

Walthamstow Montessori School

Penrhyn Hall, Penrhyn Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17 5DA
St John's Church, Brookscroft Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4LH

Inspection dates

19 June 2018

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(f), 2(2)(h), 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g) and 4

- At the previous inspection:
 - planned programmes of study for each subject did not take into account pupils' starting points, individual needs, interests and abilities
 - long-term plans did not support planning for progression over time
 - teaching did not ensure that all pupils had the opportunity to make at least good progress, especially the most able pupils
 - the school did not have an effective system to identify pupils' starting points or to check on their progress
 - provision for children in the early years had declined significantly
 - the school did not have an assessment system that measures pupils' progress. Pupils were set termly individual targets, but these were inconsistent and lacked precision and challenge.
- This inspection confirmed that all the proposed actions outlined in the school's action plan have been realised:
 - there are now suitable long-term plans and programmes of study in place for all subjects which consider pupils' individual needs, interests and abilities
 - teachers have completed a range of suitable training and are now monitored robustly and regularly; as a result, teaching has improved and all pupils now have the opportunity to make good progress, especially in the early years where all children are now achieving a 'good level of development'
 - the school now has two new online assessments systems; one for the younger pupils is embedded and the second for older pupils is in process. Both identify pupils' individual starting points, and progress over time, in all subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 9, 9(b), 12, 15, 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- At the previous inspection:
 - the arrangements for safeguarding were ineffective
 - young children were changed on the floor of the staff toilet, which was also the dedicated medical room. There were no separate areas for the changing of children and attending to sick pupils
 - expectations of pupils' behaviour were too low
 - risk assessments of the premises were poor
 - fire safety emergency lighting checks had not been undertaken
 - the admission register did not include all the required information and attendance registers did not record whether a pupil's absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- This inspection confirmed that all the proposed actions outlined in the school's action plan have been realised:
 - the arrangements for safeguarding are now suitable; the school's compliant safeguarding policy is available online, the school's approach to training staff has been strengthened and young children are now only changed in a dedicated changing facility
 - teachers have had effective training on behaviour management and leaders have worked with staff, parents and carers to raise behavioural expectations
 - comprehensive risk assessments of the premises are now thorough and suitable, and undertaken annually; full emergency lighting checks have been undertaken by fire safety professionals and leaders now log monthly tests of the system
 - the new admission register now includes all the required information and attendance registers now use the required attendance codes to signify authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are now met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(e), 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(viii) and 21(3)(b)

- At the previous inspection, there were omissions in the single central register of vetting checks on staff, and some checks were not recorded.
- This inspection confirmed the school is now fulfilling all its statutory duties by completing, and accurately recording, all the required vetting checks on staff.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a) and 24(1)(b)

- At the previous inspection, there were not separate areas for the changing of children and attending to sick pupils at the Penrhyn Hall premises.

- This inspection confirmed the premises now have a separate, appropriate medical room facility and a changing facility.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are now met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraphs 33, 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)

- At the previous inspection, the school's complaints policy did not include the possibility of a formal complaint being considered by a complaints panel. Leaders also did not maintain a suitable complaints log.
- This inspection confirmed the school's new complaints policy now meets all the requirements. There is now a suitable complaints log in place.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- At the previous inspection, the leadership team lacked the capacity to discharge its responsibilities effectively. Leaders had failed to keep abreast of changes in statutory guidance and had not ensured that all of the independent school standards were met.
- This inspection confirmed that leaders have taken decisive and effective action to remedy the weaknesses identified in June 2017. Though there is still much to do, especially in formalising arrangements for the new governing body (advisory group) and fully implementing the new assessment system, the independent school standards are now all met.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards in this part are now met.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- At the previous inspection, the statutory welfare requirements in paragraphs 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17 and 3.18 were judged to be not met because leaders were not completing all the required vetting checks on staff, including childcare disqualification checks.
- This inspection confirmed all the statutory requirements are now met, because all the required checks on all staff working in the early years are now undertaken and accurately recorded.

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 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if:
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work:
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are:
 - 2(2)(f) where the school has pupils below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:

- 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
- 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that:
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if:
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person:
 - 18(2)(c)(ii) the person's medical fitness;
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is:
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether:
 - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction

made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;

- 21(3)(a)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
- 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
- 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including:
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which:
 - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is:
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
 - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and:
 - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and

- 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
- 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 134579 |
| DfE registration number | 320/6064 |
| Inspection number | 10054547 |

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.

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| Type of school | Montessori day school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 106 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 72 |
| Proprietor | Lorna Mahoney |
| Chair | Vacant |
| Headteacher | Wendy Palumbo |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £2,160 to £6,750 |
| Telephone number | 020 8523 2968 |
| Website | www.walthamstowmontessori.org |
| Email address | e17montessori@aol.com |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 7–9 June 2017 |

Information about this school

- Walthamstow Montessori School is an independent, non-selective nursery and preparatory school for boys and girls aged between three and 11 years.
- The school is located in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The lower school is located at the Penrhyn Hall premises and includes separately registered provision for children aged two. The elementary and upper preparatory classes are located nearby on the site at St John's Church.
- The school's last inspection was a full standard inspection in June 2017.
- The school's website address has changed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This inspection was the school's first progress monitoring inspection and was conducted without notice.
- In June 2017, a full standard inspection of the school judged it to be inadequate. The school submitted an action plan. Ofsted's review of this plan judged it not to be acceptable. As a result, the Department for Education wrote to the school to confirm the action plan had been rejected.
- The inspection focused on the school's progress against specific requirements within Parts 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 of the independent school standards and some of the requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The inspector conducted the inspection in collaboration with the proprietor and the head of school.
- The inspector toured the premises and scrutinised relevant documentation related to the curriculum, assessment, safeguarding, fire safety, risk assessment and complaints. He also observed learning around the lower school.
- There has been one recent response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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