

Sakutu Organisation Montessori

346 Dollis Hill Lane, Dollis Hill, London NW2 6HL

Inspection dates

20–22 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Trustees do not monitor the quality of education or check how well pupils are learning.
- Trustees do not have a good enough understanding of statutory requirements and the independent school standards.
- Pupils' progress in writing is variable. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to show their writing skills in longer pieces of work.
- Sometimes pupils are over-reliant on adults to support their learning.
- Staff training has not been sufficiently focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough to ensure that they make good progress.
- There are no performance management arrangements in place. As a result, trustees do not challenge or hold staff to account sufficiently.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. They participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities which helps to build their confidence.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are up to date with the latest guidance.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils attend regularly and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Trustees have begun to undertake well-considered training so that they have the skills to provide effective governance to the school.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe. They trust and respect the adults at school and know that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have a problem.
- Pupils make strong progress in reading, humanities, mathematics and science.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - consistently have high expectations of what pupils can achieve so that they make good or better progress, in all subjects
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and improve their writing skills in longer pieces of work across a range of subjects
 - help pupils to become less reliant on adults to support their learning
 - have access to high-quality training focused on improving pupils' achievement in all subjects.
- Establish effective arrangements for governance by ensuring that trustees:
 - focus on monitoring the quality of education provided and the pupils' progress
 - provide greater challenge to the headteacher and staff to bring about further improvement
 - increase their awareness and current knowledge of all statutory requirements and the independent school standards
 - set up formal arrangements for the appraisal of the headteacher and other staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Trustees do not monitor the work of the school well enough. They do not hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress or check to see if the school meets its statutory responsibilities.
- The headteacher has a substantial teaching commitment. She makes regular 'drop-ins' to lessons and gives informal feedback to teachers. Following these visits and staff supervision meetings, informal personal targets are set for teachers. However, these targets are not related to improving teaching or accelerating pupils' progress. The school does not therefore have a formal system of staff appraisal or any routines for sharing good practice. Consequently, teachers are not held to account for the quality of their teaching and as a result pupils do not make strong progress across all subjects.
- Although some training for teachers has taken place, it has been mainly focused on updating staff about the current safeguarding requirements and not specifically on improving teaching and achievement. Training and development opportunities for teachers are limited.
- The effective curriculum provides pupils with many interesting activities, enabling them to develop a wide range of skills and interests, including in French and cooking. Pupils learn how to apply their reading, mathematical, speaking and listening skills to a variety of exciting activities. A wide range of after-school creative pursuits are available, including acting, dance and music. Attendance at these sessions has a very positive impact in developing pupils' confidence and social skills in preparation for their futures.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Festivals from different religions around the world are regularly celebrated. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect and they have a good understanding of how people from different cultures and backgrounds contribute to life in modern Britain. In an inspiring assembly on equality, pupils demonstrated a mature appreciation and understanding about people whose characteristics and life styles are different from their own.
- The curriculum is further enhanced by the broad range of opportunities that pupils have to contribute to the local and global community. For example, they make cakes for local firefighters and collect and send clothing to poor communities in Africa. Visits to places of interest, such as a local church, the Tower of London and museums, inspire pupils' curiosity and capture their imagination.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection are very supportive of the school and all would recommend it to another parent. They also spoke particularly highly of the excellent levels of communication between staff and parents.
- The headteacher has ensured that all the independent school standards are met, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Governance

- Governance is not effective.
- The board of trustees has only recently been reorganised and a new chair has been

appointed. Previously, trustees met infrequently to arrange fundraising events to support disadvantaged families in Brent.

- Consequently, they have not been focused on checking the quality of the provision and pupils' achievement. Currently, there is no formal system in place to manage the performance of staff, including the headteacher. As a result, the headteacher and staff are not held to account for pupils' progress. Firm plans are in place for trustees to attend the local authority's governor training programme.
- Trustees have not been routinely kept up to date with all statutory requirements and the changes to the independent school standards.
- The chair of the trustees has a background in education and health and is therefore well placed to steer the board towards establishing effective arrangements for governance. She has undertaken the required training in child protection and safeguarding, including 'Prevent'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school provides a safe and caring environment where pupils feel safe and secure. The headteacher and her staff have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective and that records are detailed and clear. The school's safeguarding policy takes account of the Secretary of State's latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education', and is available from the office.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding and vigilance in the school. All relevant staff training, including that for the designated safeguarding leads, is up to date. Staff are confident of the action to take should they have any concerns about the safety or care of pupils. For example, they know how they would spot the signs that a pupil may need early help.
- Systems to check the suitability of staff to work with pupils meet requirements. The headteacher and the new chair of trustees have completed safer recruitment training. They ensure that, before starting employment, all staff are carefully vetted to verify that they are suitable to work with children.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection feel that the school keeps their children safe, for example when using the internet. They commented that staff are very approachable if they need to raise any issue about the school's work. Staff work well with external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are variable and require improvement.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Teaching often lacks challenge, and does not consistently make pupils think hard and deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use their writing skills to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of English. They are able to write short

pieces of information well. However, they do not get enough chances to practise their writing and use a range of vocabulary in longer pieces of work, across a range of subjects. As a result, the quality of their writing is not sufficiently well developed for their ages and abilities.

- Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good. However, they do not have the specialist knowledge or facilities to plan effective activities in art and physical education, to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to read across a range of subjects, helping to develop their love of reading. Most pupils read very well. For example, they were heard reading their poems aloud with effective expression and confident delivery. Through helpful training sessions led by staff, parents are given effective strategies to support their children's reading at home. As a result, pupils read well.
- Pupils receive helpful guidance which maintains their concentration and interest and promotes stronger learning.
- Through extended research projects and presentations, pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of the topic and make strong progress, particularly in science and humanities.
- Teachers provide interesting activities that enable pupils to explore mathematical ideas and apply them to different situations. They respond well to these approaches, which help them to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Pupils feel well cared for and supported because staff provide positive role models. As a result, pupils work well, and form respectful relationships with their friends and with adults.
- Parents are extremely appreciative of staff's dedication and availability to talk through concerns or queries. Parents feel, and are, well informed about their children's learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's family ethos promotes positive and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils reported that they are happy and feel safe in school. They are confident in being able to share any worries with a member of staff and that these will be swiftly resolved.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that bullying is rare. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic forms. They show clear understanding of how to stay safe while using the internet and while travelling outside school.
- Staff provide effective role models that help to ensure that pupils are protected from extreme views, and have a mature appreciation of what is right and wrong. For example, pupils were able to discuss the dangers of speeding when driving a car, and the reasons why it is illegal.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers have established clear expectations and, as a result, pupils respond swiftly to their directions. Misbehaviour is extremely rare.
- Pupils attend school regularly. They thoroughly enjoy participating in the wide range of interesting activities on offer to them each day. Attendance is very high.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are extremely positive. In and out of lessons and when moving around the school, pupils are courteous and polite. They show high levels of respect towards adults and each other.
- At playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily together in the garden and enjoy socialising with their friends. However, sometimes pupils are over-reliant on adults to support and guide their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because they are not making good progress across a range of subjects.
- Currently, all pupils are taught in one mixed-aged class. As this teaching group is very small, analyses of trends or comparisons with national statistics for pupils' progress can be misleading.
- Pupils enter the school with skills and aptitudes that are above those typically found at their age. When they leave in Year 6, pupils reach above-average standards, which represents steady progress.
- Pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable in a range of subjects, including art and physical education.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length to practice and develop their writing skills. As a result, they are not confident in structuring longer, more in-depth episodes of writing and are not as proficient as they should be, given their attainment on entry to the school.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Most read with interest, expression and confidence. Pupils use their phonics skills well to tackle unfamiliar words when reading and to work out how to spell words when writing.
- There are frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through discussions in a variety of subjects. The reciting of poems and pupils' explanations of their solutions to mathematical problems are regular classroom activities.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the regular opportunities to take part in music and drama activities. Through these activities, their self-confidence improves and provides a firm foundation for their academic learning and personal development.
- Pupils' skills in mathematics are stronger and improving. Interesting problem-solving activities help to deepen their knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts.
- Since 2014, all Year 6 pupils have passed entrance examinations and have gained

entry to selective secondary schools. They are courteous and considerate, with good social and communication skills and as a result are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	132068
DfE registration number	304/6078
Inspection number	10020770

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Montessori primary school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Sakutu Organisation Montessori
Chair	Nabila Bangura
Headteacher	Filmah Doherty
Annual fees (day pupils)	Voluntary contributions
Telephone number	07961 181162
Website	No website
Email address	doherfim@aol.com
Date of previous inspection	9–11 October 2013

Information about this school

- Sakutu Organisation Montessori is an independent, primary and coeducational day school in Dollis Hill, north-west London. It is located in a private house with a garden. It opened in 2000.
- The school is registered for nine pupils aged five to 11 years, but there are currently three pupils aged eight to 11 years on the roll. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proprietor also operates a nursery in the same accommodation as the school. It is

called Queens Park Montessori. All early years children are educated in the nursery, including those in the Reception Year. It is inspected separately by Ofsted and did not form part of this inspection.

- The school was last inspected in October 2013, when it was judged to be good.
- The school does not have a website but all the required policies are available from the office.
- The school's aims reflect the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori. It aims 'to increase pupils' independence and intellectual development, offering the maximum freedom within a structured environment.'

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school, all jointly with the headteacher. He spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View. The inspector spoke with parents before school started and considered the school's analysis of its own survey of the views of pupils and parents.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, staff and the chair of trustees.
- The inspector reviewed key documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding, to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. He scrutinised pupils' books and learning files and the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

David Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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