required information is made available to parents and carers and the complaints procedure meets requirements. The school's resources are very well used to support learning.

The proprietor and the headteacher have ensured that all the independent school regulations are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131198
<b>Inspection number</b>	420183
<b>DfE registration number</b>	211/6386

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Montessori Primary
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	38
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	None
<b>Proprietor</b>	Jackie Brierley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jan Arnold
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	First inspection
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£9,600–£11,100
<b>Telephone number</b>	0207 488 9237
<b>Fax number</b>	None
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office2@greengableschool.com">office2@greengableschool.com</a>



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