

Rose House Montessori School

The Chapel-on-the-Hill, South Road, London, SE23 2UJ

Inspection dates

21–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
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

- The senior leaders have worked relentlessly in a short time to set up very effective systems that ensure that all pupils can achieve well. They know precisely how to further improve the school and enable pupils to make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, enabling pupils to make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and so pupils often set themselves high challenges. The staff have created a positive professional team, constantly engaged in reflecting on their practices and improving their skills.
- The good curriculum and the respectful ethos created by the staff are exemplary in that they promote pupils' outstanding behaviour and personal development, and make exceptional provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils achieve well because the curriculum stimulates their curiosity and ability to investigate, explore and discover. It is personalised very effectively to serve their individual needs.
- Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and would unreservedly recommend it to others.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is still a little more work to do to improve teaching so that a high proportion is outstanding and, for pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Pupils do not achieve quite as highly in some curriculum areas as they do in others. The curriculum for upper elementary pupils is still not fully developed to ensure pupils achieve as well as possible.

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 inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Observations were made, sometimes jointly with the headteacher, of pupils playing or working independently or in small groups, or being taught in one-to-one sessions. Discussions were held with pupils and staff. Meetings were held with the principal and the headteacher. Documentation relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, curriculum planning, teachers' assessments and pupils' work was scrutinised.
- The inspector also took account of the responses in six questionnaires completed by staff and 20 parental responses to Ofsted's on-line 'Parent View' survey.

Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rose House Montessori School is a new day primary school for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years. It is located in a residential part of Forest Hill, in the London Borough of Lewisham. It was registered in February 2013 for up to 48 pupils. The school is housed in a converted church building. It uses a local nature reserve for its 'forest school' programme of outdoor activities.
- There are currently 21 pupils between the ages of four and eight years, eight of whom are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. None has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils have diverse cultural heritages. Six pupils are at various advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. Most pupils have moved on from Rose House Montessori pre-school located nearby, which is owned by the same proprietor. The proprietor is also the principal of both schools.
- The school is accredited by the Montessori Accreditation and Evaluation Board (MAEB). This is the school's first inspection by Ofsted.
- Rose House Montessori School aims to 'develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support pupils in making outstanding progress by enabling all teachers to:
 - embrace the best existing practices and sharpen their skills through the well-structured programme of continuous professional development
 - further develop their skills and confidence to support and challenge all pupils when teaching mixed-age groups
 - gain a clearer understanding of what the attainment targets are in the Montessori curriculum.
- Help pupils to achieve highly in all curriculum areas by implementing plans to further develop:
 - the skills of teachers to lead curricular areas across the age range so that they can play an even more effective role in raising the quality of teaching and learning in their specific areas
 - the curriculum for upper elementary pupils in readiness for next academic year.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils achieve well academically throughout the school because of good teaching and a good, personalised curriculum that supports their personal development as inquisitive learners extremely well. Overall, pupils make good progress in their academic learning from their varying starting points. Some make outstanding progress in many areas of learning, most notably in reading, mathematics, natural sciences, information and communication technology (ICT) and art. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children who reached the age of five in 2013 achieved or exceeded the expected goals, and achieved exceptionally well in mathematics and creative development. Achievement is not yet outstanding, owing to slight variations in the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning across the age range in some curricular areas. Pupils acquire knowledge quickly because their interests are taken into account to motivate them, they are guided very effectively to initiate their own learning and can easily access excellent resources that support their learning and autonomy. Pupils' participation in timetabling their day enables them to engage in each activity when they are the most receptive for them. Furthermore, the opportunity to learn independently, or through sessions led by different adults, or by forming a spontaneous group with peers of different ages, helps them to study topics and concepts from different perspectives, and to consolidate their understanding in different ways. The younger pupils benefit immensely from working with older peers and often exceed expectations as a result.

Pupils enjoy reading and, from the Early Years onwards, they are supported very effectively in using strategies to decode words, making sounds accurately and understanding a variety of texts. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English make fast progress in speaking English through daily interaction with peers and with adults who model a good level of language. Pupils receive a good foundation for their writing skills because of an initial focus on syntax, grammar, and building up a wide range of vocabulary. Their reading and writing skills are extended well through project work. However, the more advanced pupils are not always supported sufficiently well to summarise a text in their own words and they sometimes copy rather than create their own narrative. Pupils' enquiry and problem-solving skills are exceptionally well developed in mathematics and science through stimulating practical work. Their acquisition of mathematical concepts is supported extremely well by the Montessori sensorial resources. For example, six-year-old pupils were observed adding four-digit numbers. The parents of an eight-year-old pupil said, 'She was thrilled about using the microscope and told us a lot about photosynthesis. She is also very excited about making a bridge and finding out how much weight it could hold.'

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' outstanding behaviour and personal development are supported by an ethos that makes exceptional provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school meets its stated aim. Pupils respond extremely well to the calm, orderly and beautiful environment and concentrate and work undisturbed for sustained periods. They love school and their attendance is very good. They demonstrate a high level of self-discipline and drive when leading and managing their own learning. After completing a task, the vast majority move on to other activities and use their time productively. Pupils do not have homework, in conformity with Montessori principles, and yet often choose to work on their project at home. They show excellent social skills and utmost respect when working with peers of different ages and cultural backgrounds, or engaging with adults. They follow ground rules scrupulously and their thoughtful behaviour contributes to the successful and safe learning of all. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils hold the 'peace flower' to indicate that they wish to air concerns and resolve perceived conflict through discussion.

Pupils develop very high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence because they are able to take charge of their learning, and, through project work, they can all find something they can excel at.

For example, in the last academic year, pupils between the ages of five and seven demonstrated excellent ICT skills when making a film on the 'Life Comes to Earth' theme, sharing the responsibilities of taking photographs and downloading them on their laptops, reading a text and recording voices, adding music, editing the film and introducing special effects. Pupils speak confidently and courteously with visitors and show pride in their school. They develop a strong sense of personal and social responsibility through daily cleaning, clearing and tidying, and forest school activities. They deepen their awareness of the wider community in all its diversity and of public institutions through educational visits and correspondence with children from the United States of America.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and sometimes outstanding. All staff are Montessori-trained and some are highly qualified and experienced. Between them, the staff bring a broad range of skills and subject expertise. They form a cohesive learning community in which staff observe colleagues as well as pupils, and are constantly engaged in reflecting on their practices and improving their skills. Teachers establish close and respectful relationships with pupils and demonstrate a good understanding of how each of them learns. This informs their observations of pupils' work and their decisions about how and when to guide them. They take great care to provide a learning environment which pupils find inviting on arrival. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and so pupils often set themselves high challenges. Teachers skilfully negotiate daily plans with each pupil, ensuring that the morning work cycle is a period of intense concentration in which pupils focus on literacy, mathematics, science, geography and history, pursuing the objectives of their learning plans. Teachers and teaching assistants follow the pupils when they are ready to move freely throughout the learning zones, and they support them well to initiate their own learning, whether in the art café, the library or outdoors. When leading sessions, teachers make clear presentations and ask questions of graded difficulty that challenge all pupils well. Occasionally, the pace of learning drops a little in mixed-age group sessions when some pupils are not supported or challenged quite sufficiently to make rapid progress in their understanding. On other occasions, time is not used productively at the end of an activity when pupils' concentration wears off and they are not inspired to initiate another activity sufficiently promptly.

Pupils' learning is assessed continuously and very effectively as they progress through the Montessori curriculum. Progress is well documented in each pupil's 'learning journey' booklet. The information from assessments is used to decide whether pupils have made secure gains or whether they need to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of a topic or concept. Senior leaders and teachers are currently involved in refining the assessment framework so that all share a clearer understanding of what the attainment targets are in the Montessori curriculum and so help to provide pupils with a consistently high level of challenge. Parents and carers are invited to observe learning at any time and to comment on their children's achievement in the learning journey booklets. They feel well informed by high quality reports on their children's progress.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The good curriculum is personalised very effectively to meet the needs of each pupil and ensure all pupils make good progress, in an environment that is free from pressure. It is exemplary in that it supports pupils' outstanding personal development and stimulates each child's curiosity and ability to investigate, explore and discover, in conformity with Montessori principles. The areas of learning of the Montessori curriculum correlate with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and cover all National Curriculum subjects. The provision for reading, mathematics, natural sciences and ICT is particularly strong. From the Early Years onwards, pupils thrive in a well-prepared learning environment that offers a combination of structured learning opportunities and great flexibility. At the core of the elementary curriculum are the 'Five Great Lessons' that present pupils with a history

of the universe, life and mankind through broadly sketched and stimulating stories. They serve as a springboard for more specific study, branching out into several subject areas, directed by daily teacher-led workshops. These inspire pupils to further explore topics of their choice within each theme. The holistic approach to learning promotes pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Understanding their place in the universe is at the heart of pupils' personal, social and health education. Through 'social graces and courtesies', life skills, cosmic and peace education, and forest school activities, pupils develop an excellent understanding of what it means to be respectful and peaceful citizens who care for themselves, others and the world because everything is connected. The curriculum is enhanced well by a wide range of educational visits.

The curriculum is planned well and developing in the upper elementary. Detailed schemes of work clearly indicate how pupils will progress in their learning. There are effective procedures to check the curriculum covered by each pupil. Teachers have begun to shoulder the responsibility of leading the teaching and learning in each curriculum area across the age range. However, their skills are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure that all pupils can achieve extremely well in all areas.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety and staff provide excellent day-to-day care. All the requirements for independent schools and the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Pupils feel safe and they and their parents and carers have full confidence in the school's ability to keep them safe in all circumstances, to promote very high standards of behaviour and deal with any concerns very effectively. Pupils' health and safety education is planned and taught thoughtfully, sometimes with the support of public services officers. Pupils are currently engaged in developing an information booklet on e-safety. A rolling lunch time allows them to enjoy eating and socialising at a time that suits them. Pupils have ample opportunities to exercise vigorously and benefit from specialist teaching in physical education. Supervision is vigilant without being obtrusive and accidents are rare.

All the policies for child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety and first aid are up to date and implemented consistently. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all adults working at the school are properly vetted. All the required checks are recorded in a single central register in the correct manner. All staff are trained in child protection to approved standards and at the required intervals. There is a sufficient number of staff with appropriate first aid qualifications for the age range. Careful risk assessments are carried out of the premises, and on-site and off-site activities. The school can demonstrate it has a satisfactory level of fire safety. However, fire alarm tests have not always been recorded weekly and the school has taken steps to remedy the situation.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good and developing rapidly at all levels, securing good academic achievement for all pupils. The proprietor, who is also the principal, ensures that genuine Montessori practice is enacted by all staff and the school's aims are met. The principal and headteacher communicate their high expectations and ambition clearly to the staff and lead them most effectively by involving them in all stages of school improvement and creating a culture of reflective practice where each member of staff is a leader. The staff successfully create an ethos that promotes pupils' outstanding behaviour and personal development. Teaching is good and improving as a result of rigorous induction, accurate monitoring, effective staff appraisals, well-structured professional development and links with the wider Montessori community. Consequently, pupils make good progress. The curriculum is good and developing to ensure all pupils can achieve very highly in all areas. Self-evaluation is robust and further improvements are identified correctly and planned carefully. The school can demonstrate it meets all independent school standards. The school forms partnerships of exceptional quality with parents and carers to

inform them of Montessori practices and involve them in fostering their children's well-being and learning at home. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and all would recommend it to others. They receive the full range of information to which they are entitled, including the complaints procedure. The premises provide very pleasant teaching accommodation conducive to effective and safe learning.

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

Unique reference number	139331
Inspection number	422861
DfE registration number	209/6000

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.

Type of school	Day Montessori primary school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Number of part time pupils	6
Proprietor	Spectrum Montessori Ltd
Chair	Mrs Dawn Nasser (also principal)
Headteacher	Dr Ursula Nerre
Date of previous school inspection	Not inspected previously
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,830
Telephone number	020 8291 5691
Email address	spectrummontessori@live.co.uk

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