

# Walthamstow Montessori School

Penryhn Hall, Penryhn Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17 5DA

## Inspection dates

30 October–1 November 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' outcomes is insufficiently rigorous. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is inaccurate.
- The advisory board is too newly established to be able to demonstrate a positive impact on teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes. It is not yet in a position to hold school leaders to account for their actions and performance.
- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Teachers do not make effective use of the assessment information they have collected to plan challenging work.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils' achievement are not high enough, especially in writing.
- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. Leaders do not ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare require improvement. Pupils have a limited understanding of the forms that bullying and discrimination can take, and of e-safety.
- There are too few opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology.

### The school has the following strengths

- The early years provision is good. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and are prepared well for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy school and are polite. They feel safe and are kept safe.
- Parents and members of staff are positive about the school and the way it is improving.
- Recent improvements demonstrate leaders' commitment and their capacity to improve the school.

### 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?

- Increase the positive impact of leadership and management, by:
  - strengthening the monitoring of teaching and learning and of the progress that pupils make
  - developing the accuracy of self-evaluation
  - ensuring that the newly formed advisory board holds school leaders to account for their actions and performance
  - strengthening the curriculum so that pupils have opportunities to use and learn about information and communication technology.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - making better use of assessment information to ensure that pupils are challenged in their learning
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' progress and the quality of their work, especially in writing
  - making better use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum.
- Strengthen pupils' personal development and welfare so that they have a better understanding of the forms that bullying and discrimination can take, and how to stay safe online.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement. Systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching are at an early stage of development and are insufficiently rigorous to ensure that teaching is consistently good. Leaders have undertaken suitable training and carry out a programme of lesson observations. However, their monitoring is not sufficiently evaluative or followed up rigorously to ensure rapid improvements.
- Leaders are developing a system to gather information about pupils' progress across the school. Currently, assessment information is not used well enough to analyse outcomes achieved by pupils. As a result, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness is overgenerous.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop the quality of their writing or to use and learn about information and communication technology.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils understand the forms that bullying and discrimination can take and how to stay safe when they are working online.
- Nevertheless, leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection and demonstrate the capacity for further improvement. For example, both the early years provision and pupils' behaviour have improved from inadequate to good over the past year.
- Leaders motivate other members of staff to want to succeed, and relationships between members of staff are good. A calm and welcoming atmosphere is evident across the school. All staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire agree that they are proud of their school and want to improve their work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully. Staff make good use of events and festivals. For example, on the day of the inspection, All Saints Day, older pupils learned about the customs of people in Mexico in using this day to honour their dead.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. They especially agree that their children are happy at school, are looked after well and are kept safe. They typically make comments such as: 'Members of staff are very supportive; my son is very happy and enthusiastic about learning' and 'I'm pleased with the nurturing, personal care and attention.'
- Leaders, including the proprietor, ensure that the independent school standards are being met.

### Governance

- There is no governing body. The school is in the process of developing an advisory body to help oversee its work. Members of the advisory body have gained some understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are receiving training and are increasing their understanding about how they can fulfil their role in holding leaders to account.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children, and all staff are trained in safeguarding. An up-to-date safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. Members of staff are vigilant in making sure that the premises and the activities they provide are safe.
- Leaders work with parents, carers and other stakeholders to ensure that pupils are kept safe and feel safe at school. A calming and friendly atmosphere enables pupils to develop confidence and independence.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers spend too much time going over work that pupils have already mastered, at the expense of new learning. This is especially evident in the pupils' written work.
- Limited use is made of information and communication technology to help prepare pupils for life in a technological society. For example, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop skills that make use of computers to support their learning across the curriculum. In addition, pupils do not learn enough about e-safety to give them secure knowledge of any potential dangers.
- Teaching time is not used consistently well, with some time wasted due to weak planning or unnecessary interruptions that prevent pupils from getting on with their learning.
- Teachers have improved the systems for assessing pupils' progress since the previous inspection. The school has introduced the use of learning targets that are shared with the pupils and their parents. However, assessment information is not yet used consistently well when planning new work.
- Reading, including phonics, is taught well so that pupils can read unfamiliar words and understand new vocabulary.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are patient and caring. They provide good opportunities for pupils to develop and pursue their own specific interests.
- Effective use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge in subjects such as physical education and music. For example, the older pupils learned several new ball and racket skills when working with a tennis coach.
- Teachers make good use of the local park to provide opportunities for pupils to learn about their environment. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed using new vocabulary to describe the leaves they had collected. They knew to keep quiet if they wanted to watch the squirrels at play.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils have limited knowledge about how to keep safe. They understand

about physical dangers such as road safety but are not clear about the various forms that bullying and discrimination can take.

- Members of staff care for the pupils well and support their physical and emotional well-being. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay healthy. For example they can talk about foods that are good for us and the need to be vigilant about allergies.
- A strength in the pupils' personal development is their self-confidence. They feel safe at the school and their parents are happy that their children are kept safe. Safeguarding arrangements have improved since the previous inspection and are now sufficiently rigorous.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils generally behave well in class, around the school and in the clubs that take place before and after school. There is a calm atmosphere in lessons and pupils concentrate well. Occasionally, however, pupils lose focus and become restless when tasks lack challenge.
- Leaders have improved the monitoring of attendance, and rates of attendance are now good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils, including the most able, require improvement. There is limited assessment information to show pupils' progress over time. Work in pupils' books shows that progress is not consistently good enough, particularly in writing. For example, the writing in some older pupils' books mixed up capital and lower-case letters within sentences and made erratic use of punctuation.
- There is limited evidence of writing being used and developed in subjects across the curriculum, or of the use of information and communication technology.
- In mathematics, pupils make progress as they move through the school, with work that is broadly appropriate for their age and attainment. However, on occasion, errors and misconceptions are not identified and followed up to resolve pupils' difficulties and secure strong progress.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Most pupils in Year 1 achieve the standard in the national phonics screening check, and they use their knowledge of phonics to help them to read and spell. They read fluently and with good expression.
- Pupils are adequately prepared for their next stage of education.
- There are very few pupils who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities. No pupils are disadvantaged.

## Early years provision

## Good

- The early years provision is good. Children make good progress during their time at the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with the children and each

other. They plan and deliver a stimulating curriculum that is matched well to the individual needs and interests of the children. An area identified by leaders for further development is children's use of information and communications technology.

- Children are confident and happy to work independently and when sharing with others. The strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening is evident in the quality of adults' questioning and the conversations being held with the children. Children listen well and are keen to share each other's ideas and views.
- Children gain confidence and behave well. They make choices about their learning and know how to find and use their own resources. Expectations for behaviour are consistent and children learn self-control and respect for others. For example, children learned how to hold a baby doll gently and with care. Children learn good manners when taking part in social events such as snack-time.
- New vocabulary is promoted well. For example, children in the Nursery were learning about Halloween. They learned the names of various human bones when singing a song about skeletons; and they were able to describe the reaction that took place when they mixed baking powder and vinegar together in the pumpkins to cause an 'explosion'.
- Literacy and numeracy are promoted especially well. For example, during the inspection children in the Nursery were learning to count and add together small quantities of the seeds that came out of the pumpkin lanterns they had helped to make. However, some opportunities are missed for children to develop early writing skills, including accuracy in their writing.
- Children's attainment and progress have improved significantly since the previous inspection. In 2018, all the children achieved a good level of development by the time they left the Reception Year. As a result, they were fully prepared for joining Year 1.
- Leaders have worked together effectively to improve provision rapidly. They ensure that assessment information is used well to help plan the children's next steps. There are close relationships with parents and external agencies to ensure that children feel safe and are kept safe. Parents make positive comments such as: 'Children are encouraged to explore their learning so that they develop and grow into well-rounded individuals'.
- The school fully complies with safeguarding and welfare requirements and meets the independent schools' standards.

## School details

Unique reference number	134579
DfE registration number	320/6064
Inspection number	10055505

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	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Number of part-time pupils	53
Proprietor	Lorna Mahoney
Chair	Doug Cherry
Headteacher	Wendy Palumbo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,980–£6,750
Telephone number	020 8523 2968
Website	<a href="http://www.walthamstowmontessori.com">www.walthamstowmontessori.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:e17montessori@aol.com">e17montessori@aol.com</a>
Date of previous 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. Pupils come to the school from diverse backgrounds and almost half speak English as an additional language. Few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Very few pupils have special educational needs and/ or disabilities. No pupils are disadvantaged.
- The lower school is located at the Penrhyn Hall address. It includes separately registered and inspected provision for two-year-olds. Three classes, for older pupils, are located nearby in St. John's Church, Brookscroft Road.

- The school runs a breakfast and after school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The previous standard inspection took place on 7–9 June 2017, with a check made of the school’s action plan on 31 October 2017 and a check of the Independent School Standards on 19 June 2018.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons.
- Discussions were held with leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with several parents and scrutinised 35 responses to Ofsted's 'Parent View' questionnaire, a letter from a parent and five responses from members of staff.
- Inspectors listened to the reading of pupils in Years 2 and 5 and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- A range of information supplied by the school was checked, including the school's own information about pupils' outcomes, planning documents and checks on the quality of teaching. The inspectors also looked at the school's development plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors checked that the school complies with the independent school standards by holding discussions with members of staff, checking the premises and scrutinising relevant policies and documents held by the school.

## Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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