

Rainbow Montessori School

13 Woodchurch Road, London NW6 3PL

Inspection dates

23–25 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and headteacher have a well-articulated vision for the school. Their ambition is to provide the highest-quality welfare and education for the pupils in their care. Together they have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Leaders use well-thought-out action plans to make sure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good and pupils make good progress. These plans would benefit from the inclusion of measurable targets, to improve pupils' progress further.
- Teachers use information about pupils' progress well to plan engaging activities. As a result, pupils grow in confidence, develop knowledge, skills and understanding and achieve well. Occasionally, in mathematics, teachers miss opportunities to sufficiently challenge pupils' thinking further.
- The well-constructed curriculum is a strength of the school. Broad and balanced, it gives equal weight to academic achievement and personal development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. This is because of the strong focus leaders have on developing these attributes.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. Pupils behave impeccably. Staff understand pupils' needs very well and are effective in helping them to develop self-awareness, confidence and an excellent understanding of the wider world.
- Good provision in the early years ensures that children achieve well, develop good personal and social skills, and are kept safe.

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 leadership and management by:
 - sharpening the school's strategic plan so that it includes measurable targets and is focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that action planning across the school includes clear success criteria linked to measurable targets which are based on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics so that pupils who grasp concepts rapidly are supported to solve problems of increasing complexity and reason mathematically.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor has a very good knowledge of the independent school standards. He has devised policies that effectively reflect the many good practices seen in the school and has ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. These policies are fully implemented and are making a positive difference to pupils' learning, safety and care.
- The headteacher and staff promote pupils' social and academic development particularly effectively in a caring environment based on high ambitions. Consequently, pupils are 'well prepared for life', fulfilling the school's own motto and aim.
- The well-planned curriculum, enhanced by many extra-curricular activities, meets all the areas of learning required by the independent school standards. Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that a strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme continues to support the outstanding outcomes in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders successfully recognise and promote equality and diversity. They ensure that pupils are prepared positively for life in modern Britain. Leaders make sure that pupils understand the importance of inclusion. Pupils learn about different people, including those with protected characteristics. Pupils know that homophobia is wrong; derogatory or racist language is not tolerated.
- The headteacher has ensured that a happy and caring learning environment prevails, where both pupils and staff are supported to do their very best. She has endeavoured to keep up to date with the latest Montessori teaching, undertaking ongoing professional development and visiting schools to observe best practices in this area. She supports staff well through regular supervision meetings, ensuring that pupils' individual learning plans are closely linked to the national curriculum while following the principles of the Montessori approach to learning. Staff rightly identify, in Ofsted's confidential questionnaire and face-to-face meetings with inspectors, that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support their improvement.
- Leaders monitor all aspects of the school's performance and have a good understanding of what is working well and what could be even better. This informs their planning for improvement. However, these plans, including individual action plans, lack measurable targets based on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This may hinder teachers and leaders from being held fully to account for the impact of their work. The school's strategic plan and other improvement plans would benefit from clearer indicators of success, linked to measurable targets.

Governance

- The proprietor supports the school's work well and holds leaders to account successfully through regular, weekly management meetings and weekly visits.
- The proprietor has ensured that all key information is readily available to current and prospective parents and carers in the parent handbook on the school's website. This comprehensive document is reviewed and updated annually. He has ensured that an

appropriate accessibility plan is in place which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have acted swiftly to ensure that all procedures take account of the government's latest statutory guidance. A single central record of checks on staff suitability is in place and meets requirements. The relevant training for designated safeguarding leads and all other staff is completed and up to date. Staff are able to identify potential signs of abuse, are vigilant and take good care of the pupils at school. All staff are first-aid trained and liaise well with parents. Parents are rightly pleased with the care staff provide.
- All aspects of health and safety, including fire safety, are checked and recorded regularly. The site is clean, well maintained and secure. Staff keep detailed records of potential risks to pupils' safety and ensure that potential risks are fully assessed. Staff take appropriate action taken to reduce any hazards that are identified.
- The school has a safeguarding policy published on its website. The policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance from 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016).

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan learning well by focusing on the individual needs of their pupils. Each pupil has an individual learning plan which tracks their progress well. Teachers regularly use information in pupils' individual learning plans to plan engaging activities. Pupils enjoy their learning. They have access to an excellent range of practical resources which they use very well to support and challenge their learning further.
- The teaching of literacy is a strength at the school. The initial reading skills, including the teaching of phonics, are well taught by staff. Consequently, pupils are able to make sense of unfamiliar words in the texts they read. They use letter sounds to help them with their writing and spelling. Pupils say they enjoy reading and read frequently. Pupils are well-supported by adults and encouraged to read widely. Pupils use their good reading and writing skills to undertake independent research and summarise their findings.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure that learning areas are well equipped with exciting resources to support pupils' independent learning. They intervene effectively to highlight additional resources, or sources of information pupils may choose to use. For example, in one class the teacher intervened effectively, extending a pupil's learning about animals that lived during prehistoric times. She modelled using an index to find additional information, to supplement the facts already gathered from the resources available.
- The quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make is consistently good across all areas of learning. Occasionally, in mathematics, teachers miss opportunities to sufficiently challenge pupils' thinking further so that they make even stronger progress. Inspection evidence indicated that on these occasions there are fewer opportunities for the most able to solve problems of increasing complexity and to reason mathematically.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders and staff successfully recognise and promote the inclusion of all. For example, a well-considered PSHE programme is providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on differences and respect others. Topics like 'Who is in a family' explore the many family dynamics that exist, promoting caring relationships. Staff choose texts carefully to help pupils learn about disability. Pupils are encouraged to learn about the world around them and their place in society.
- Parents and staff agree with pupils that they are happy and safe in school. Pupils know how to keep safe from the various types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They know how to use the internet responsibly.
- Pupils engage energetically in games during sports and games time. They know that exercise and healthy food are important for a healthy body and mind. They value the many opportunities available to keep them fit and well, including weekly yoga sessions, sports and their healthy lunches. They are able to explain clearly why Eton Mess is a treat, and that fruit is a healthier, alternative dessert. They show an excellent understanding of the school's rationale behind the menu choices on offer.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They enjoy school and this is reflected in pupils' very high attendance.
- A happy, purposeful and calm atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils know how to behave in classes, around the school and when out and about, for example walking to their sports activities at a local community hall.
- Pupils respond positively to the high expectations for behaviour and care for others set by all staff at the school. During social time, pupils behave exceptionally well, make their own games and play happily with each other.
- Pupils' take pride in their environment and their daily roles or responsibilities. Right from the start, all pupils are encouraged to contribute to their learning community. Even the very youngest four-year-olds were seen helping with lunch arrangements. They participated with pride and enjoyed washing up and drying plates, and carefully folding and putting away tea towels.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their school life. From strong starting points on entry to the school, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in curriculum subjects, sustaining high outcomes. The school provides detailed termly reports to parents on pupils' progress across the curriculum.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points because good-quality teaching and pupils' positive attitudes are underpinned by a well-thought-through curriculum. Pupils' progress is consistently good across a range of subjects.
- Regular opportunities to read and discuss their work contribute to pupils making strong gains in their writing. When pupils join the school, teachers quickly identify the next steps in their learning and incorporate the teaching of phonics. This plays a significant part in developing pupils' reading skills. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in reading across the school.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding of numbers well. However, for pupils who grasp concepts rapidly, teachers provide fewer opportunities to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding further.

Early years provision

Good

- Most Reception-age children join the elementary classes with skills that are either above or at least typical for their age and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Staff are skilled in making sure that activities are provided which interest and fascinate children. This sustains their concentration and deepens their understanding of key concepts. As a result, children are able to start reading, writing and calculating confidently and with increasing accuracy.
- The very good teaching of phonics is ensuring that the rapid progress seen in pupils' writing. There are many opportunities for children to write independently and for a purpose. They show perseverance and tenacity to get things right.
- Children behave extremely well because adults have high expectations of them. They are polite and kind to each other.
- Staff keep parents informed about their child's progress through formal reporting, the day-to-day conversations and through the parent communication log. Consequently, parents know what they can do to support their child's learning.
- The headteacher, well supported by the part-time special educational needs (SEN) coordinator, leads the early years well. Together they monitor the work of all adults and provide effective support to improve practice through regular supervision meetings.
- The headteacher knows what works well and what needs to be done next. The school's strategic plan highlights the need for further analysis of the progress made by different groups of children and how performance relates to national expectations (good levels of development at the end of the Reception Year).
- Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards and specific statutory and welfare requirements for the early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	100086
DfE registration number	202/6390
Inspection number	10020718

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 independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	John Madden
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Sylvia Peternell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,240 to £12,417
Telephone number	020 7328 8986
Website	www.rainbowmontessori.co.uk/
Email address	rms@rainbowmontessori.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 September 2011

Information about this school

- Rainbow Montessori School is an independent, co-educational day school for pupils aged from four to 12 years. It opened in 1982.
- There are 50 pupils on roll, most of whom live locally. There are 18 children in the early years, 11 of whom are in receipt of government funding. The school serves a diverse community. Many pupils speak English as an additional language, but few are at an early stage of learning English. There are no pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan. A very small number of pupils have been identified as having SEN.

- The school is in West Hampstead, in the London Borough of Camden, in a detached Victorian house. It is part of a group that, along with the junior school, includes two nursery settings, one in West Hampstead and one in Queen's Park. The third nursery, situated in Highgate, open at the time of the last progress monitoring visit in June 2016, has since closed. Many of the children attending these two nurseries move on to the junior school. Both nursery settings are the subject of separate inspection arrangements.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in September 2011, when it met all the independent school regulations and provided a good quality of education.
- An emergency inspection was conducted in July 2015 that focused on the curriculum; pupils' welfare, health and safety; the implementation of the school's complaints procedures; and the leadership and management of the school. In October 2015, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school to gather additional evidence. The October inspection found that the school did not meet two of the requirements of the independent school standards relating to the premises and accommodation.
- A progress monitoring inspection took place in June 2016. The June inspection found that the school met the previously identified unmet independent school standards.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across all classes. One inspector accompanied a class to the local community hall to observe their weekly sports session. Pupils were observed during playtimes, at lunchtimes and as they moved around the school. An inspector also listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor and a member of staff responsible for overseeing the checks made to keep children safe. Meetings were also held with the headteacher, a group of staff and a group of pupils.
- The headteacher accompanied an inspector during a tour of the school site to check compliance with the independent school standards. Inspectors also scrutinised records of checks on the premises, including risk assessments and fire safety records.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation and strategic plan. School improvement documents, policies, information on pupils' outcomes, information on pupils' behaviour and attendance, and minutes of management meetings were also reviewed.
- Inspectors met with 12 parents informally at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and the 13 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff at the school.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rebekah Iiyambo

Ofsted Inspector

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